

**GUIDE TO THE PAPERS OF
JIM ROBERTSON**

National Public Broadcasting Archives
University of Maryland Libraries

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7.25 lin. ft.

BIOGRAPHY

E. James (Jim) Robertson had a long and distinguished career in commercial and educational broadcasting. Robertson was born in 1918. He began his broadcasting career in 1934 while still in high school in Madison, Wisconsin. During his junior year at Madison West High School, Robertson arranged for his school to have a half hour show once a week on the local commercial NBC radio station, WIBA. In the summer between his junior and senior years, Robertson had a quarter-hour poetry program once a week on the same station. As a result of this work, Robertson gained the attention of H.B. McCarty, then director of the University of Wisconsin's pioneering radio station, WHA. McCarty invited Robertson to volunteer at WHA as a student announcer during the summer of 1935.

Robertson pursued his higher education at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. He was hired as a part-time announcer at WIBA in 1937 at the end of his freshman year. By the time he graduated in 1940, he had three years of professional announcing and programming experience at a commercial station.

Robertson continued his work in commercial radio during the next three years at various stations in Wisconsin. After working for a few more months at WIBA, he moved on to a management position at a station in Marinette, WMAM. In December 1942, he was hired as Program Director of WCLO in Janesville, where he worked for a year.

In 1943, Robertson was invited to join the Milwaukee Journal radio station WTMJ as an announcer. He helped to produce programs as well, and became the Radio Program Director in 1946. A year later, on December 3, 1947, WTMJ-TV went on the air as the eleventh television station in the country. Robertson had been instrumental in launching the station, having hired the first staff and produced the first programs. He remained in charge of television operation until 1952, when he resumed radio programming.

Robertson's noncommercial broadcasting career began in the fall of 1954, when he was selected as Director of Programming for WTTW in Chicago. Again, he played a vital role in the planning and organizing of a television station. WTTW-TV went on the air in September 1955. At WTTW, Robertson worked with other well-known names in early broadcasting, such as John Taylor, Chalmers Marquis, and Harry Skornia.

Robertson remained at WTTW until 1959, when he was named as the first Director of Station Relations at National Educational Television (NET), which at the time was still the National Educational Television and Radio Center. In this capacity, Robertson served a liaison between ETV stations and NET, conducting visits to member stations and administering grants. He assisted in the organization of an Affiliates Committee with Bill Harley, Hartford Gunn, Jonathan Rice, and John F. White.

In 1962, Robertson became Vice-President for Network Affairs for NET, retaining supervision of station relations but with added responsibilities. He served as liaison with the FCC,

Congress, and other national public broadcasting organizations. He acted as NET's contact with Newton Minow, the Chair of the FCC. Robertson helped develop the Educational Television Facilities Act of 1962, the first federal legislation concerning educational broadcasting. In addition, he played a role in developing the All-Channel Act of 1962. Robertson also helped with the development of video tape technology, and distributed video equipment which the Ford Foundation had provided. While at NET, he headed the effort to get stations on the air in key communities, such as Los Angeles.

In 1963, Robertson became Vice-President and General Manager for Community Television of Southern California. A year later, he once again was responsible for the planning, equipping, and constructing of a new television station. KCET began operation in September 1964.

Robertson once again returned to radio in 1967, when he was named the Director of Educational Broadcasting at WHA, University of Wisconsin. He stayed at WHA for three years, during which time he headed the State Radio Council's eleven station radio network. He also acted as advisor to the Coordinating Committee on Higher Education in planning for statewide networking and interinstitutional communications. In addition, he assisted in drafting legislation creating the State Educational Communications Board which coordinated state educational radio and television, and developed a statewide public television network. In 1968, while at WHA, the National Association of Educational Broadcasting acknowledged Robertson's dedication to educational broadcasting by electing him Chair of the NAEB Board.

In 1970, Robertson was selected as Executive Director of National Educational Radio (NER), a division of NAEB. While he was with NER, Robertson worked closely with the FCC, lobbying on the Hill for support of educational broadcasting. He helped form the Association for Public Radio Stations and assisted in drafting that organization's constitution.

Robertson left NER in 1973 and began his own public broadcasting consulting firm, Robertson Associates, Inc. In 1979, he began an oral history project in which he interviewed 55 pioneers in the field of public broadcasting. The project was funded primarily with grants from CPB. These interviews were the basis of a book by Robertson entitled Televisionaries, which documents the history of the founding of public television in the U.S., from the late 1940's to 1967. The book is an important contribution to the broadcasting industry, written by a man who was himself influential in establishing and developing educational radio and television. Robertson has continued his involvement in public broadcasting. In 1985, he served on the Advisory Board for southwest Florida ETV and public radio stations.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Papers of Jim Robertson span the period from 1946 to 1989, with the bulk of the material dating from 1970 to 1982. The papers consist of oral history transcripts, correspondence, reports, memos, articles, slides, audio tapes, audio cassettes, and one video cassette. The papers deal largely with Robertson's 1980-1981 oral history project, in which he interviewed 55 pioneers in

public broadcasting. Also included are materials that Robertson collected during his time at National Educational Radio, and consultant reports that he wrote under the name of Robertson Associates, Inc. Additionally, there are some materials relating to CPB and PBS.

The Papers of Jim Robertson are divided into five series:

- Series 1: Public Broadcasting Oral History Project
- Series 2: Robertson Associates, Inc.
- Series 3: National Educational Radio
- Series 4: Public Broadcasting
- Series 5: Audio-Visual Materials

PROVENANCE

The Papers of Jim Robertson were donated to the National Public Broadcasting Archives, University of Maryland Libraries by Jim Robertson in September of 1990, April of 1991, January of 1992, and September of 1994.

SERIES DESCRIPTION

Series 1: Public Broadcasting Oral History Project, 1947-1984 (3.5 lin. ft.)

This series contains material generated from Jim Robertson's oral history project in which he interviewed more than 50 of the men and women who played important roles in the establishment and development of noncommercial educational broadcasting in the United States. Robertson was also interviewed as part of this project. The project was funded primarily by grants from the CPB, as part of its Congressionally-mandated archival responsibility. Supplemental funding was provided by the Benton Foundation and several private donors. The interviews, which were conducted by Robertson in 1979-82, were the basis of his 1989 book Televisionaries.

Subseries 1: Final Interview Transcripts, 1979-1982

This subseries contains the final typed transcripts of the public broadcasting oral history interviews. Included within each of the folders is a photo, brief biography, note from the project director, and the interview transcript. The folders are arranged alphabetically by the last name of the person interviewed.

Subseries 2: Background Material, 1947-1984

This subseries contains edited transcripts and background material. Included within each of the folders is the edited transcript with corrections, questions for the interview, biographical information, and correspondence between Robertson and the person to be interviewed. Also in this subseries is the project proposal written by Jim Robertson in an effort to gain funding for the project. The folders are arranged alphabetically.

Series 2: Robertson Associates, Inc., 1969-1981 (1.5 lin. ft.)

This series contains reports undertaken by Jim Robertson as President of Robertson Associates, Inc., his educational radio and television consulting firm which he formed in 1973. These reports analyze existing public broadcasting systems, and offer recommendations for the future. Also included with the Robertson Associates materials are four reports which were prepared by Robertson before the formation of his consulting firm. This series also contains two articles which were written by Robertson during the time that he acted as a communications consultant under the name of Robertson Associates. The materials in this series are arranged chronologically.

Series 3: National Educational Radio, 1970-1973 (0.25 lin. ft.)

This series contains papers collected by Jim Robertson while he served as Executive Director of National Educational Radio (NER), a division of the National Association of Educational Broadcasters (NAEB). Robertson served in this position from November 1970 to June 1973. Included are memos and reports concerning various NER issues, and minutes of NER Board of Directors' meetings. These materials are arranged chronologically.

Also included in this series are materials which document the NER station visits Robertson conducted with Jerry Yokom in 1972. The stations were public radio stations which were members of NER-NAEB. The station visit reports are arranged first alphabetically by state, then alphabetically by call letters within each state.

Series 4: Public Broadcasting, 1973-1980, n.d. (0.25 lin. ft.)

This series contains material pertaining to public broadcasting, with the majority of the material focusing on public television. The material in this series was sent to Robertson by Joseph Hughes, a charter director of CPB. Much of it concerns the Carnegie Commission II 1977 study of public broadcasting. Included are newspaper clippings, articles, reports, and correspondence. One letter, written by C. Scott Fletcher to Hughes, is particularly rich in public broadcasting history. This series also contains documents which concern programming and financing of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the Public Broadcasting Service. These materials are arranged chronologically.

Series 5: Audio-Visual Material, 1969-1989, n.d. (1.75 lin. ft.)

This series contains audio tapes, audio cassettes, and one video cassette. Much of this material concerns NER, and was created while Robertson was Executive Director of that organization. Topics include NER meetings, visits with member radio stations, and public broadcasting in general. Included are reports delivered by Robertson, as well as interviews with Robertson and others in public broadcasting. Materials are arranged by media type, then

chronologically within each type.

BOX INVENTORY

SERIES 1: PUBLIC BROADCASTING ORAL HISTORY PROJECT SUBSERIES 1: FINAL INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

Box	Folder	
1	1	Gerard (Jerry) Appy, 1981
	2	George Arms, April 13, 1982
	3	James Armsey, June 19, 1981
	4	Roy Barthold, March 11, 1981
	5	Robert J. Blakely, June 25, 1981
	6	Frederick Breitenfeld Jr., October 14, 1981
	7	Gertrude Broderick, January 26, 1982
	8	Elizabeth Campbell, January 25, 1982
	9	Everett Case, September 26, 1981
	10	Henry J. Cauthen Jr., August 20, 1982
	11	Kenneth Christiansen, January 28, 1981
	12	Marcus Cohn, March 31, 1982
	13	Norman Cousins, April 17, 1981
	14	John C. Crabbe, June 1, 1981
	15	David Davis, October 8, 1981
	16	James Day, October 8, 1981
	17	Lee A. DuBridge, April 14, 1981
	18	Keith Engar, May 25, 1981
	19	C. Scott Fletcher, January 1981, 1982
	20	Lee Frischknecht, March 21, 1981
	21	Martha Gable, October 12, 1981
2	1	Hyman Goldin, September 11, 1981
	2	G.H. (Bill) Griffiths, April 21, 1981
	3	Hartford N. Gunn, April 7, 1981
	4	William Harley, January 27, 1982
	5	Robert Hudson, January 26, 1982
	6	Richard B. Hull, November 20-21, 1979
	7	Arthur Hungerford, September 3, 1981
	8	Armand Hunter, June 2, 1981
	9	Raymond Hurlbert, March 4, 1981
	10	Rosel Hyde, January 28, 1982
	11	James R. Killian Jr., September 11, 1981
	12	James L. Loper, April 13, 1981
	13	James Macandrew, October 2, 1981

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| | 14 | Leonard Marks, March 31, 1982 |
| Box | Folder | |
| 2 | 15 | Chalmers Marquis, March 31, 1982 |
| | 16 | Jack McBride, June 10, 1981 |
| | 17 | William (Bill) McCarter, June 24, 1981 |
| | 18 | H.B. (Mac) McCarty, June 29, 1981 |
| | 19 | Newton Minow, June 17, 1981 |
| | 20 | Stanley Neustadt, January 28, 1982 |
| 3 | 1 | Morris S. Novik, October 7, 1981 |
| | 2 | Kenneth Oberholtzer, April 30, 1981 |
| | 3 | Jonathan Rice, April 27, 1981 |
| | 4 | James Robertson, October 23, 1982 |
| | 5 | Frank Schooley, June 22, 1981 |
| | 6 | Rhea Sikes, August 3, 1981 |
| | 7 | Harry J. Skornia, October 22, 1982 |
| | 8 | Ralph Steetle, May 8, 1981 |
| | 9 | Loren Stone, March 30, 1981 |
| | 10 | Donald Taverner, September 17, 1981 |
| | 11 | John W. Taylor, June 16, 1981 |
| | 12 | I. Keith Tyler, August 21, 1981 |
| | 13 | Parker Wheatley, August 13, 1981 |
| | 14 | John F. White, September 30, 1981 |
| | 15 | Raymond Wittcoff, August 13, 1981 |

SUBSERIES 2: BACKGROUND MATERIAL

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|---|----|---|
| 4 | 1 | Gerard (Jerry) Appy, February 1981-July 1982 |
| | 2 | George Arms, August 1981-March 1983 |
| | 3 | James W. Armsey, October 1980-January 1984 |
| | 4 | Roy Barthold, October 1980-December 1982 |
| | 5 | Robert Blakely, March 1979-December 1982 |
| | 6 | Frederick Breitenfeld Jr., November 1980-October 1981 |
| | 7 | Gertrude Broderick, October 1980-April 1982 |
| | 8 | Elizabeth Campbell, March 1961-December 1982 |
| | 9 | Everett Case, February 1981-September 1981 |
| | 10 | Henry Cauthen, July 1958-August 1982 |
| | 11 | Ken Christiansen, December 1980-September 1982 |
| | 12 | Marcus Cohn, February 1981-March 1982 |
| | 13 | Norman Cousins, June 1980-April 1981 |
| | 14 | John Crabbe, November 1980-January 1983 |
| | 15 | David M. Davis, November 1980-October 1981 |

Box	Folder	
5	1	James Day, November 1980-October 1981
	2	Lee DuBridge, October 1980-April 1981
	3	Keith Engar, October 1980-May 1981
	4	C. Scott Fletcher, May 1974-January 1984
	5	Lee Frischknecht, February 1981-March 1981
	6	Martha Gable, February 1981-January 1983
	7	Hyman Goldin, April 1981-September 1981
	8	G.H. (Bill) Griffiths, February 1981-June 1982
	9	Hartford N. Gunn, October 1980-December 1982
	10	William G. Harley, September 1980-March 1983
	11	Robert B. Hudson, October 1980-January 1982
	12	Richard B. Hull, October 1979-December 1982
6	1	Arthur Hungerford, October 1980-November 1982
	2	Armand Hunter, October 1980-December 1982
	3	Raymond Hurlbert, October 1980-December 1982
	4	Rosel H. Hyde, November 1980-January 1982
	5	James R. Killian Jr., October 1980-December 1982
	6	James Loper, February 1981-January 1983
	7	James F. Macandrew, October 1980-October 1981
	8	Leonard Marks, November 1980-January 1983
	9	Chalmers Marquis, November 1980-April 1982
	10	Jack McBride, February 1981-June 1981
	11	William J. McCarter, June 1981
	12	H.B. (Mac) McCarty, February 1981-June 1981
	13	Newton N. Minow, October 1980-January 1983
	14	Stanley Neustadt, March 1981-January 1982
	15	Morris S. Novik, April 1956-December 1982
	16	Kenneth E. Oberholtzer, October 1980-August 1982
7	1	Jonathan Rice, March 1981-February 1983
	2	James Robertson, October 1982
	3	Frank Schooley, February 1981-July 1981
	4	Rhea Sikes, August 1981
	5	Harry J. Skornia, July 1947-January 1983
	6	Ralph Steetle, October 1980-October 1982
	7	Loren B. Stone, October 1980-March 1981
	8	Donald V. Taverner, November 1980-September 1981
	9	John Taylor, October 1980-December 1982
	10	I. Keith Tyler, December 1980-December 1982
	11	Parker Wheatley, July 1981-August 1981

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|-----|--------|--|
| | 12 | John F. White, October 1980-January 1983 |
| Box | Folder | |
| 7 | 13 | Raymond H. Wittcoff, October 1980-September 1981 |
| | 14 | Project Proposal, [1979] |

SERIES 2: ROBERTSON ASSOCIATES, INC.

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|---|----|--|
| 8 | 1 | Future Directions for Rhode Island Educational Television, April 1969 |
| | 2 | The Future Role of Regionals (for CPB), February 1970 |
| | 3 | Radio's Role in Instruction (for NER), January 1973 |
| | 4 | Public Radio for South Florida, January 1973 |
| | 5 | Public Radio Policy for Virginia, November 1973 |
| | 6 | Cable Opportunities for the Milwaukee Public Schools, Spring 1974 |
| | 7 | What Next for TV College?, June 1974 |
| | 8 | Article by Robertson - "Can Schools Cope with Cable?" in <u>PTR</u> , February 1975 |
| | 9 | Public Radio in Chicago: What it Ought to Be, June 1975 |
| | 10 | Public Radio in Ohio: What it is Now and What it Might Become, September 1975 |
| | 11 | Feasibility of Public Radio in Nebraska / Engineering Considerations for Nebraska
Public Radio Network, October 1975 |
| | 12 | A Public Television Station for Palm Beach County: Is the Community Ready?,
March 1976 |
| | 13 | Appropriate Sources of Financial Support for Maryland Public Broadcasting,
September 1976 |
| | 14 | Public Radio Possibilities in Kentucky, April 1977 |
| | 15 | University of Mid-America Satellite Use Study / Great Plains National Instructional
Library Satellite Use Study, October 1977 |
| | 16 | Local Station Utilization of PBS Programming, October 1977 |
| 9 | 1 | NAEB TV Managers' Council Slide-Tape Presentation by Robertson Associates, Inc.,
November 1977 |
| | | [1/4 inch audio tape on 7 inch reel] |
| | | Soundtrack for NAEB TV Managers' Council Presentation, November 14, 1977 |
| | | [audio cassette] |
| | | Audio narration for NAEB TV Managers' Council Presentation, [November 14,
1977] |
| | | [see Box 14 for slides] |
| | | Slide program for NAEB TV Managers' Council Presentation, 88 slides, November
14, 1977 |
| | 2 | Article by Robertson - "Look to the Skies" in <u>Community and Junior College Journal</u> ,
March 1978 |
| | 3 | KRMA: Its Present Status, Its Future Potential, March 1978 |

Box	Folder	
9	4	Improving Public Television Services to the People of Indiana, October 1978
	5	Public Broadcasting in Illinois (volume one), 1979
	6	Public Broadcasting in Illinois (volume two), 1979
	7	Systemwide Review of Broadcast Educational Programs in the State University System of Florida, April 1980
	8	KTWU Topeka, December 1980
10	1	Planning for the Eighties: Public Broadcasting in Oklahoma, 1980-81

SERIES 3: NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL RADIO

2	National Educational Radio (1), October 1970-December 1972
3	National Educational Radio (2), January 1973-October 1973
4	Robertson-Yokom Station Visits, July 1971-October 1972

SERIES 4: PUBLIC BROADCASTING

5	"South Carolina Educational Television's 15th Anniversary", 1973
6	Newspaper Clippings, 1974-75, n.d.
7	Joseph Hughes, 1977-1980
8	CPB/PBS, 1978, n.d.
9	"Summary of 1969" - Carnegie Commission FOIA Request, 1979

SERIES 5: AUDIO-VISUAL MATERIALS

11	[1/4 inch audio tapes on 7 inch reels]
	-Five Minute History of Public Broadcasting; narration for slide presentation at NAEB banquet; 5:25; November 2, 1969
	NER Audio Visit Number Two; communication with member radio stations via audio tape, similiar to a closed circuit, concerning member stations' interests and services; 31:20; [1971]
	Morning Session of Indiana Association of School Broadcasters Meeting in Indianapolis; including Robertson's report on the status of public radio stations nationally at the time; November 5, 1971
	NER Drive-In Conference; Robertson's noon address; about 35 minutes; April 21, 1972
	Typical NER Station Visit; on-air interview, Grand Forks, N.D.; [1970-73]

Box

- 11 [1/4 inch audio tapes on 5 inch reels]
NER Audio Visit Number One; [1971]
NER Audio Visit Number Three; about 14 minutes; September 9, 1971
National Public Radio (NPR) Closed Circuit to Member Stations; with CPB president John Macy, and CPB radio director Al Hulsen; October 12, 1971
NER Business Meeting and 1971 NAEB Convention; at Miami Beach, chairman Dick Estell; October 18, 1971
Burt Harrison; NER board member from KWSC-FM in Pullman, WA describes his station at Public Radio Conference; about 15 minutes; 1972
Closed Circuit Conference Call Concerning New Public Radio Organization; May 19, 1973
- 12 [1/2 inch videotape cassette]
Interview of Robertson during visit to "Convocom" with George Hall; Springfield, IL; 20:19; April 1979
- 13 [audio cassettes]
Public Radio; three-way on-air discussion over WAMU-FM, Washington; Participants: Don Quayle, president of NPR; Al Hulsen, director of radio for CPB; Lawrence Laurent, columnist for the Washington Post; and Jim Robertson, director of NER/NAEB; April 1971
Highlights from NAEB Staff Meeting; June 16, 1972
NER Board of Directors' Meeting, Las Vegas (1); 1972
NER Board of Directors' Meeting, Las Vegas (2); 1972
NER Board of Directors' Meeting (1); May 20, 1973
NER Board of Directors' Meeting (2); May 20, 1973
NER Instructional Task Force Meeting (1); at Marina del Rey; November 23 [year unknown, but assumed to be 1970-1973]
NER Instructional Task Force Meeting (2); November 23 [1970-73]
Robertson Talk at Forum 76, University of Mid-America Third National Conference on Open Learning and Nontraditional Study; [1976]
Oklahoma Interview Excerpts; segments from interviews of individuals throughout Oklahoma as basis for study conducted by Robertson for Oklahoma ETV Authority; 30:25; 1980
Robertson Talk on Teleconferencing; at 1980 NAEB convention in Las Vegas; October 28, 1980

Box

13

Off-the-air audio tape during PBS broadcast of "Washington Week in Review"; including quotes from Sylvester L. "Pat" Weaver, former president of NBC Television, and Grant Tinker, TV program executive; April 24, 1989

Off-the-air audio tape during PBS broadcast of "Television", produced by Michael Winship; including quotes from interviews with John F. White, president of NET (predecessor of PBS), Joan Ganz Cooney, originator of Children's Television Workshop, Bill Moyers, and others; n.d.

SERIES 2: ROBERTSON ASSOCIATES, INC. (CONTINUED)

14

[slides] - see Box 9 for additional presentation materials

Slide Program for NAEB TV Managers' Council Presentation, 88 slides, November 14, 1977