



Stillwater Pioneer Athlete Memorial



JOSEPH EDWIN "BILL" PLATT

April 22, 1923 - April 7, 1997

Stillwater High School Class of 1940

3rd Annual Memorial Induction Ceremony
October 10, 1998

Joseph Edwin (Bill) Platt was born in Lone Tree, Iowa on April 22, 1923. He died in Stillwater on April 7, 1997. He didn't become BILL PLATT when he began his career in radio. He once confided to a co-worker that he got the name Bill because his parents had some difficulty in selecting a name. Someone mentioned that he looked like his uncle Bill, his father's brother. Bill it was, for the rest of his life. However, his

"official initial" was always JEP.

Bill's mother was a school teacher. His father was a painter and Bill learned to paint houses, inside and out, at an early age. Exhibiting professionalism beyond ordinary house painting, Bill was a natural at interior decorating and enjoyed the challenges of this art form all his life.

The family moved to Stillwater in 1938 and Bill finished high school here, graduating in 1940. During the two years at Stillwater High, he played baseball and basketball. He also wrote for and edited the high school paper.

College at Oklahoma A & M was interrupted by World War II. Bill served in the Army Air Corps. After discharge, he returned to Stillwater and graduated in 1947. In his senior year of college, he needed a certain number of hours to finish. Somehow, he was steered to John Woodworth, who headed up the new radio department. When Woodworth asked Bill why he wanted to take this certain three hour course, Bill answered that he needed three hours to graduate. Woodworth replied, "You're just the kind of man I want in this class". That was the beginning a career in radio that spanned nearly five decades.

Jon B. Wagner was continuity director for KOCY radio and hired Bill to write commercial copy for the station. Bill told Jon that he knew nothing about writing copy for radio but Jon taught him and encouraged him in this effort. During the stint with KOCY, Bill worked with Curt Gowdy, who was doing Oklahoma City Indians baseball broadcasts. Gowdy suffered from chronic back pain and Bill frequently did the games by himself. In 1949 came the move to WBBZ in Ponca City in sales, sports and the job of broadcasting the games of a Dodger minor league team.

Early in 1958 Bill returned to Stillwater as sales manager and sports director. Immediately, he began broadcasting OSU Baseball and in the fall aired Pioneer Football, Oklahoma State Football, Pioneer Basketball and OSU Basketball. He gave up the pioneer sports in 1975 when the load became too heavy. KSPI radio began airing the complete and expanded Cowboy baseball schedule at the end of the 1970's.

There was never a desire to return to Iowa. Bill said that as a kid he delivered papers on ice skates in the dead of winter. His life was here in Stillwater with his wife Tia, sons Stephen and Gary, golf, yard work, and Oklahoma State sports, especially Cowboy Baseball, the sport he enjoyed working more than the others.

It was obvious through his entire professional career of the heritage Bill gained through his Stillwater High School beginnings. A foundation stone of pride, as evidenced in his professional Pioneer sport broadcasts which he always equated to the high, consistent standards of his college events.

Bill Platt won may awards over the years including Oklahoma Sportscaster of the year five times. He was inducted in the Oklahoma Association of Broadcasters Hall of Fame in 1989 and the OSU Baseball Hall of Fame in 1996.

A tough, smart, hard working man and a loyal friend to so many, Bill always ended baseball broadcasts with, "I'm roundin' third and headin' home". All who knew Bill Platt miss him. It goes without saying that those who knew him best, miss him the most.