



# Will NBC Drop WPCQ-TV Down The Tube?

By William James Brock  
Post Entertainment Editor

The NBC television network announced last week that it will terminate its affiliate contract with WPCQ-TV 36 in Charlotte. The split becomes effective July 1, and will allow NBC to negotiate for affiliation with other stations in this broadcast area.

John Damiano, a vice president with NBC, said the move does not amount to "a cancellation per se." However, the network has been unhappy with WPCQ's performance here for some time. NBC is currently ranked No. 1 nationally, due to the popularity of such prime time shows as "L.A. Law" and "The Cosby Show."

Both feature black and other minority actors in prominent roles. The latter show has made veteran performer Bill Cosby one of the most popular and highly-paid people in show business. It was "The Cosby Show," in fact, that fueled NBC's rise to ratings dominance. Bill Cosby caught on with viewers

as the amiable Cliff Huxtable, making the series a monster hit.

The weak local ratings of WPCQ worry network executives looking at the bottom line. One ratings point nationally generally translates into \$1 million in advertising revenue for the networks. "A weak local station in a major broadcast market can have a definite effect on that scenario," said Michael C. Greenfield, a New York media analyst.

Prior to the phenomenal success of "The Cosby Show," the Peacock Network had its own problems in the ratings game. At one point in the 1970s several affiliates across the country dumped NBC. WSOC-TV 9 in Charlotte dropped the network in 1977 to go with then-hot ABC.

Now that NBC is top gun nationally, the network is not keen about remaining tied to an affiliate with a "loser" image in the booming Charlotte market. WPCQ has traditionally lagged behind both WSOC and WBTV 3

locally. That prompted Damiano to write in a December 22 letter to Michael Finkelstein, CEO of WPCQ's parent company, that NBC is "exercising our right of termination of our affiliation contract effective at the end of the current two-year period." Finkelstein is president of Odyssey Partners Inc., which owns and operates the Charlotte station.

Contracts between networks and affiliates generally run for two-year periods. Such contracts are usually renewed automatically, so long as both parties are content. Either party can request termination six months before the contract is to expire.

NBC has made no secret of its desire to go with a more successful Charlotte affiliate. The network has aggressively wooed both WSOC and WBTV in recent times. WBTV announced last summer that it will remain with CBS, a relationship that has lasted since the station signed on in 1949 as the first television station to go on the air in the

Carolinas.

Jeff Davidson, general manager at WPCQ, said he will probably go after affiliation with ABC if NBC and WSOC renew their old ties. Many in local broadcasting feel that will be the network's move. "I'll have to go for ABC if they get back together," Davidson added.

That might prove easier said than done. WJZY-TV 46 general manager Mark Conrad said he will fight to get a hookup with one of the networks. "I'm fairly sure Channel 9 can get back together with NBC if they really want to," he added. "That would leave ABC up for grabs. We'll go for network affiliation either way."

With WCCB-TV 18 a Fox Broadcasting Co. affiliate, WPCQ could find itself becoming Charlotte's only independent television station. "Right now everything's in limbo," Conrad said. "Viewers will benefit no matter how it goes. Competition will mean better programming all around."



Cliff, Rudy and Claire Huxtable

## WBTV Dedicates Studios To Pioneers



BETTY FEEZOR



CLYDE MCLEAN



JIM PATTERSON

Charlotte, NC - WBTV's studios have been dedicated to the memory of three of the station's most beloved talents -- Betty Feezor, Clyde McLean and Jim Patterson.

In announcing the dedications, Cullie M. Tarleton, Senior Vice President and General Manager of WBTV, said: "Notwithstanding the fact that a tremendous number of talented people have played major parts in attaining the success of the station, we feel these three made the greatest contributions, and had the biggest impact on the

viewers and the community. Betty Feezor, for over two decades, had one of the highest rated shows of its kind in the nation. Clyde McLean was the premier weatherman in the Carolinas. And, Jim Patterson, who signed the station on the air, truly represented the spirit of WBTV. The permanent dedications of the studios will forever honor the memories of these three who were such a vital part of our company, and will let future employees know who they were and what unique contributions they made.

The dedications are physically represented by solid bronze plaques with portraits of the three. Betty Feezor's plaque is on the door of Studio I, which houses the kitchen set. Clyde McLean's plaque is on the door of Studio II, the news set. And, Jim Patterson's plaque is on the door of Studio III, the production studio where a variety of sets are kept.

The spouses of the three, Turner Feezor, Barbara McLean, and Julia Patterson, appeared on "Top O' The Day," Thursday, December 31, for the unveiling

## WJZY Wants Network

Mark Conrad's vow to fight for a network hookup comes as no surprise to those familiar with the brief but controversial history of WJZY-TV 46. The television station, which began broadcasting in the Charlotte market in July 1987, had become a key issue in local politics by November. Harvey Gantt, the first black mayor in Charlotte's history, was narrowly defeated by Sue Myrick that month in his bid for a third term. Myrick made Gantt's ownership of stock in WJZY's parent company a campaign issue that helped her become the city's first female mayor. Clearly, WJZY is familiar with being in the thick of things in the community.

The station has more than simply reputation, however, to offer NBC if the network seeks affiliation with another local station after its contract with

WPCQ-TV 36 expires. "WJZY will be attractive to NBC because our signal covers a wider area of this market," general manager Conrad said. "We have a 2,000-foot tower; WPCQ's is only 1,400 feet. WJZY's transmitter is 240,000 watts, while theirs is only 110,000."

According to Conrad, WJZY's coverage area is within a 65-mile radius of Charlotte. That includes Gastonia, Hickory, Monroe, Rock Hill, Spartanburg and Winston-Salem. The station broadcasts the second most powerful signal in the Charlotte market. Its signal strength is exceeded only by WBTV.

"Another thing NBC will be looking for is a strong news and public affairs offering," Conrad said. "While WJZY is still too new in the community to be at full staff, we are looking for both

news and public affairs talent. I'll have more to say on that a bit later on."

Meanwhile, WPCQ is not simply waiting for the axe to fall, according to general manager Jeff Davidson. The station plans to build a new 2,000-foot tower of its own. "We've bought 80 acres of farmland north of Dallas, NC to build the tower on," he said. "This will give us a 67% increase in our coverage area."

Meanwhile, a shakeup of WPCQ's news staff seems likely, according to an unnamed source at the station. News anchor John McKnight and weatherman Russ Frye seem slated for departure. The future of news anchor Karen Adams seems uncertain at this point.

What all of this means for WJZY is also uncertain. "There is no real guarantee that NBC will not decide to renew with Channel 36," Conrad said.

## Ramessees Mint Exhibit

By Phil Busher  
Special To The Post

Egyptian officials have selected Charlotte's Mint Museum to host an extended tour of "Ramessees The Great" from October 1, 1988 through January 31 of 1989. The exhibit is organized by the Egyptian Museum, Cairo in cooperation with the Arab Republic of Egypt and the Egyptian Antiquities Organization.

Gold, lapis lazuli, granite, limestone, wood--these are some of the materials Egyptian artisans worked with more than 3,000 years ago to create the 72 artifacts in the exhibit.

Many of the pieces were recovered from tombs. The door of the burial chamber of Sennudjam, leader of a family of great royal craftsmen, has colorful drawings that depict family members worshipping the gods of the dead.

Another important piece is the lid of the wooden sarcophagus in which Ramessees II was re-entombed after his burial chamber was looted in antiquity. The mummy of the pharaoh lies at the Egyptian Museum, still in the lower half of the sarcophagus.

But like his predecessors and descendants, except for the young King Tutankhamen, Ramessees II's tomb was looted by grave robbers despite elaborate

measures to hide the location. Only a few artifacts in the Ramessees The Great exhibit, therefore, are known to have belonged to the pharaoh. Most were recovered from others' tombs or archaeological excavations.

The only comparable exhibit to come to the United States in recent years was the King Tut exhibit, which also was made available by the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. Officials there regard the Ramessees The Great exhibit as more significant because of its size (more than a third larger than the Tut exhibit) and because of the historical import of Ramessees II, also known as Ramessees the Great.

Ramessees II is important because many Egyptologists believe he was the pharaoh of the biblical Exodus. It is certain that both the Israelite oppression and the Exodus were very near to Ramessees II's time, making him significant to all those whose heritage includes the Old Testament.

Ramessees II, whose name is most often associated with massive monuments and the Biblical account of the Exodus, was a grand figure in history by any standard. During his long reign of more than 66 years, Ramessees' rule was a period of conflicts and truces with the other major powers of the Eastern Mediter-

anean area. His experience in the art of combat began as a young prince, son of Set I, when he would accompany his father on military campaigns. The most famous battle associated with Ramessees II was against the Hittites in Syria (now Turkey). Later, as relations between the Hittites and the Egyptians improved, Ramessees received two Hittite princesses into his harem, a practical application of ancient diplomacy.

Ramessees had numerous wives, including his favorite queen, Neferati, for whom he built one of the two temples of Abu Simbel. He had well over 100 children, many of whom died, and therefore his thirteenth son succeeded him to the throne when Ramessees II died in 1224 B.C.

Ramessees II died in the sixty-seventh year of his reign at the age of 92. While his son was being crowned as his successor, the body of Ramessees II was being prepared for burial. The construction of his great tomb had begun the year Ramessees assumed the throne. In accordance with ancient mummification rituals, the body was preserved in a series of gold coffins, and transported on a royal barge to the Valley of the Kings in Thebes.

## Out Of Africa

By William James Brock  
Post Entertainment Editor

Most scientists agree that human life probably began in Africa. That was confirmed for the scientific community in 1974, when anthropologist Donald C. Johanson found the oldest known hominid remains in Hadar, Ethiopia. The tiny 4-foot female was christened "Lucy." Anthropological evidence indicated that she died more than 3 million years ago in a remote valley in that African country. Her discovery marked the troubled continent as the wellspring of human origins.

Africa had been a powerful totemic symbol to American blacks even before the discovery of Lucy. The ancient Homeland has bequeathed a heritage of both mindbending tragedy and boundless glory. Almost every black American has some ancestor who came to these shores in chains. But they can also trace their ancestral lineage back to great heroes, kings and queens who equal any found in European history.

Powerful Ramessees, mighty Hannibal, beautiful Cleopatra, fearsome Shaka Zulu--the heroic names toll like bells across eons of time. Most theologians and religious scholars agree that even biblical King David had at least one black parent. Thus it is no surprise to blacks that his son, King Solomon,

could have become enamored of the black Queen of Sheba.

The Mint Museum in Charlotte has tapped the deep well of African heritage with its forthcoming "Ramessees The Great" exhibit of ancient Egyptian art and royal artifacts. Over the next several months, the museum will spend \$800,000 to publicize the huge exhibit of royal trappings of the 67-year reign of the Pharaoh who clashed with Moses and the Children of Israel. Thus Africa will reach out, from the reign of a great monarch dead for 3,000 years, to again influence our culture.

Cultural roots and blood ties to Africa run deep in Black America. From the genes of tiny Lucy, who died there in her remote valley so many eons ago, have come inspirational leaders like Martin Luther King and Mary McLeod Bethune. Firebrands like H. Rap Brown and Angela Davis also owe a debt to tiny, primordial Lucy. Great artists, performers and writers--Romare Bearden, Scott Joplin, Miriam Makeba, James Baldwin--all sprang from the ancient soil of Africa. It is the ancient Homeland.

