

Ruth Meyer: The First Lady

By 1981 Ruth Meyer was among a select group of women to have been a successful major-market air personality, radio-station PD and network radio programmer.



Ruth Meyer

In the United States during the 1950s, a woman who wanted to program a radio station couldn't get arrested. But there was an exception. Her name was Ruth Meyer.

Meyer lived in Kansas City. She was 18 and wanted to be a newspaper reporter, but newspapers only gave jobs to those with experience. So, in desperation, she started pitching local radio stations for a job. Destiny intervened when KCKN hired Meyer as a continuity writer. She was also allowed to pick music.

Todd Storz was in his 20s then. When he came to Kansas City to run the station he'd just bought, WHB, he heard about Meyer and offered her a job. People (read *men*) who were established in radio laughed at the idea of playing 40 records, but the disciples of Storz and Gordon McLendon knew better. In 1958, at the urging of WMGM/New York talent Peter Tripp, Meyer went to New York. WMGM management didn't get the fundamentals of Top 40, and after three months Meyer accepted a job across town at WMCA.

Her title was Production Director, but she did everything a PD does. "Everyone used to ask, 'Who's really programming the station?'" she says. "I didn't think of myself as a woman program director, but as a programmer." Bob Shannon told her that Chuck Blore,



BIG GUY, BIG HAT, BIG DEAL

Gordon Jump who played Arthur "Big Guy" Carlson on WKRP in Cincinnati, starred in a series of TV spots that promoted the various radio stations owned by Charter Broadcasting, such as KCBQ/San Diego.

the PD at KFVB/Los Angeles, was using a line on the air that she should know about: Blore was calling the KFVB airstaff "The Good Guys."

"I wanted to use the phrase on WMCA, but my boss thought it was a dumb idea," Meyer says. Despite her boss' objections, she started to use The Good Guys on the air and to build a team around the name. Despite their skepticism, the WMCA Good Guys played along and found out that being a team worked.

The team had the same haircuts, dressed alike and showed up everywhere together. Ruth even wrote a song called "We're the Good Guys" that the station played. Did she get any recognition? "None whatsoever," she says. "I got my kicks from watching it all happen."

In 1968 Meyer left WMCA and consulted Radio Luxembourg and Radio Caroline, stations that defined radio for England and Western Europe in the late '60s. In 1973 she took on a new challenge: WMGM/New York had been middle of the road, but the plan was to change the call letters to WHN and change the format. "I didn't like Country," Meyer says. "In fact, when I found out, I quit." But when she overheard someone in the sales department complaining, "Country will never work in New York," she changed her mind and agreed to stay for a year.

As she'd done at WMCA, Meyer stayed behind the scenes and built her team. After WHN she went to WNEW for a short time, where she worked with a sales guy named Mel Karmazin, and then returned to WMCA to lead its new Talk format. That's where she discovered Sally Jessy Raphael. In 1978 Meyer was named VP/Programming at the NBC Radio Network and was instrumental in creating the Source. "We did concerts and news and even created a program called *Sex, Drugs and Rock and Roll*," she says. "That drove NBC management bananas."

Today Meyer lives in Kansas City and has trouble listening to radio. "I always want to fix the problems I hear," she says. "So I listen to Sports radio, because I don't know anything about it."

RADIO

Cullie Tarleton Jefferson-Pilot Sr. VP ... **Michael O'Shea** KBLE/Seattle GM ... **Dean Tyler** WFIL/Philadelphia PD ... **Al Peterson** WQXM/Tampa PD ... **Carey Curelop** WABX/Detroit PD ... **Scott Shannon** WRBQ (Q105)/Tampa Operations Director ... **John Sebastian** launches consultancy ... **Rick Balis** KSHE/St. Louis PD ... **Goff Lebharr** WWDC-FM (DC101)/Washington President ... **Bob McKay** KCBQ/San Diego PD ... **Tom Cuddy** WARA/Attleboro, MA Station Manager ... **Gil Rozzo** WMZQ/Washington GM ... **Bill**



Herb McCord

Tanner Metroplex VP/Programming ... **Rick Candea** KILT-FM/Houston PD ... **Beau Weaver** KILT-AM/Houston PD ... **Dave Anthony** KZZP/Phoenix PD ... **Bill Figenshu** Viacom VP/Programming ... **George Francis** WWWE/Cleveland President ... **John Lander** WCKX/Tampa GM ... **Joel Raab** WHK/Cleveland PD ... **Jim Teeson** KPPL & KLAK/Denver President ... **Corinne Baldassano** VP ABC Contemporary Net ... **Jeff Lucifer** KGB/San Diego PD ... **Walt Tiburski** WMMS/Cleveland VP/GM ... **Gary Edens** Southern President ... **Nick Trigony** KIKK/Houston GM ... **Dene Hallam** WWWW/Detroit PD ... **Al Casey** Charter VP/Prog. ... **Toney Brooks** Sandusky President ... **Joe Parish** WPLJ/New York VP/GM ... **George Toulas** WLIF/Baltimore GM ... **Dwight Case** Transtar President ... **Jerry Lyman** RKO FM President ... **Dave Martin** WMAQ/Chicago GM ... **Kernie Anderson** WBMX/Chicago GM ... **Tony Berardini** WBCN/Boston GM ... **Ted Cramer** WMAQ/Chicago PD ... **Fred Jacobs** WRIF/Detroit PD ... **Bert Wahlen**



Mel Karmazin

Westinghouse VP/FMs ... **Bob Hattrik** Doubleday VP/Programming ... **Earnest James** KDIA/Oakland, CA GM ... **J.J. Jeffries** WBMX/Chicago PD ... **Bernie Moody** KSOL/San Mateo, CA OM ... **Don Benson** KIIS-FM/Los Angeles VP/Operations ... **Dave Cooke** RKO Nets VP/News ... **Jim Davis** WVAF/Charleston, SC GM ... **Robert Hall** SMN AC PD ... **Marv Dyson** WVON & WGCI/Chicago VP/GM ... **John Gehron** WLS/Chicago VP ... **George Mills** KSDO/San Diego President ... **Paul Fiddick** Multimedia Sr. VP ... **George Johns** Southwestern VP ... **Jim Smith** WKQX/Chicago VP/GM ... **Jerry Lee** KJQY/San Diego VP/GM ... **Rick Torcasso** WDRQ/Detroit PD ... **E. Karl Sunbelt** Sr. VP ... **Denise**

Oliver PD ABC Rock Net ... **Bill Stedman** WLW/Cincinnati PD ... **Jim de Castro** WLUP/Chicago VP/GM ... **Larry Campbell** Research Group VP/GM ... **Bob Christy** KHOU/Denver PD ... **Guy Zapoleon** KRQ/Tucson PD ... **Mike McVay** WABB/Mobile GM ... **Chet Redpath** WCLR/Chicago President ... **Allen Shaw** Summit VP ... **Dan Halyburton** KLIF & KPLX/Dallas OM ... **Jim Tazsarek** KTAR & KBBC/Phoenix VP/GM ... **Neil Rogers** WNWS/Miami PD ... **Randy Bongarten** GE VP/Radio ... **Herb McCord** Greater Media VP/Radio ... **Mel Karmazin** Infinity President ... **Julian Breen** Greater Media VP/Prog.; **Tom Milweski** VP/Legal ... **Liz Kiley** WIFJ/Philadelphia PD ... **Mike Osterhout** WRBQ/Tampa GM ... **Dene Hallam** WHN/New York PD ... **Gary Guthrie** KOPA & KXAM/Phoenix GM.



Liz Kiley



Polly Anthony

Larry Douglas E/P/A VP ... **Stan Monteiro** Columbia VP/Promo ... **Jack Craig** RCA VP ... **Bruce Shindler** E/A Assoc. Dir. ... **Polly Anthony** Epic Pop Adult Promo ... **Ernie Singleton** PolyGram Black Music ... **Jack Forsythe** Chrysalis VP/Promo ... **Vernon Slaughter** CBS VP/Black Music ... **Paris Eley** E/P/A VP/Black Music ... **Johnny Barbis** Geffen Promo Dir. ... **Bill Cataldo** PolyGram VP/Pop ... **Vince Pellegrino** PolyGram Promo ...

Bonnie Goldner RCA AC Promo ... **Dick Asher** CBS President ... **Al Teller** Columbia Sr. VP/GM ... **Jack Lameier** CBS/Nashville Nat'l Promo ... **Jheryl Busby** A&M VP/Marketing ... **Myron Roth** CBS West Coast Sr. VP/GM ... **Russ Thyret** WB Sr. VP/Marketing ... **Howard Rosen, Dave Urso** WB VPs ... **Vince Pellegrino** PolyGram VP ... **Rick Bleiweiss** PolyGram VP ... **Vince Faraci** Atlantic Sr. VP/Promo ... **Bob Catania** RCA Nat'l LP Promo ... **Billy Bass** Motown VP/Pop ... **Bob Sherwood** Columbia VP/Marketing ... **Bill Cataldo** PolyGram Nat'l Promo ... **Ray Anderson** Columbia VP/Promo ... **Don Jenner** Millennium Exec. VP ... **Jerry Sharell** E/A Sr. VP ... **Ronnie Jones** EMI-A/Liberty Nat'l R&B Promo.

RECORDS



Jerry Sharell