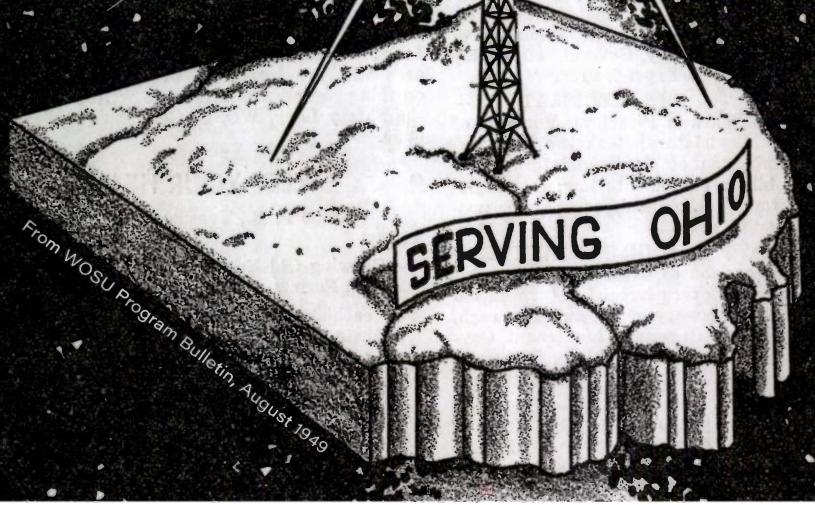
# The second of th



WOSU
Public Media's
distinguished
history of public
service is the
result of many
who believed
in the power of
broadcasting
to educate and
inspire Ohioans.

"Our longevity, expansion and success is thanks to our wonderful donors. And with your ongoing support, we'll continue telling the story of Columbus and Central Ohio as we enter our second century of service."

Ronnie Agnew
Thomas Rieland Endowed
General Manager
WOSU Public Media

# Ta century of service

SERVING OHIV

# wosupublic media A Century of Service

WOSU Public Media's distinguished history of public service is the result of many who believed in the power of broadcasting to educate and inspire Ohioans.

# Foreword Who We Are

Documentary producer Ken Burns once said, "History isn't really about the past. It's about defining the present and who we are."

As public media continues to evolve in its mission, we take this moment to honor those who made a remarkable difference over the past century. We cannot fathom the challenges to the grand experiment in America called "educational" or "public" broadcasting.

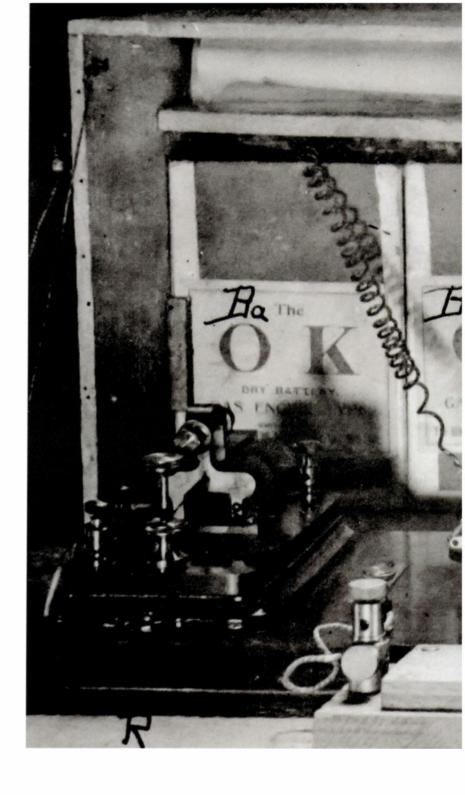
The flame of that service flickered often in those first decades, but never died thanks to the tireless efforts of a handful of mostly land-grant universities, whose broadcast stations extended their mission well beyond the borders of the campus. One of the most important of those was The Ohio State University through stations known today as WOSU Public Media.

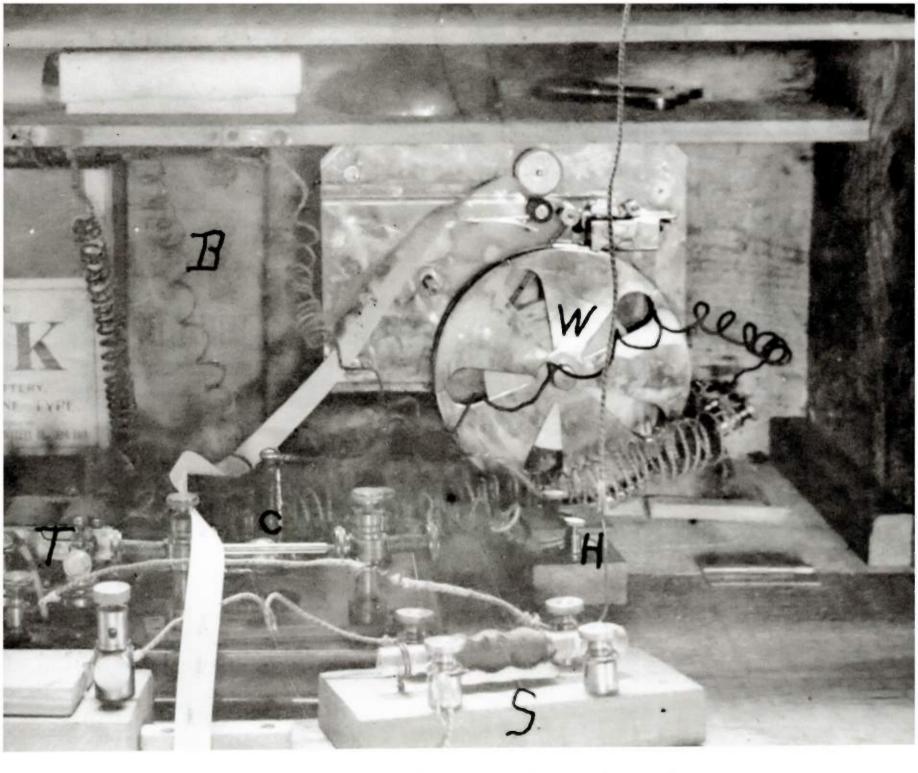
The first president of PBS spoke of these university stations in a 1979 address: "Years ago, a few farsighted people – educators, mostly – saw a potential for using this new technology as a way of reaching people with a service that had been limited by what a textbook and chalkboard could do. Had these pioneers failed to take advantage of the window of opportunity, we would not be here debating the future of the PBS system today. There wouldn't be any system; there wouldn't be any public broadcasting at all."

This book is dedicated to those brilliant leaders of our past who believed there had to be a place for noncommercial broadcasting dedicated to educating and inspiring all people. And to those leaders today and all those who support their efforts. There is no more important time for WOSU Public Media to uniquely serve this community.

#### Tom Rieland

WOSU General Manager 2002–2022 Author of Sparks Flew: WOSU's Century on the Air





#### The Roots of Today's Public Broadcasting System

Though 1922 marked the start of regular radio broadcasts from the Ohio State campus, the groundwork was laid decades before in a small electrical engineering lab. In 1900, OSU engineering student Robert Marriott pioneered the research that helped Ohio State create one of the most powerful wireless stations in the country. Marriott's homemade receiver was able to print a dot when it received a coded signal.



## 1922

# The First Radio Station in Columbus

On April 24, 1922, OSU President William Oxley Thompson announced the premiere of the first radio station in Columbus. WEAO (later WOSU) was just the sixth educational station in America. The OSU station became instantly popular by broadcasting home football games from the new Ohio Stadium and weather and market reports to Ohio's farmers.



WEAO Sports Announcer









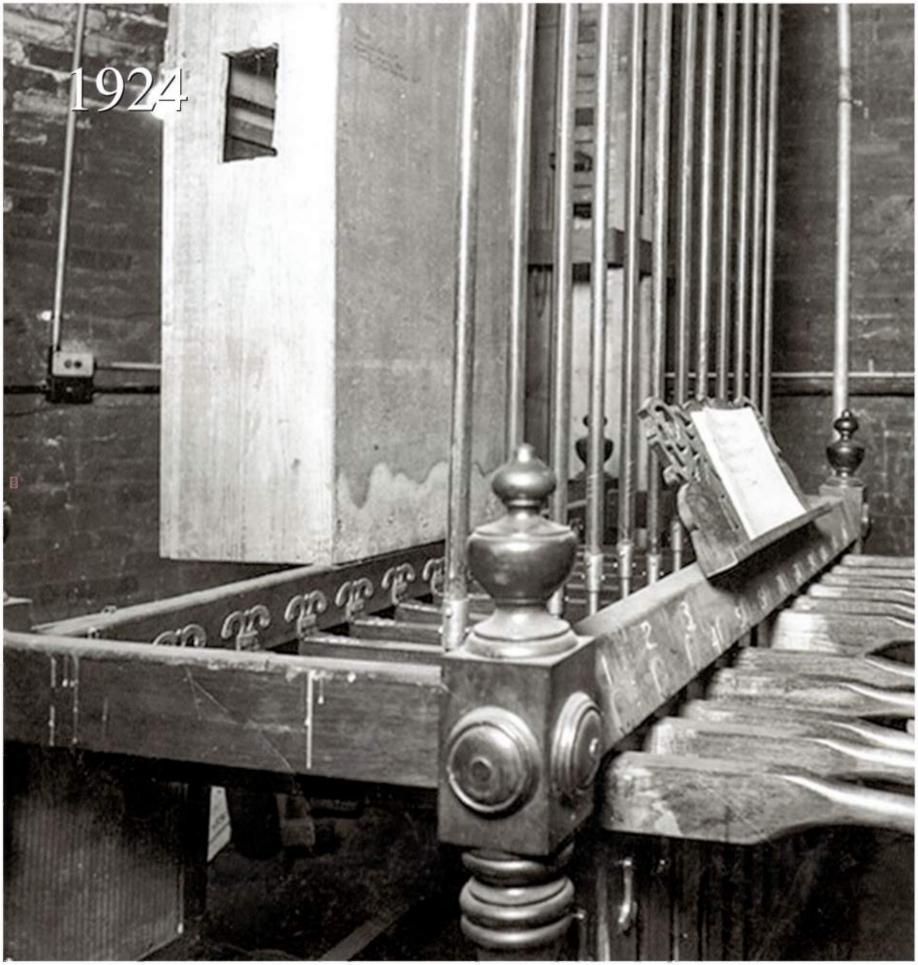




WEAO Radio Program

◆ One of the Few Women's Voices Heard on the Radio in the 1920s

Ann Charles was the station's first full-time employee, with duties as announcer, publicity and program director. She said it was like running a three-ring circus.





#### Ohio State Uses Elaborate Scheme for Announcing Gridiron Contests

Special Studio Gives Vision of Field for Announcing Plays as They Are Made-Nine Microphones Allow Listeners in to Hear Cheering and University Bands

By Alten D. Spencer COLUMBUS, Ohio.—What is believed to be the most claborate arrangement ever made by any broadcasting station for sending out the results of an athletic event are those used at the Ohio Stadium, the largest in the Big Ten football con-ference. Ohio state's broadcasting sta-tion, WEAO, furnishes the power that carry's the sound picture gridiron contests to a host of listeners.

Profiting by the experience of one season of broadcasting home games, attaches of the station have set the stage at the stadium and behind the brick walls of stadum and bening the orice waits of the engineering laboratory, where the plant is located. This gives the maxi-mum of efficiency in giving the running story of the games and snatches of cheer-ing and band music—as complete a picture as can be obtained without being in actual attendance.

Eliminate Relay Announcers

The greatest improvement made in the system is the elimination of relay announcers. This system was discarded partly because of the difficulty of getting dved-in-the-wool football fan away from the game long enough to do the amouncing at the studio. Last year it became necessary once or twice to put one unskilled in "gridiron" phraseology on the line, with uncomplimentary rephraseology

The system employed this fall centers all announcing, cheering, band music and customary sounds of the game in a tiny white booth located in the middle of the west press box at the stadium. It connects directly with the broadcasting sta-

Nine microphones send the audible im-Nine microphones send the audible impressions picked up into a miniature switchboard at the announcer's booth. Eight of these are located in the upper tiers or aprons at the cast and west centers of the stadium. The ninth is for the exclusive use of the announcers. In addition to wires from the "cheering microphones," lines connecting with assistance located the honder of the sistants located at the henches of the rival teams flow into the booth.

Seated at a table just below the plate glass window of the little house, Anglass window of the little house, An-nouncer A. Lee Henderson and Engineer Robert C. Higgy have complete control of the situation. From their window they have a comprehensive view of the game and the happenings in the big horacshoe. What cannot be seen is relayed to them hy the two information scouts camping on the team benches. At the station, located about two blocks away, Operator N. F. McDowell and his assistant, A. M. Rose, handle the intricate transmitting apparatus and the control of sound volume, which is accomplished through an adaptation of certain telephone equip-ment to the needs of Radio.

Ocnect All Incoming Zines

Connect all Incoming Zines

The stadium broadcasting headquarters
an innovation, being simply a small
studio for the announcer. The walls are
padded and draped with studio cloth,
making it as nearly soundproof as it is
possible. All incoming lines connect with a small switchboard designed by Mr Higgy for this purpose. By the pressure of a button, the voice of Announcer Hen-derson comes through without interference. Other switches bring in either or both of the "cheering microphones."

#### Columbus Dispatch, November 14, 1924

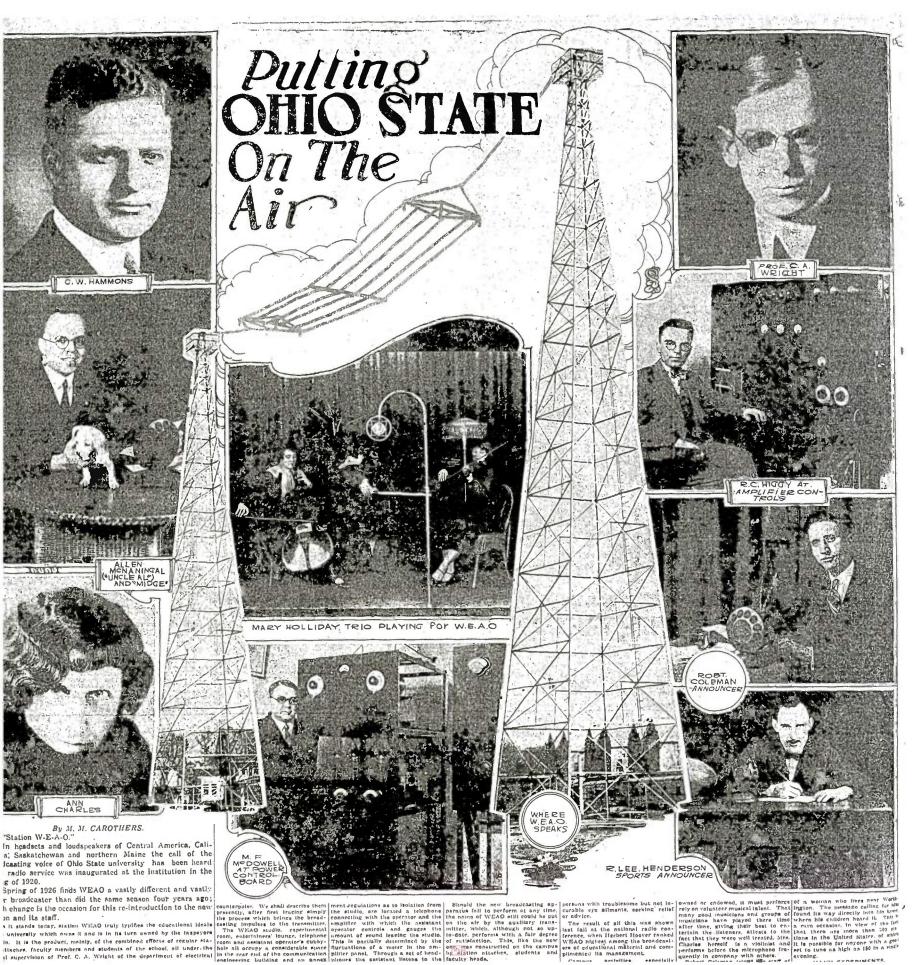
In an innovative arrangement, Buckeye football games started being broadcast with microphones positioned around Ohio Stadium where snatches of cheering and band music helped "capture as complete a picture as can be obtained without being in actual attendance."

The chimes at Orton Hall were broadcast via wires installed from the station and became a popular feature for over two decades. Dr. Allen McManigal would leave the engineering school where he taught to hike up to the chimes and play them every weekday for the station.

## 1926

Aerial shot of the Shoe, from 1926





#### R. C. HIGGY, RADIO GENIUS, RETURNS TO HOME TOWN

Leaves Position as Assistant Editor of QST to Devote His Time to Research Work in Wireless Field and Manufacture of Apparatus- Has Had Great Success.

nue, former maistain editor of QRT, standy timbering with electricity and mantour rudio magazine and who at good study books on the subject of the forement numberiles on annature of the average youth discretes in the country, recently record for the standard of the forement rudio of the country, recently record for the present to the form of the country, recently record for the present to the form of the college correct for the present to

R. C. Iller), 72 East Frambes ave. early youth. As a loy he was con-nue, former maintain editor of QST, stantly thilering with electricity and

sons agrees fill radio attition and intement of reality derived from use of legalized abort waves by officient outflish in transmitting mea-coines arous the ocean, rested much outnest agroup those interested in the reducing aspects of radio. This takes resultly appeared in QST of the theory (light). After delivering his fecture of the low convention, Mr. Higgs expects or exten to Columbia to emission.

Builder of University Station Is Acting Head in Absence of Professor Wright.

> Higgy, who built WEAO n its radio engineer and or, now is acting direchio State university sta. icceeds temporarily Pro. es A. Wright of the de. f electrical engineering. leave of absence be gone

a graduate of 1925, had o installation of the new or WEAO, put into serv. months ago. He person. much of the equipment la said to broadcast more lectures than any other d States.

#### YOUTHFUL COLUMBUS WIRELESS ENTHUSIAST HAS HAD REMARKABLE SUCCESS WITH NEW SCIENCE

Robert C. Higgy, Producer of City's First Wireless Musical Concert, Was Licensed Operator at Nine — Taught Aviation Aviation Students When Only 16.

Columbus Dispatch articles Clockwise starting at top left: March 7, 1920 July 8, 1926 November 29, 1925



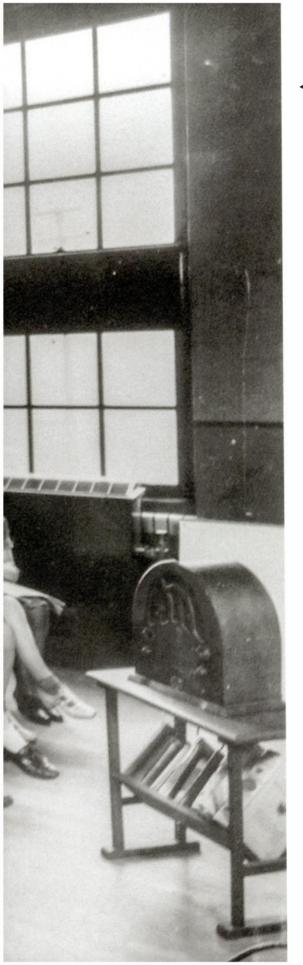
Robert Higgy, one of the youngest and most respected radio engineers in the country, became the station's first full-time director. He would go on to lead the station for thirty years.

#### HIGGY HAS COMPLETE TO EXPLAIN RADIO FOR BEGINNERS



For the edification of new arrivals in the realm of radio, Mr. Higgy, who is rudio engineer and chief operator. of sistion WEAO of the Obio State university, will give a talk on "Elementary Radio" from that broadcaster at 8 o'clock. Wednesday evening. He is one of the real veterans in radio work and experimentation in Columbus, although he is quite a young man. He formerly was editor of QST, the radio amateurs magazine.





# First Radio School Broadened Education During the Great Depression

An early effort to use radio to support public education, the Ohio School of the Air was founded in 1929 by radio headmaster Benjamin Darrow. Broadcast to primary and secondary school students across the Midwest, the first radio school of its kind reached 300,000 students at its peak.

"Education by radio brings the world to the classroom, making available the finest teachers, the greatest leaders and unfolding events which through radio come as a vibrant textbook of the air."

Benjamin Darrow
 Creator of the Ohio
 School of the Air
 on WEAO (later
 WOSU) Radio









An Ohio School of the Air dramatic radio production featuring a variety of sound effects. The man on the left is about to slam a door.

#### ■ The University Players

Made up of faculty and staff, The University Players regularly performed on the radio station.



"There is no color to talent."

Ruby Elzy

Ruby Elzy, who came to OSU as a voice student from Mississippi, debuted on the station. Elzy became a star of network radio, the movies and Broadway in the 1930s. The sweet-voiced soprano performed in over 800 stage performances of the opera *Porgy and Bess.* In 2005, WOSU won statewide honors for a radio documentary tribute to her remarkable life.

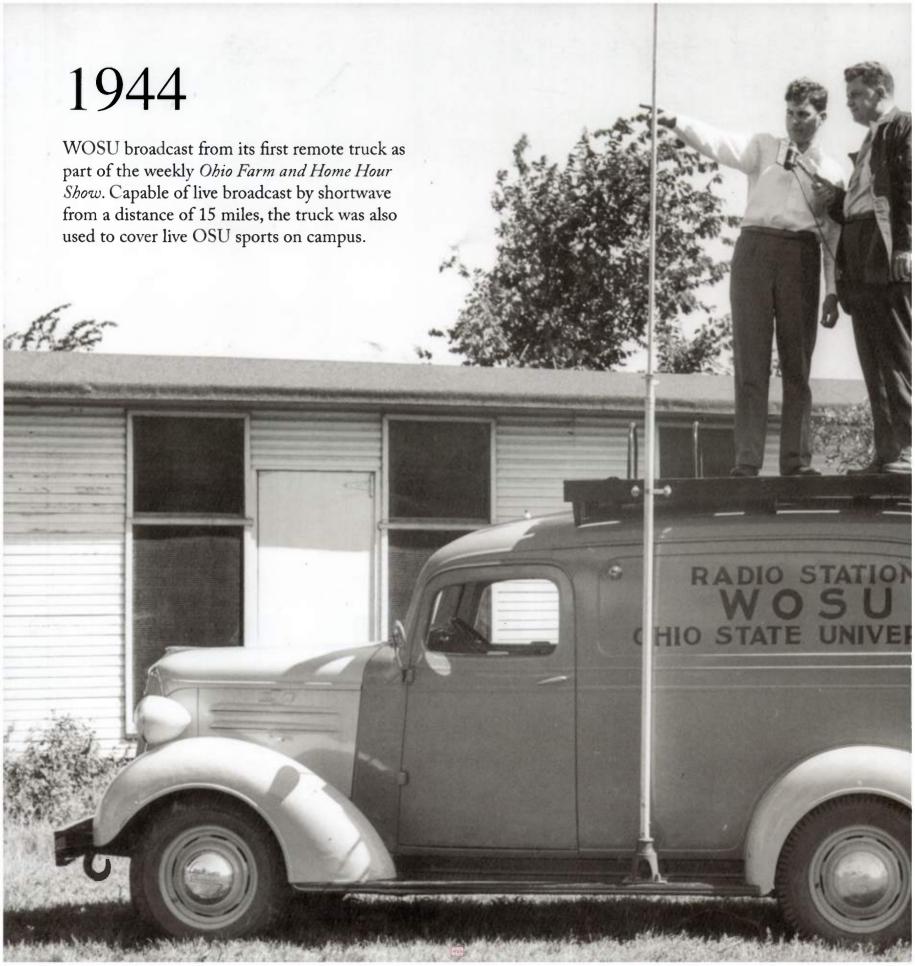
# Ohio State granted new call letters: WOSU



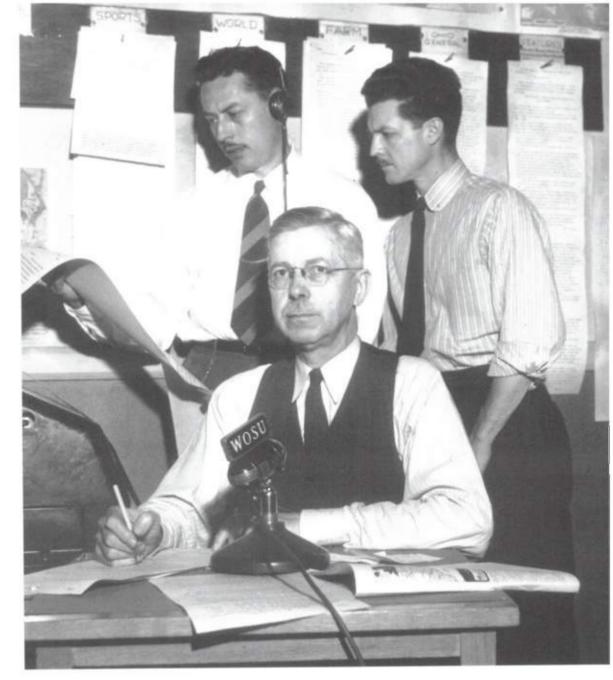


WOSU Radio Program, March 1935









### 1948 Newsroom

The 1940s WOSU newsroom included the national newswire service and small team of part-time news readers. A strong commitment to local news coverage occurred in the mid-1950s when WOSU built a full-time news staff.



#### 1949

On December 13, 1949, WOSU FM signed on at 89.7 FM after WOSU's Higgy and other educational leaders convinced the FCC to set aside radio frequencies for noncommercial radio.



# 1950

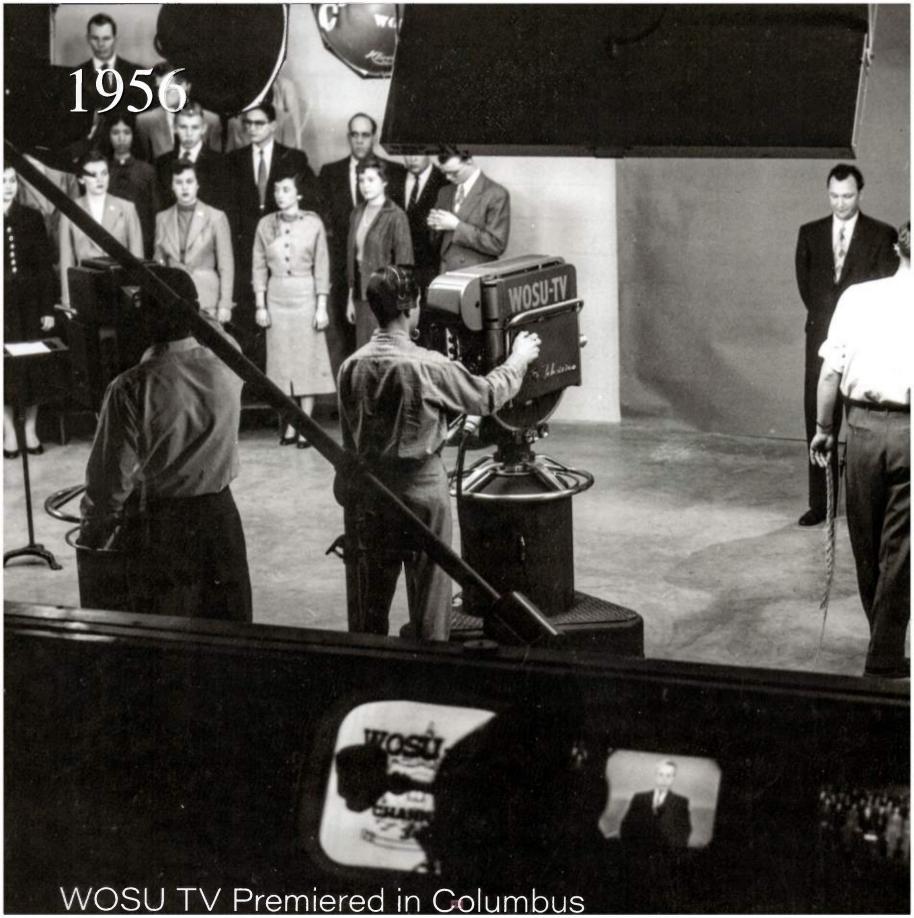
In the Bookstall aired daily for thirty years, bringing books to life for listeners including all of those written by James Thurber, Orwell's 1984, Dr. Zhivago and many others.

#### Ohio State Helped Save Educational Television

Ohio State's I. Keith Tyler organized an intense lobbying effort to convince the FCC to set aside TV channels for educational television. Despite fierce opposition from commercial broadcasters, on April 11, 1952 the FCC set aside 242 channels for educational use. Tyler's leadership and initiative helped save public television.

(Left to right) Ralph Steetle and I. Keith Tyler of the Joint Committee on Educational Television alongside FCC Commissioner Frieda Hennock and FCC Chair Paul Walker. The educational television assignments map is behind them.









Five and Ten was a children's variety show featuring two sibling puppets talking about the problems of being a mouse. It was the first WOSU TV show distributed to other educational stations.



John Schmidt was WOSU's first television announcer and host. He was also a performer with experience on Broadway and sang regularly with his wife Mary on WOSUTV.

The first broadcast of WOSUTV at UHF Channel 34 was on February 20, 1956, from a new North Star Road studio. It may have been just 44 degrees outside, but it was unbearably hot in the studio from the giant studio lights. A sixty-voice student choir impatiently waited as OSU Vice President Frederic Heimberger christened the station saying this "new medium has possibilities beyond the bounds of imagination." WOSU was just the 19th educational television station to go on the air across the country.



# Innovative Stereophonic Radio

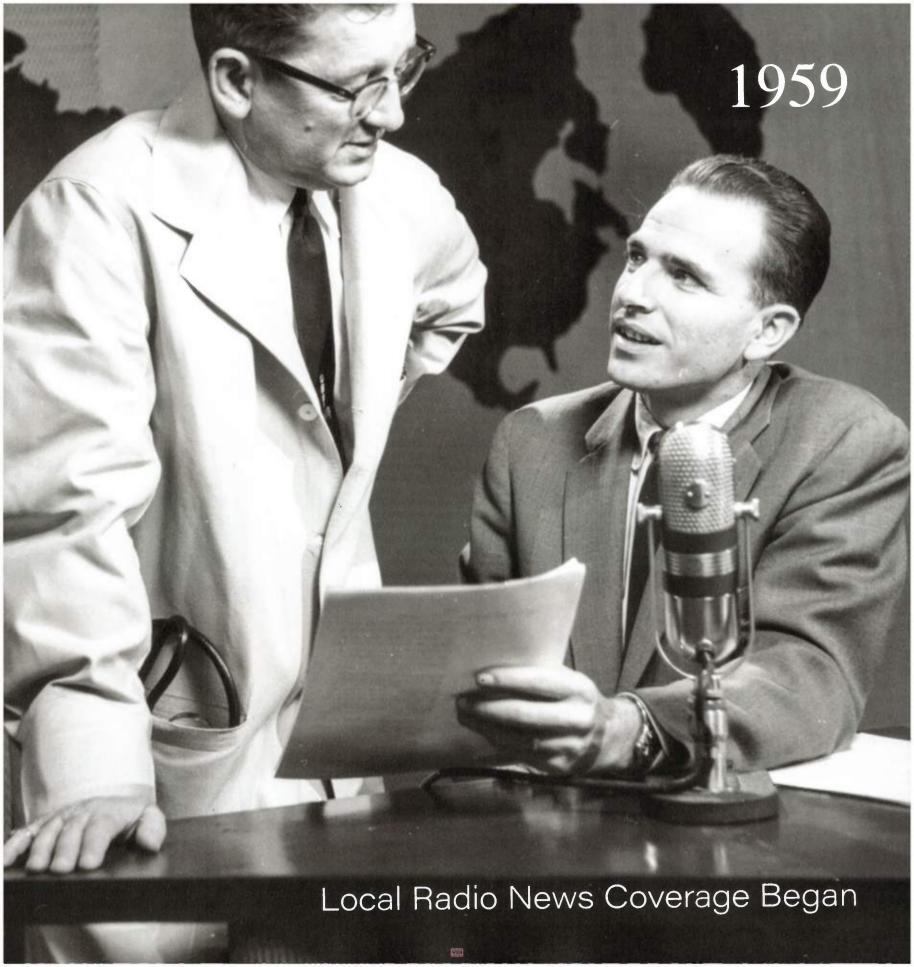
Through a series of music concerts broadcast across two stations (89.7 FM for the left speaker and 820 AM for the right speaker), listeners received stereo broadcast for the first time. However, they needed two radios positioned 12 feet apart for optimum stereo effect.

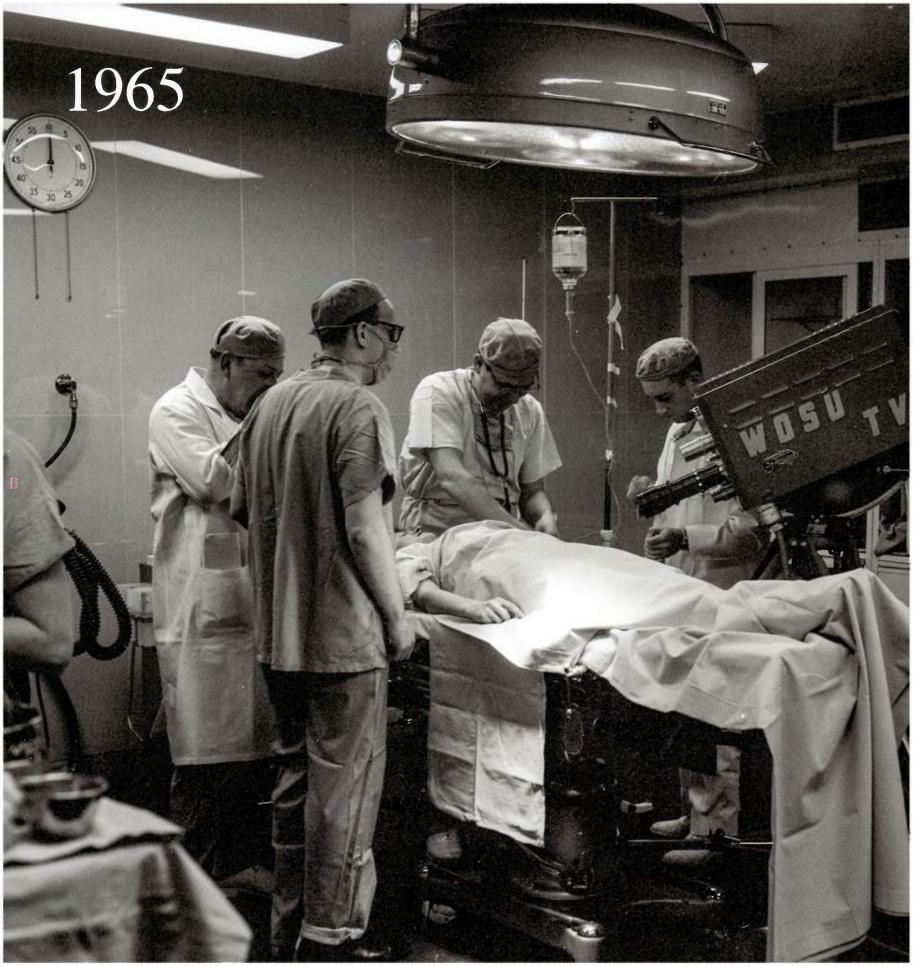
"This brought 'living sound' into the home with depth, realism and dimension."

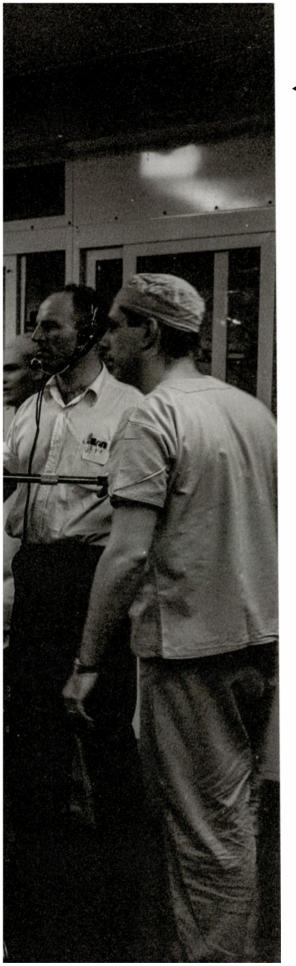
- Fred Calland, WOSU Music Programming Director

Don Quayle helped professionalize local news coverage on WOSU radio by creating *On The Way Home*, a popular afternoon drivetime news and variety radio show.

Don Quayle later became the first president of National Public Radio (NPR) and used the WOSU show *On The Way Home* as one of the prototypes to create NPR's *All Things Considered*.







Through the 1960s, WOSU TV used broadcast and a closed-circuit video network to feed telecourses to classrooms across OSU's campus. By 1965, over 23,000 students were watching 16 introductory courses on television. Working with the Medical Center and Dental School, WOSU used video for research and teaching.



On November 7, 1967, President Lyndon Johnson signed into law the Public Broadcasting Act, which created the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) to assist and support public stations. With CPB support, PBS (1970) and NPR (1971) connected individual stations into a national network and expanded access to national programming.

#### 1967

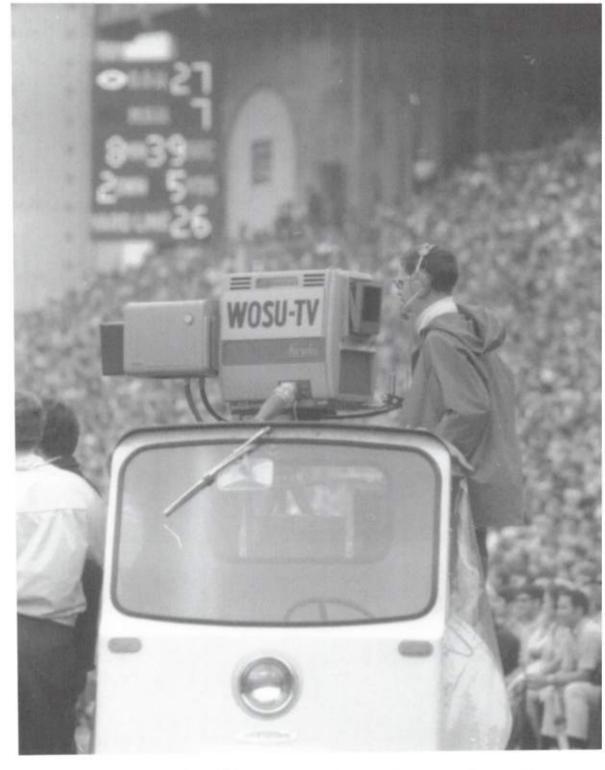
# For the Enlightenment of All the People

"In 1862, the Morrill Act set aside lands in every State – lands which belonged to the people – and it set them aside in order to build the land-grant colleges of the nation. So today we rededicate a part of the airwaves – which belong to all the people – and we dedicate them for the enlightenment of all the people."

- President Lyndon Johnson

1968 THE OHIO WOSU UNIVERSIT COLUMBUS CHANNEL 34 AA





#### WOSU TV's First Color Broadcast

In collaboration with ABC Sports, WOSU TV 34's first color broadcast was the Ohio State vs. Michigan football game. UHF antennas flew off the shelves of electronic stores, expanding the ability of viewers to receive TV 34 for years to come.







# WOSU Forced Off the Air

In May 1970, The Ohio State University shut its doors for nearly two weeks after student riots over issues ranging from the Vietnam War to racial and gender inequality. Administrators forced WOSU radio and television from the air for the first and only time in station history.







WOSU Radio and TV facilities merged into the new Fawcett Center for Tomorrow located on Olentangy River Road.

The Ohio Educational Television Network was funded by the Ohio Legislature to expand and connect Ohio's television stations and provide instructional programming from its headquarters at the former WOSU TV studios on North Star Road.





#### Friends of WOSU Board Created

Budget cutbacks by Ohio State led to the creation of the Friends of WOSU Board, a fundraising and advisory board officially chartered on October 29, 1973. For the first time, WOSU turned to the public for support and raised over \$24,000 from 1,300 pledges. Today, the community board continues to advocate for WOSU and advise on major strategic initiatives.





The Friends of WOSU Board, including five past presidents pictured here, answered phones during a Board Challenge Night in 2016.

# 1978 The Blizzard of '78

The blizzard of 1978 shut down power at WOSU and staffers provided local news powered by a generator and read by candlelight. One newscaster's hair caught fire. Staffers were stranded in the Fawcett Center overnight.

#### Bluegrass Ramble

On July 6, 1978 the local radio show *Bluegrass Ramble* premiered on WOSU radio with musician Tom Ewing as its first host.



David Feingold, News Director circa 1980

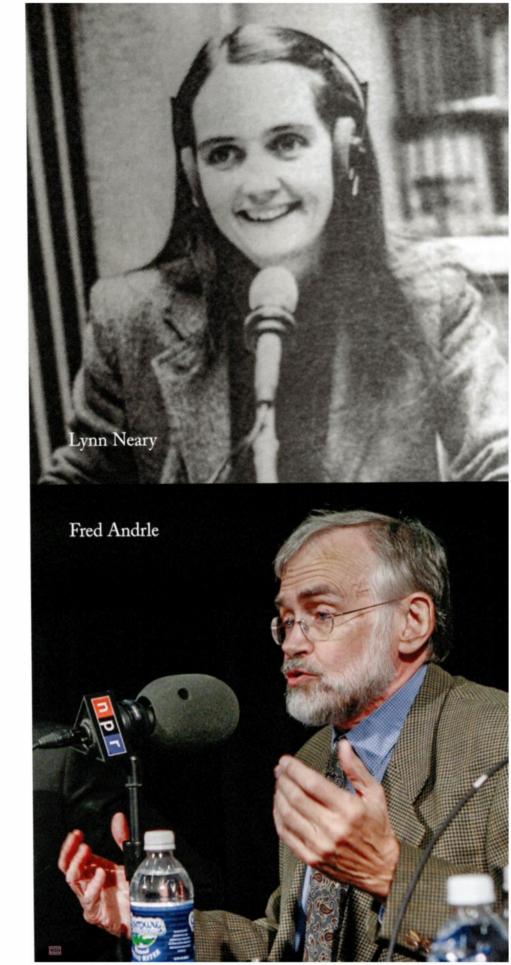


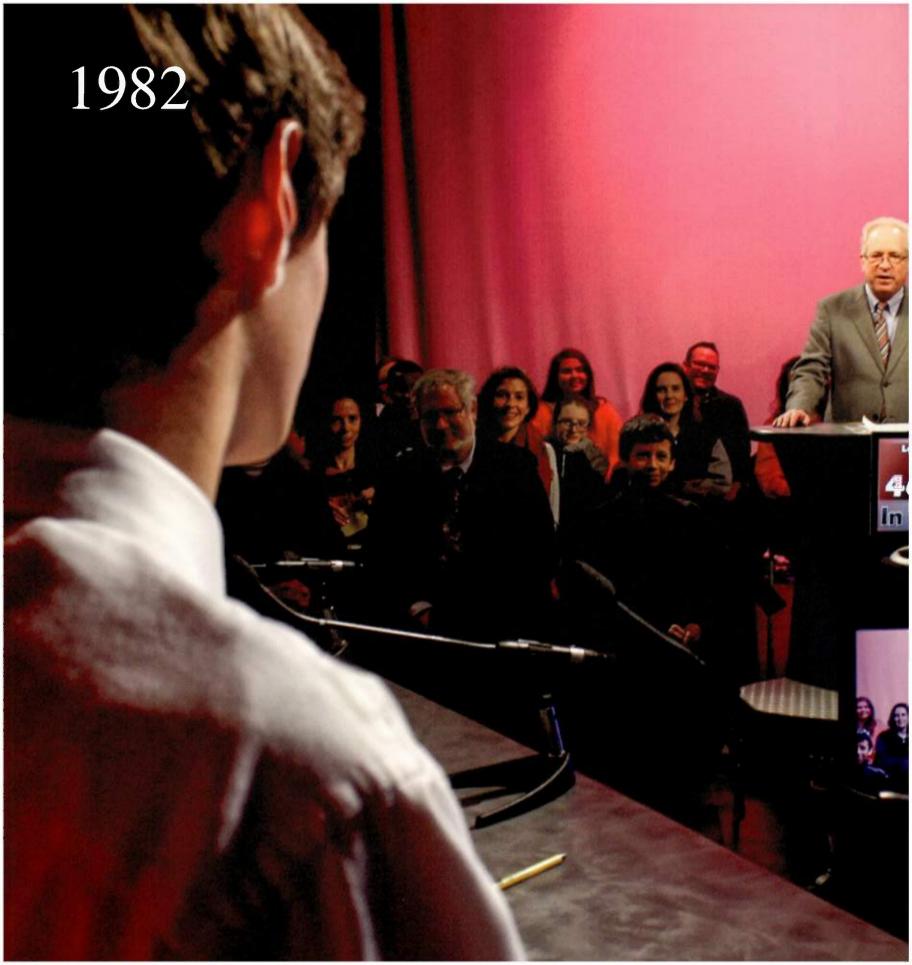
## 1982 Open Line

Open Line, WOSU's first radio news call-in program, premiered with Lynn Neary as host. Neary left for NPR and Fred Andrle took over in 1989 and became the station's most popular on-air personality.

#### 1980 Ohio Public Radio Statehouse News Bureau

WOSU set up operation of the statewide Ohio Public Radio Statehouse News Bureau. Shown here is reporter Bill Cohen.









WOSU began a television auction to raise needed revenue. Among the regular guest hosts was Columbus Zoo director Jack Hanna, who brought in snakes, birds and other exotic animals. The TV auction was an annual volunteer-driven fundraising event for the next 25 years.

#### In the Know

*In the Know*, a high school quiz show, moved from WBNS TV to WOSU TV, hosted by Bill Schiffman. In the years since, there have been about 2,331 shows with upwards of 7,500 participating high schoolers.



# 1989-98

WOSU added four FM stations to create a regional radio network with community partners in Mansfield, Marion, Coshocton and Portsmouth. In 2020, a station in Granville was acquired from Denison University and joined the network.

# 2006

The weekly TV series *Columbus On The Record* began airing, offering in-depth, thoughtful, and balanced analysis of the issues and stories affecting Columbus and Central Ohio.



State funding helped launch WOSU Ready to Learn, focused on early childhood learning and training for caregivers. Special events such as Daniel Tiger's Be My Neighbor Day encouraged donations to help needy new parents in Central Ohio.

#### 2001

WOSU announced the ability to listen to WOSU AM and FM station programming through its website at wosu.org.

#### 2003

WOSU TV began digital broadcasting, including HDTV, and provided the first multi-channel broadcasts in Columbus. A year later, WOSU FM became the first digital HD Radio station in Central Ohio.

#### 2006

WOSU Public Media opened WOSU@COSI – a digital media center with TV studios at the COSI Science Center. Carroll Spinney, Big Bird on Sesame Street, and David Fanning from FRONTLINE were among the special guests.

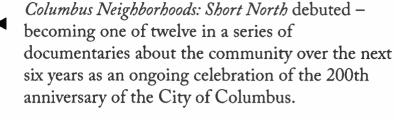
A pledge special featuring WOSU's documentary about the OSU Marching Band, "The Pride of the Buckeyes," raised more money than any single pledge night in WOSU history.

#### 2007

89.7 NPR News began to consistently be named Ohio's Best Radio Newsroom by the Ohio Society of Professional Journalists and the Ohio Associated Press.































WOSU received a national public service engagement award from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting for uniquely assisting poor and elderly viewers on the transition to digital television.

#### 2010

#### WOSU Radio Changes Expand Audience

WOSU purchased a new radio signal at 101.1 FM and all-day classical music programming began with Classical 101. WOSU 89.7 FM became an all-news station, and the legacy 820 AM radio station was sold.

V

# WOSU 89.7 npr news

# wosu classical 101

#### 2013

WOSU unveiled its first digital mobile app - one of the first in the country.

Fred Andrle retired from the popular local radio talk program *Open Line* and *All Sides with Ann Fisher* debuted mornings from 10am to noon.



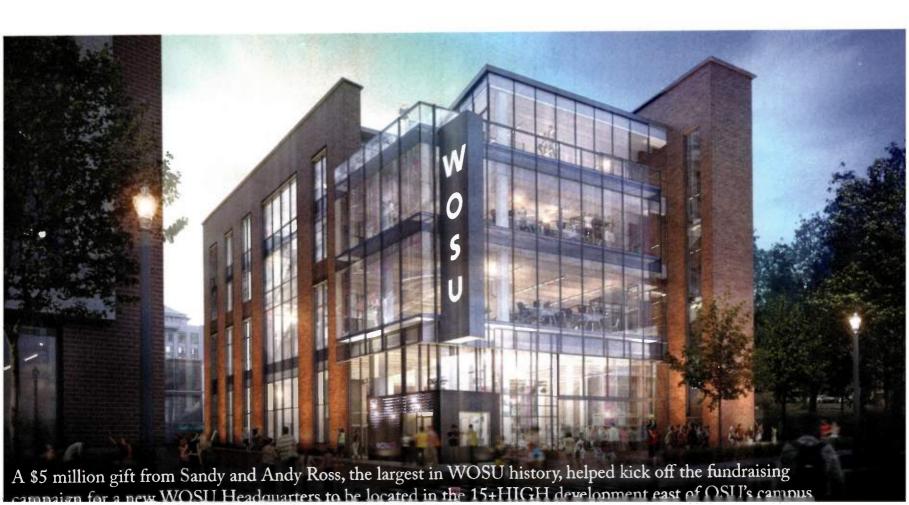




In a partnership with the Greater Columbus Arts Council, WOSU TV created a new local arts and culture weekly series called *Broad & High*.

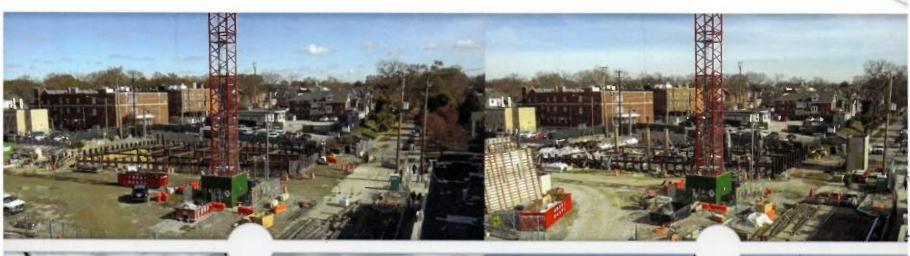
#### 2017

A Columbus-based educational technology teaching non-profit (ITSCO) merged into WOSU to create a new division to serve teachers and students called WOSU Classroom.



#### Breaking Ground on a New Headquarters

On April 11, 2019, WOSU broke ground on its new headquarters and studios at the corner of 14th Street and Pearl Alley.



















#### Rising to the Moment

A worldwide novel coronavirus pandemic caused 80 percent of staff to work from home as WOSU initiated safety protocols for essential workers. The stations stayed on the air and continued to produce local programming and news. WOSU's digital and broadcast services set new overall audience records as the station provided vital news reporting and built timely programming initiatives in service to the community.





On May 3, 2020, WOSU produced, broadcast and livestreamed the first all-virtual Ohio State commencement. WOSU has broadcast university commencements since the 1930s.



Striking visual of hundreds laying down, chanting, Il can't breathe."















Night four of protests for MGeorge Floyd in Columbus, Ohio.



36 113













People dancing on cars, marching







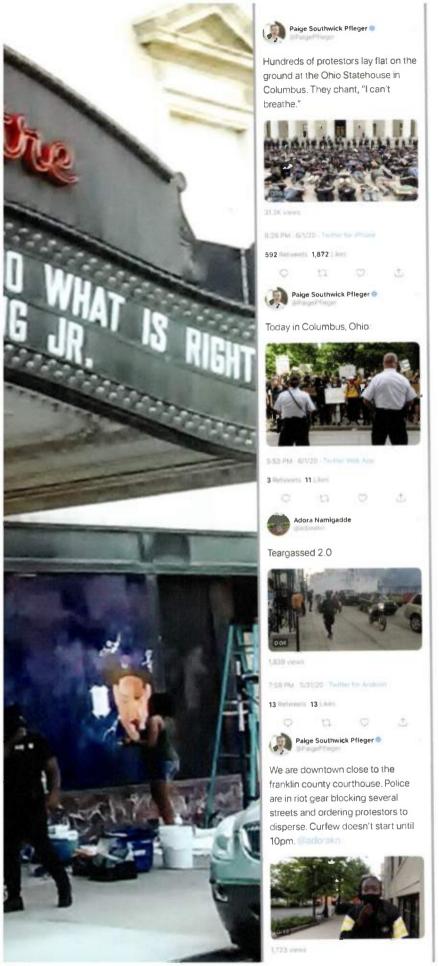




Protesters take a knee in front of the statehouse

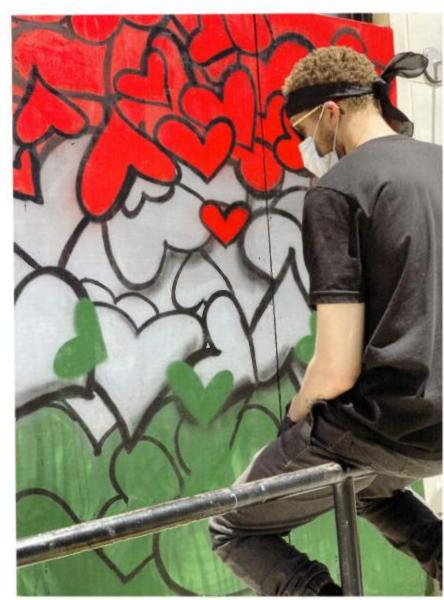


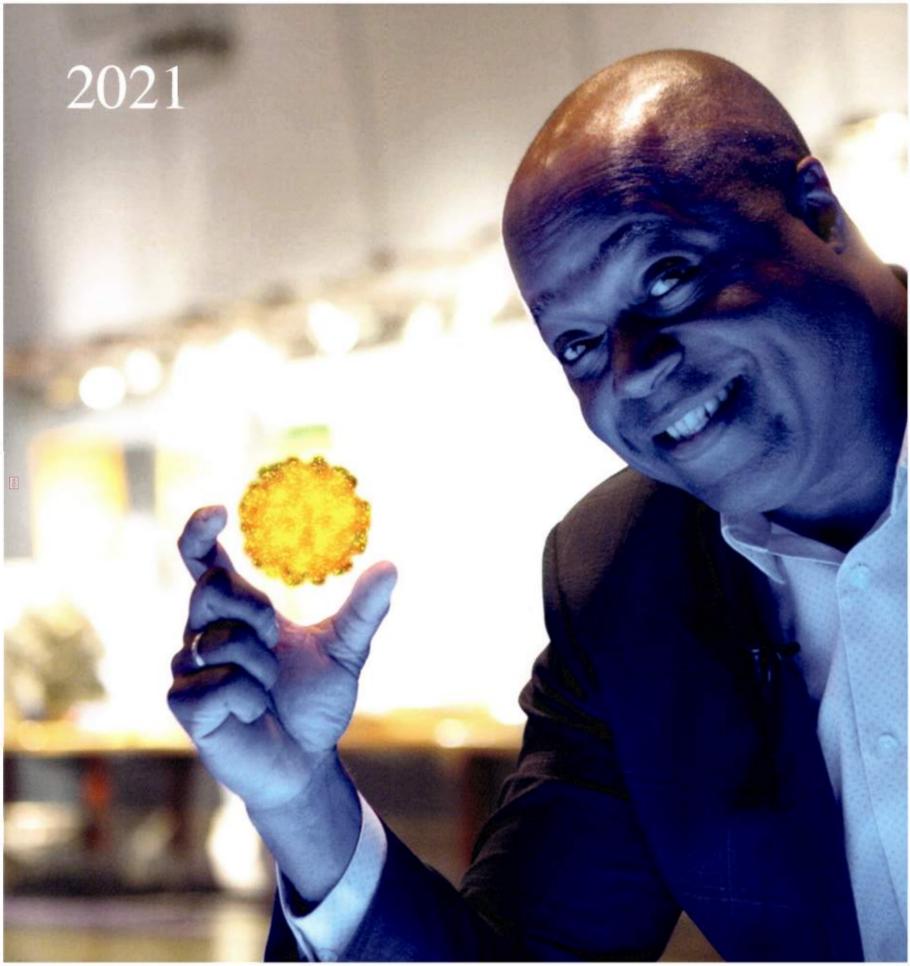




#### Elevating Voices for Racial Justice

From the May 25 death of George Floyd through to the local police-involved shootings at the end of the year, WOSU Public Media provided ongoing coverage of the Black Lives Matter movement and calls for police reform.



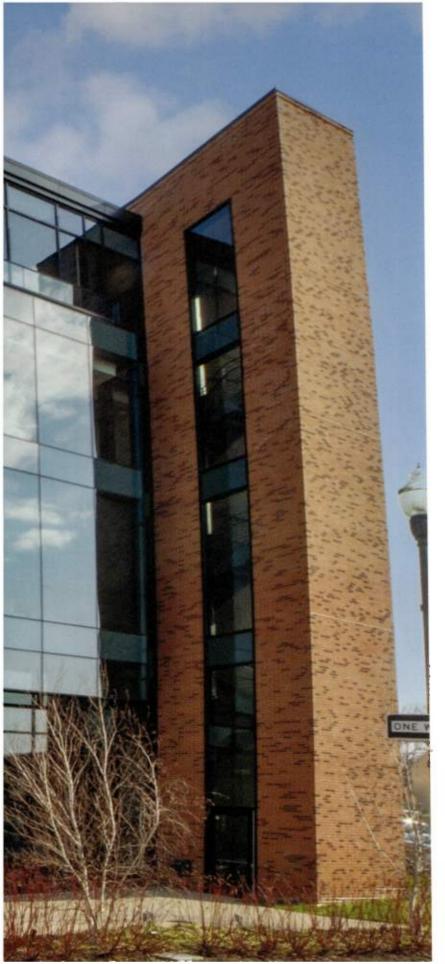






WOSU launched a new local science series on WOSU TV and digital platforms called *QED with Dr. B* in collaboration with Columbus' Center of Science and Industry (COSI).



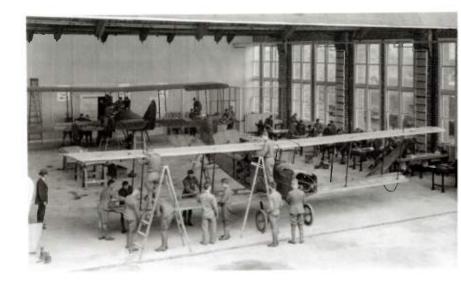




In March 2021, WOSU surpassed its ambitious \$12 million capital campaign goal to support its new headquarters.

#### 2022

The Ohio Newsroom, a statewide reporting effort in collaboration with Ohio's largest public radio stations, launched.



After 50 years in a repurposed campus airplane hangar, and 50 more years at the Fawcett Center, WOSU Public Media moved into its custombuilt new headquarters and studios at 1800 N. Pearl Street.

# **WOSU** public media Epilogue

Our longevity, expansion and success is thanks to our wonderful donors. And with your ongoing support, we'll continue telling the story of Columbus and Central Ohio as we enter our second century of service.

# WOSU public media



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY