

# Veteran KTVU News Reporter Bob MacKenzie Dies



Legendary Bay Area newsman **Bob MacKenzie**, whose masterful storytelling was a hallmark of KTVU newscasts for more than 30 years, lost his long battle with cancer on Thursday, September 22. He was 75.

MacKenzie joined KTVU Channel 2 News in 1978 as a feature reporter for The Ten o'Clock News and ultimately was instrumental in the development of KTVU's popular *Segment 2* and *My 20th Century* franchises, which gave MacKenzie the perfect forum for his inimitable style.

"When Bob told his stories, you felt like you were on the edge of your seat. He was one of a kind," said **Tom Raponi**, KTVU Vice President and General Manager.

"For more than 30 years, Bob's stories graced KTVU's newscasts and stood out like gems," added KTVU news director **Ed Chapuis**. "His writing was witty and masterful. His expert use of words, paired with natural sound and moving images, evoked a sense of great artistry as much as great journalism."

MacKenzie was a graduate of UC Berkeley with a B.A. in Journalism. Shortly after graduating in 1962, he spent a year as editor of the *Seaside News Sentinel* in Monterey County. He returned to his Bay Area roots when he joined the staff at The *Oakland Tribune*, where he worked for 14 years, including a long stint as the paper's television columnist.

For 12 years, MacKenzie also served as *TV Guide's* television critic, succeeding **Cleveland Amory**. He wrote a monthly column for *New Choices* — a *Reader's Digest* publication with 600,000 readers — in addition to writing for the *Columbia Journalism Review* and several *Time-Life* magazines. He also contributed to the *Time-Life* book *The Great Cities: San Francisco*.

"I had a chance to work with Bob for several years and he is hands down one of the best writers and best story tellers I've ever seen," remembered KTVU anchor **Frank Somerville**. "Bob was able to see things that other people didn't notice and then bring them out in his story. Every time I'd watch one of his pieces I'd always think 'How did he come up with that line?'"

"He had a way of pulling people in and getting them to care about his reports, even if it was a subject they weren't interested in," continued Somerville. "Bob was a special person and an extraordinary reporter. I really enjoyed working with him and learning from him."

While MacKenzie may be best remembered for his feature reporting, he was equally adept at working hard-news. He notably covered a civil war in Haiti, delved into the mind of a nurse serial killer with his *Angel of Death* documentary and delivered an award-winning investigative series on the conditions at Agnew State Mental Hospital.

He was the recipient of 13 local Emmy® awards, a National Headliners award and numerous other professional honors, including induction into the NATAS (National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences) *Silver Circle* in 1996. He also received the Society of Professional Journalists Career Achievement Award in 2005 and the NorCal RTNDA Lifetime Achievement Award in 2008.

"Bob was one of a kind. I always marveled at how easily he could craft a sentence or tell a story, especially with humor," said fellow KTVU reporter **Rita Williams**. "He could take the simplest of subjects and make them memorable. He transitioned to hard news with equal ease, but with his mischievous smile, I was always waiting for the punch line."

"Bob was just what you saw on TV. He loved life to the fullest — fishing, dancing, and spinning a yarn," remembered Williams. "He is part of what made Channel 2 news great and distinctive. Not just another pretty face, but a man who shared his wisdom and creativity with all our viewers. He will be dearly missed but will live on in his lovely stories."

Bob MacKenzie retired officially in 2006 but continued to file stories.

He is survived by his wife, **Miyuki**, of Antioch; his daughter, **Dana** of San Anselmo; his brother, Chief KTVU Photographer **John MacKenzie** of Alameda; and two grandchildren.

Memorial services will be held at a later date "with jokes and ice cream, as he wanted," John MacKenzie said.