

On ABC Last Week

Record 80 Million Watched "Roots"

The phenomenon "Roots" created when it was first aired on the ABC Television Network early in 1977 was rekindled this past week by a repeat showing of the epic 12-hour drama.

"Roots", winner of nine Emmys and a Peabody Award, was run in five episod-

es, Sept. 5-8 and Sept. 10. Approximately 80 million people watched all or part of the encore showing of the story that traces the saga of Alex

Haley's family from its origins in Africa through 100 years of slavery, growth and freedom in the United States. ABC researchers had pre-

dicted that the program in rerun would deliver about one-third of the amount of people watching television. But it achieved a significantly high-

er 42 percent share and a national rating of 25.4 while facing a strong amount of original programming from the competition.

This is believed to be the highest rating ever for the repeat of a limited series.

The concluding episode of "Roots" in repeat (Sept. 10, 8-11 p.m., EDT) delivered the highest rating of the five episodes, 26.2, and a 42 share.

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Lester Strong
...Popular TV personality
Lester Strong

Returns To

WBTV

Lester Strong, who as a member of the WBTV staff produced and hosted "The Lester Strong Show," a minority Community Affairs series, in the early 70's is returning to WBTV as Community Affairs Director-Program Development Specialist. Strong replaces Lou Heckler, who has accepted the new position of Director for Human Resources Development for Jefferson-Pilot Broadcasting.

Strong left WBTV in 1974 to study with Ghana Broadcasting in Africa and Europe. He later became Community Affairs Director at WSB-TV in Atlanta, and in 1977 was named Manager of Children's Programs for the ABC network's East Coast operation. There, he helped develop critically-acclaimed network shows such as ABC Afternoon Specials, ABC Weekend Specials, "Schoolhouse Rock," and a new 90-minute series premiering on ABC this week, "Kids Are People Too."

In announcing Strong's return John A. Edgerton, Managing Director of WBTV, said: "We are very pleased to have Lester and his uniquely broad range of experience back at Jefferson-Pilot Broadcasting. We had explored several job possibilities to tap this experience prior to the need which developed to fill WBTV's Community Affairs Director slot. We find it very logical to use Lester's experience in meeting the needs of that existing position while reaching out for additional strength in new program development."

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