



Jim Joy

Video Editor Extraordinaire



Class of '07

Silver Circle Profile By:
Kevin Wing



For nearly 40 years — from the mid-1960s to just a few years ago — Bay Area television viewers never had any idea of the monumental impact **Jim Joy** had on their experience of watching the local nightly news.

After all, it was Joy, who spent all of his years in local television news behind the scenes as a film editor, tape editor and video editor, who had the rare gift of combining the talents of the reporters and photographers he worked with into a marriage of television news synergy through his editing talents. Unfortunately, that doesn't happen every day at every station, anywhere. But, it happened whenever Joy was around, starting at KRON in 1965.

The multi-Emmy® Award-winning Joy — 20 golden statuettes through the years — has seen and done it all. Joy, inducted into the Class of 2007 of the Silver Circle of the NATAS San Francisco/Northern California Chapter, credits his fascination with going to the movies as a young boy with putting him on the track to eventually become one of the Bay Area's best-known, cherished television editors ever.

After the Air Force, Joy decided he wanted to live in San Francisco, eventually landing a job in advertising. Soon after, Joy continued to learn everything he could about film, eventually learning how to splice. He made short movies. His early experience got him a film editing job at KRON, in 1965.

"I didn't set out to be an editor," Joy says. "But, I became an editor for my love of the movies, and being behind the scenes to show movies to an audience. I was always thinking of the audience and what they were perceiving with what I was showing."

Joy spent two years at KRON before leaving to join KTVU in 1967, where he remained until 1969. That year, following his love for the cinema, Joy became a business partner and leased the Lorenzo Theater in San Lorenzo. He was also the chief projectionist.

In 1972, local television came calling again, and Joy returned to where he first began seven years before, at KRON. For the next 34 years, Joy would churn out the kinds of news stories and documentaries that the other stations would only sometimes match.

"Jim was just one of the treasures of Channel 4," says friend and former KRON reporter, **Greg Lyon**. "Jim is a magician with pictures and film. I really loved working with him. We reporters used to fight over Jim, especially on long-form projects and documentaries. He was the best."

Back in 1965, when Joy was with KRON the first time around, technology was still some years off, and the editing of film at that time would probably make many heads spin today.

"I was editing images in which the whites were black, and the blacks were white. We also had to hand crank the film to approximate the speed," Joy explains. "It was very difficult. Once on air, the polarity would be electronically reversed."

Joy had a lot to learn at the time, but says there was one thing he learned about the business of television.

"You can learn a lot, but there has to be a basic intuition about it," he says. "It's something you're born with. Without it, well, I wouldn't have lasted as long as I did."

With the advent of technology through the years — from film and 3/4" tape to Beta and finally digital — Joy realized early on how important sound is. "It's just not the pictures," he says. "Sound is so important to what a viewer sees. It can add more dimension to a picture. When sound and pictures came along in the late 1920s, how nice it must've been for people to see and hear the movies."

Through his years at KRON, Joy's work consisted mostly of daily news stories, big stories (the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake came to Joy's mind) and a few documentaries here and there. "Late-breaking news was never a turn-on for me," he says. "Rush rush. Tight deadlines. That was never for me. But, I

continued on page 7



continued from page 6

love doing documentaries. I love doing feature stuff. I was never happier as an editor when I had a script to go along with the video."

Joy cannot stress enough about the importance of sound in video.

"I really liked working with sound. I used sound a lot. Some editors don't get that. They think editing is all about the pictures," Joy says. "The ears are a very critical instrument. You have to satisfy the ear to make the video appear real. Just an ambience under a picture makes it seem real."

One of those documentaries that Joy loved to do at KRON had such a marriage of sound, pictures and words that it won a Peabody Award. Called *I Want to Go Home*, the one-hour documentary spotlighted homeless mothers without prenatal care. **Sylvia Chase** narrated the show, **Jon Dann** was the producer and writer and **Craig Franklin** was the photographer.

"Jim's skill is legendary," says Franklin, a longtime KRON photographer who is now at KPIX. "I worked with Jim my whole career, until he retired. His retirement (in 2005) was a blow to reporters, photographers and producers everywhere. Those reporters, photographers and producers would stand in line, falsify schedules, puncture each others' tires, whatever it took to schedule time in Jim's edit bay."

As for his years at KRON, Joy "got to do it all. I was blessed to learn from great people. And to be appreciated. As an editor, I got a lot of appreciation that most editors don't get. What a blessed career I had."

In 2005, after nearly four decades in the business, Joy decided it was time to retire. Since then, he's come out of retirement to work on two projects. One is called *Saving the Bay*, a four-part KOED series produced by **Ron Blatman** on the history of San Francisco Bay. The other documentary was *An Enduring Tradition*, telling the history of Stuart Hall School, an all-boys school on the occasion of its 50th anniversary. That's a project Joy worked on with **Emerald Yeh**, his friend and the former longtime anchor and reporter at KRON.

"Jim is a genuine human being," says Yeh, who spent nearly 20 years at KRON, from 1984 to 2004. "He cares about everything. He's one of the nicest

people in the business. Jim had such a huge reputation at KRON. With everyone loving his work, he never had a big ego. That's what I love about him. He's an incredible editor, and an incredible human being."

At 73, Joy enjoys retirement. He lives in a neighborhood along the San Francisco waterfront, and makes a point to do his crossword puzzles every morning. Joy also gets together with friends and, yes, he regularly enjoys a trip to the theater to see a movie.

But, four years after leaving the business behind, the accolades continue to roll in.

"I can't count how many times Jim made bad material airable, mediocre material good, and good material great, for myself and for others," Franklin says. "He's the Fred Astaire of editing."

"Jim's a good friend to me," Lyon adds. "I am really grateful to have had a chance to work with him all those years, and I'm really grateful to know him as a friend."



Gold & Silver Circle Induction Luncheon

SATURDAY
OCTOBER 24, 2009
Hilton Hotel ~ San Francisco
Financial District

The Gold & Silver Circle
Class of 2009 will be announced soon.
Mark your calendar now!
Plan to attend the annual Induction Luncheon
in honor of your distinguished colleagues.