



Smithsonian Institution

National Museum of African American History and Culture

Delegate Magazine 1971

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[[image - black & white photograph of Artis Hall holding a large camera]]

[[caption]] Artis Hall has been a Newsreel photographer with WCAU-TV since March, 1969. A native of North Carolina, Artis came to the station following ten years with Temple University; two years in the X-Ray Department and eight years as a university photographer. A high school graduate with two years of special courses in commercial still photography, Artis attended the Philadelphia College of Art's two-year course in motion picture photography from 1965 to 1967. Artis is 33-years-old and lives in Phila. [[/caption]]

[[image - black & white photograph of Bill Wilkerson holding a microphone]]

[[caption]] Bill Wilkerson is News Editor-Reporter at KMOX-AM and FM Radio. A graduate of Southern Illinois University, he joined KMOX Radio in September, 1969, as a member of the news-writing staff. Before joining KMOX Radio, Bill was employed by Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville, in the News Services Department and by the Breckenridge Job Corps. He wrote a documentary on the history of Southern Illinois University, which was broadcast on KMOX Radio; and as a free-lance writer, his features have appeared in Dodge Magazine, Kansas City Star and other prominent publications. He lives in Ferguson, Missouri. [[/caption]]

There has been a growing concern among minorities, particularly Blacks, with respect to equal employment opportunities at all levels in the Broadcast industry. This concern has extended itself in the area of programming as well. While there has been much improvement in the industry as a whole - some of it brought about because of challenges to renewal applications, one major network stands out among other networks and independent stations for its age-old policy of fair employment practices - The Columbia Broadcasting System.

The Columbia Broadcasting System's radio network, as far back as 1929, was telling the nation about minority capabilities in a series called NEGRO ACHIEVEMENT HOUR. Columbia Records in the 1920's and 1930's pioneered in Black music, not only by presenting such notable performers as Bessie Smith, Robert Jackson, Duke Ellington, and Louis Armstrong, but also by sending portable recording equipment out into the field to discover and record Black songs and singers. The Archives series has reissued a history of Black music. Columbia Records' leadership has been consistent in this field from Bessie Smith and Mahalia Jackson to Thelonious Monk and Miles Davis.

The CBS Television Network, when it was just starting, presented network television's first integrated variety show, TOAST OF THE TOWN (now THE ED SULLIVAN SHOW).

From the earliest days CBS has operated on the principle that discrimination will not be tolerated in its organization or in any of the enterprises operated by it. This policy was put in force during the Company's formative years. More than a generation ago, CBS concluded that more aggressive action was required. It began actively to recruit minority employees. It advertised in minority publications - and still does - sought the help of minority organizations, minority business



and professional men, urged all levels of management to seek out and hire minority employees.

Although these efforts met with some success in office and clerical areas, the numbers were disappointing in executive, professional and craft positions. Yes, there were some exceptions, such as broadcasting's first Black staff announcer and network television's first Black graphic arts director. But, in general, CBS encountered great difficulty in finding minority applicants who could fulfill its normal requirements for advanced positions.

Even so by 1963 CBS's minority employment percentages were ahead of industry averages.

Not resting on its laurels, in 1969, Dr. Frank Stanton, President of the Columbia Broadcasting System, in a memorandum dated September 26, 1969, to "Officers and Department Heads of CBS, Groups, Division and Subsidiaries" on the subject of minority employment, once again reminded his top staff that "CBS policy is to afford equal opportunity to all, to discriminate against none, to pursue the spirit as well as the letter of the profound objectives embodied in the Civil Rights Act of 1964."

It engaged the full-time services of a Black, Morris DeLisser, as staff executive for minorities, charged with the responsibility of recruiting Black and other minorities.

The CBS Foundation has joined with the Ford Foundation and NBC in sponsoring this year's Summer Training Program for Minorities at the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism. This will be available to all radio and television stations in the country. The CBS Foundation commitment to this program to train Black and other minority broadcast journalists is \$90,500.

CBS seeks employees from potential source - through the National Urban League, Black colleges, employee referrals and many private and public organizations.

In 1967, WBBM-TV, the CBS-owned television station in Chicago, created and developed OPPORTUNITY LINE, a job-finding series which was adopted subsequently as a broadcast service not only by all five CBS-owned television stations but also by more than 60 other stations to which the Chicago format and methodology have been freely supplied.

Aimed at the heart of problems confronting minorities

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