



**Voice Of The Rams**

Al Roseboro, the voice of Winston-Salem State football and basketball and North Carolina A&T football, is handling the public address duties at the 41st annual CIAA Tournament (photo by James Parker).

**Sports Profile**

**Roseboro smiles with his voice**

By DAVID BULLA  
Chronicle Sports Editor

RICHMOND, Va. -- Al Roseboro, the public address announcer for Winston-Salem State athletics, has a smile that equals his resonant voice.

Ask Roseboro to spin a Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association yarn and he grins broadly. Although there are so many stories to choose from, Roseboro, whose job is to dispense information quickly and concisely like an auctioneer, makes a fast choice and delivers a neat, little expose.

"There was this big, husky kid from Norfolk State a few years back and he made a move to the basket for a layup," Roseboro begins. "As he put his foot out to make his pivot, his pants split. He went ahead and made the layup, and the fans started cheering wildly.

"He wasn't a big scorer or anything, so he thought he was getting his long-awaited applause. Then he realized what had happened and tiptoed to the bench, covering the rip in his shorts."

Roseboro has seen the bawdy comedy, high drama and dull moments of every CIAA Tournament since 1961, when he attended his first "double-AA" as a senior at WSSU. This week, for the third straight year, Roseboro's voice will greet CIAA fans attending the conference tourney. He and Kenny Gilbert will handle the public address duties at the Richmond Coliseum.

There are five games Wednesday and four Thursday, which calls for a tag-team approach. Last year, Roseboro and Gilbert alternated every half. Still, the first day takes its toll on an announcer's voice.

*"Sometimes I realize I'm getting partial, so I have to realize it's not my place to judge the officials."*

-- Al Roseboro

"The opening day is quite a task and I started out lubricating my throat with sodas," said Roseboro, a former Ram football player. "But you have to drink so many that it's harmful to your health, so I began substituting with water."

Roseboro, a health and physical education instructor at WSSU, made the grade that led to his hiring by the CIAA with a suave tenor voice and smooth game descriptions. He makes each announcement as soon as the official has signaled the scorekeeper. He also bags unnecessary gab.

"My responsibility is to give the right call quickly," said Roseboro, a physical education instructor and volleyball coach. "My most frequent mistakes are being redundant, in basketball on foul calls and in football sometimes I repeat who's quarterbacking during a series. That's even irritating to me.

"Sometimes I realize I'm getting partial, so I have to realize it's not my place to judge the officials. I may see that they missed an out-of-bounds call. It is very difficult sometimes, but you have to wait for the official's call and help him out by making the announcement correctly and promptly."

C.E. "Bighouse" Gaines, WSSU's athletic director and basketball coach, said impartiality has helped Roseboro earn a reputation as one of the best public address men in the league.

"We don't get many criticisms of Al from the opposing teams," Gaines said. "He does his job so consistently and remains neutral."

Roseboro said his favorite announcer was the late David "The Zink" Zinkoff, who was mike man at Philadelphia's Spectrum.

"It wasn't necessarily his voice or style, but he brought excitement to the game," Roseboro said of Zinkoff, who died last Christmas Day. "People knew, no matter how the game went, he'd make it exciting. They came from all over the East Coast to hear him."

Roseboro, who also does the public address work at North Carolina A&T's home football games, said there's a special relationship between the crowd and the announcer.

"I don't want to talk too much, but when the crowd gets involved I know there's a certain rhythm I have to get into," he said. "I like to draw a little picture for the crowd and no more. People will tune you out if you talk too much.

"But I also will give them information that they might not otherwise get, like when Alvin Powell (now with the USFL's Arizona Outlaws) played football here. Linemen don't get as much publicity as backs and he was an exceptional offensive lineman. Our linemen do a lot of pulling, so, when Alvin led the charge, I would say something like: 'That was all-CIAA guard Alvin Powell leading the charge on that fine run by such-and-such.' I guess I do a little public relations work, too."

Last season, Roseboro put a little extra into his descriptions of A&T football games by calling wide receiver-return specialist Herbert Harbison "Mr. Excitement."

The voice of the Rams said the most important aspect of his job is memorizing the pronunciations of all the names he runs across. In football, that can be quite a chore. There are between 25-30 new names each week.

"A lot of players may not get too much attention, so at least you can get their names pronounced right," he said. "A night or two before the game, my wife (Agnes) and I go over all the names. She helps me tremendously."

Roseboro, who was program director at the Patterson Avenue YMCA in the 1960s, first put his voice to use on a WAAA radio show titled "Let's Talk It Over" in 1967. The call-in program primarily dealt with social issues.

It was more than a decade later before he did his first P.A. work at a sporting event. One of his most memorable early efforts was his first football game, the 1979 WSSU-A&T clash in which the Aggies prevailed 14-7.

"I thought I would have problems and I was anxious," said Roseboro, who replaced former WSSU social science instructor Paul Kuhl as the voice of the Rams. "There was a lot of pressure because there were 31,000 people and it was our first game in Groves Stadium.

"But I have the world's best critics, my wife and Coach Gaines. They saw to it that I made the proper adjustments."

Roseboro overcame the jitters and performed well enough to earn the job for keeps.

"Al can deliver anytime," Gaines said. "He also puts a little imagination into it."

Roseboro inherited his voice from his father, Al Roseboro Sr. The elder Roseboro headed the gospel group the Bell Jubilees, which featured blues singer Nappy Brown. The younger Roseboro does a little singing and plays the guitar for fun.

Yet, his favorite entertainment is the CIAA Tournament. If there's one game he'll always remember, it's the semifinals of the 1967 tourney at the Greensboro Coliseum, in which archrival A&T upset Earl Monroe-led WSSU.

"We thought we could not be beaten that year because it was the Pearl's senior season," he said. "He was averaging something like 43 points per game at the time. He was so exciting and he did a few spin moves that brought the house down. But he only got something like 28 points that night and the Aggies won.

"It was our only loss of the season, because we went on to win the national championship," Roseboro said, beaming one of his frequent smiles.

Roseboro says one of the best sports voices these days is ESPN color analyst Dick Vitale, another perpetual smiler.

"Vitale's taking the place of (Winston-Salem native Howard) Cosell," Roseboro said. "He tells it like it is. Some like him, some don't."

Although Roseboro's approach to mike work is much different from Vitale's gregarious style, one gets the feeling he appreciates the excitement Vitale has brought to college basketball.

And that he hopes he does the same.

**SUBSCRIBE**  
*Winston-Salem Chronicle*  
**722-8624**

*Bill Jackson's Used Cars*  
345 PETERS CREEK PARKWAY

LOT #2  
722-0999



**1984 DATSUN 200SX**  
All Power Equipment, Including Elec. Sunroof,  
Digital Dash, Auto Trans. Blue with Blue Int.  
20,000 miles.  
**\$9488**



**1983 BUICK RIVIERA**  
Red with Burgundy Int. All Power Equipment,  
Including Astro Roof. White Vinyl Top.  
40,000 miles.  
**\$10,988**

**1984 Ford Bronco Ltd.**, black with red int., all power equipment, only 28,000 miles  
**\$12,988**

**1981 Mazda GLC** silver with black int., sunroof, AT, F, 59,000 miles  
**\$3488**

**1980 Chevrolet Chevette**, blue with blue int., AT, PS, PB, AC  
**\$1988**

**1984 Camaro**, white with tan int., optional V-8 engine, all power equipment. 29,000 miles  
**\$8988**

**1981 Toyota SR5** white with blue int., PS, PB, AC, AM/FM, 5-speed  
**\$4988**

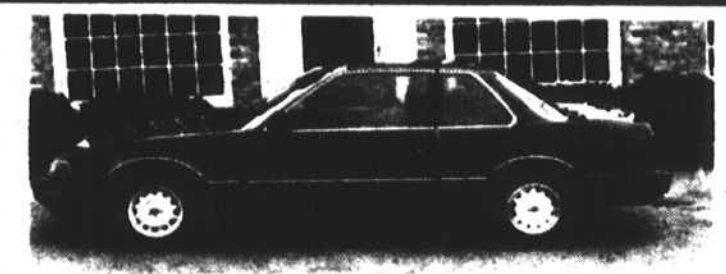
**1978 Monte Carlo Landau**, brown with tan int., beige vinyl roof, PS, PB, AC, V-8, one owner, 53,000 miles  
**\$3988**

**1985 Monte Carlo SS**, silver with grey int., bucket seats, all power equipment, 18,000 miles  
**\$12,488**

**1985 Chevrolet Chevette CS**, 4-speed, PS, PB  
**\$4988**



**1985 CUTLASS SUPREME**  
Gold with Tan Int. PS, PB, AC, Cruise, Tilt, PW, P Doors. 20,000 miles.  
**\$8988**



**1983 HONDA PRELUDE**  
Red with Black Int. All Power Equipment, Including Sunroof, AM/FM Cassette Stereo. Only 31,000 miles.  
**\$9488**

*Bill Jackson's* LOT No. 2  
722-0999

**BUSINESS OR INDIVIDUAL LEASES!**

**'86 GRAND MARQUIS**

**\$299** per month!

- Power Windows
- Tilt Wheel
- Cruise Control
- AM/FM Stereo
- Coach Roof
- Body Side Moulding
- Power Locks
- Protection Package

**HURRY, LIMITED OFFER**



**\$39950** per month!

**'86 LINCOLN TOWN CAR**

- Front/Rear Floor Mats
- Power Windows
- Power Seats
- AM/FM Stereo
- Tilt Wheel
- Cruise Control
- Vinyl Roof

**HURRY, LIMITED OFFER**



**SABLES IN STOCK. COME TAKE A LOOK!**

FORD MOTOR COMPANY RED CARPET LEASE PLAN: First month and security deposit in advance. 48 months. Taxes, Tag and Dealer Preparation Not Included!

**LIBERTY** LINCOLN • MERCURY • MERKUR  
Peters Creek Pkwy • Across From The Marketplace **724-0411**