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College Radio Days: 70 Years of Student Broadcasting at Dartmouth College

First Book to Explore Remarkable History of College Radio

One of the more influential yet least explored segments of U.S. media is college radio, a medium that has been in existence for more than 90 years and provided a training ground for hundreds of thousands of students in the fine arts of leading and communicating. *College Radio Days: 70 Years of Student Broadcasting at Dartmouth College* by Tim Brooks (Glenville Press, 2013, \$24.95) explores this field through the prism of one institution, whose stations span virtually the entire history of the medium from experimental AM broadcasting in the 1920s to FM and Internet distribution today.

College Radio Days opens with an overview of the history of college radio in the U.S., followed by an in-depth history of the stations at Dartmouth. These grew out of experiments by the radio club in the 1910s, which initially culminated with an AM broadcast station that operated for about a year in 1924-25—until it was abruptly shut down after a scandal in which the president of the College was introduced to give an speech, only to have an engineer throw a switch the wrong way and send a stream of curses from the control room out over the air.

Dartmouth was back in 1941 as part of the first wave of college stations to adopt carrier current broadcasting, which used the institution's wiring system to distribute a signal limited to the campus. In 1958 this was changed to a full power AM signal covering the surrounding region, supplemented in 1976 by an FM station, and in 2006 by an Internet feed that can be heard worldwide. Thousands of students helped run these stations, mostly on their own, with no professionals in charge. Among the notable graduates have been New York radio personality John A. Gambling, Hollywood producer/writer/actor Buck Henry (*Get Smart*), production executive Herb Solow (*Star Trek, Mission: Impossible*), CBS-TV president James Rosenfield, CNN president Reese Schonfeld, BBC personality Paul Gambaccini, U.S. Secretary of Labor Robert Reich, California Attorney General and gubernatorial candidate John Van de Kamp, major league baseball manager Sandy Alderson, Pulitzer Prize winning author David K. Shipler, and acclaimed

documentary producer Don Hyatt (*Project Twenty*). Far from being a “radio school,” the stations prepared students for a wide variety of professions, by giving them genuine responsibility at a young age.

The book portrays how successive waves of students, who were just learning how to lead, communicate, and run a business, navigated massive changes in technology, fierce opposition from local commercial broadcasters, faculty who wanted to “take over,” war protesters of the 1960s, demands from women and minorities, and pressure from right and left wing groups seeking to use the station’s powerful voice to advance their own agendas. It also includes a description of the station’s extraordinary news operation, which interviewed scores of national leaders who came to campaign in the New Hampshire presidential primary, and a listing of more than 700 student leaders over the years with their subsequent professions.

Tim Brooks is a former network television executive, media historian, and onetime staff member at Dartmouth’s WDCR radio.

Note: This book is available from major booksellers, including Amazon.com. It is not sold directly by Glenville Press. ISBN: 978-0615893204