



JAYE ALBRIGHT

Success Never Rests



With childhood DJ heroes like Cottonseed Clark, Johnny Kay and Hugh Downs, Jaye Albright's love for radio stretches back almost as far as she can remember. A perpetual student of the game, Albright parlayed her passion into prominence – first as a personality, then as a programmer and finally as one of America's pre-eminent consultants. Jaye's earned numerous awards and deserves credit for countless success stories. Her decision to pursue gender reassignment a decade ago was met with widespread industry support, and she is regarded as one of the top minds and mentors in radio.

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I always wanted to be a disc jockey. Our local radio/TV repairman filed a license for an FM before anybody listened to it and built a station in my hometown of Salem, Ohio. The night guy made a deal that if I babysat for his kids, he'd let me run the board, cue up records and segue them. At 12, I built a phono-oscillator transmitter in our garage, got two Silvertone turntables from Allied Radio, bought microphones and equipment and ran a little

During the Vietnam War, I was in the Air Force working at Armed Forces Network in Thailand. When you get out of the service, they give you enough money to go back where you enlisted. For me that was Cleveland, but I was discharged in San Francisco. I got \$800, and I thought, "I could use this money to drive back to Ohio or I could stay out here and spend \$800!" So I worked in Berkeley, then Anaheim, Las Vegas and then got my first PD

what my mother would say to me when I was young. It's that good old Midwestern work ethic, and I love to put everything I've got into what I'm doing. I don't know that I've ever been one to compete to beat somebody or to win; that's not what it's about for me. In radio, no one dies. The only one who either wins or loses is the listener, so it's my kind of competition. Because the better we all are, the better radio does.

was a full Class C and went with Country before someone else could. So Bob started an "aluminum drive," telling listeners, "We don't have a lot of money because we're a brand-new station. We're working really hard to improve our tower, and we need everybody to donate aluminum to help us to make it more powerful." People donated a lot of aluminum, and the culmination was to turn on the high power and say, "Listen *now*, because

“CONSULTING IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO DO A LOT OF TEACHING AND MENTORING, AND IT'S WONDERFUL.”

radio station that broadcast around the neighborhood playing Top 40 music in the '50s. All the kids worked for me and were my staff. I'm sure there are kids today playing with the Internet in just the same way we did with radio at the time.

job at KHOS/Tucson. It was my first experience in Country and I loved it.

"Good, better, best. Never let it rest. When your good is better, make your better best." That's

I owe my opportunity to be a consultant to Larry Daniels, who was our National PD when I was PD and doing mornings at KUZZ/Bakersfield. Later, while I was programming KEEN/San Jose, Drake-Chenault was looking to hire a consultant in Los Angeles and was recruiting Larry really hard. But Larry mentioned my name as someone they should talk to, and I got the job. I stayed late every night, reading the files and letters to clients and market analyses by all these great people that had been in the company over the years, and I learned a lot. I don't know that I ever chose to be a consultant, but once I started doing it I loved it. In college I was planning to be an English teacher as a backup plan, and there was a part of me that wanted to be a teacher even when I was going into radio. Consulting is an opportunity to do a lot of teaching and mentoring, and it's wonderful. I've always found that in sharing information, it flows back and you learn more than what you gave away. It's a little bit like love in that sense.

you've made us even stronger and better. Thanks for your help!"

When I was PD at KMPS/Seattle in the early '80s, one of my dearest friends, Lee Rogers [now a client at KUPL/Portland], was PD at crosstown Country KRPM. These were the days before monitored playlists, and Lee used to go through our trash at night at KMPS to try to find our music logs. Of course, I never let that stuff get to me, but I admit that we would occasionally put things in there, so if he was reacting to what he found in our dumpster, he was probably reacting to the wrong music.

Between Tucson and Bakersfield in the mid-'70s, I actually went to the University of Arizona as a woman for a semester and was considering sex-change surgery then. On one hand I regret that I didn't go ahead, but I got scared then because those were different times. I couldn't find a job and finally gave up, and that's when I went back. Just a week later I got hired at KUZZ, so it was sort of like God telling me, "You *could* do that if you want, or here's this really great job for you." So life kept kind of telling me, "You want to be normal, you want to be like everyone else."

You're not born with a card that tells you "Here's your identity." That's what life's about – we figure it out. It took 30 or 40 years of struggling with it and thinking about how I knew I wasn't like everyone else, but wanted to be like everyone else. Maybe I worked extra hard because there was this element of shame inside that if anybody found out what was going on inside my head it could ruin me. [Finally making the change] empowered me a lot.

Going into the Hall of Fame, I start thinking about all the people who have impacted me and whose shoulders I'm standing on. Maybe because Country wasn't as big a format when they were in the business, there was no such thing like this for them. But all these people live on in my memory, and I hope they're in a Hall of Fame somewhere because they sure are in mine. **CAC**



It All Runs In Cycles: KHOS/Tucson's Dan Gates and Jay Albright, KNIX PD Larry Daniels and morning personality W. Steven Martin (l-r) put the pedal to the metal as they near the Phoenix Zoo finish line after biking to kick off the American Cancer Society annual fund drive across Arizona.

Soldier On: Witnessed by WCUE/Akron Traffic Reporter Chick Watkins (in chopper), here's Albright (l) in 1965 enlisting in the U.S. Air Force to join American Forces Thailand Network for two tours in Southeast Asia as an air personality, member of the Network's news department and ultimately unit historian.



My dad was paymaster and treasurer for a manufacturing company in Salem, and was an impressive, organized numbers guy – very much a student of life. When he was 39, he suffered a stroke that pretty much left him paralyzed and bedridden. But he worked his butt off trying hard to regain his faculties as much as he could. He was one of those people who'd say, "I know what is needed to recover from one of these, and I'm going to work hard and do it." That incredible self-discipline – having to do a lot of physical and mental rehabilitation and relearn a lot of things – had a big impact on me.

One of my favorite turnaround clients was WBOB/Minneapolis, where we used the phrase, "Turn your knob to Bob." The station was named after the PD, Bob Wood, who is a crazy, unconventional programmer. When we were first getting ready to sign on, "BOB" wasn't going to have a great signal, but we decided not to wait until it