

Broadcasting the Pony League World Series 50 years and counting...

WJPA **95.3FM**
1450 AM



WJPA radio has broadcast nearly every Pony League World Series game played in Washington since the first World Series in 1952. Through the 50's, 60's, and 70's, the man behind the mic was Pete Stanton. WJPA was barely ten years old when the sportscaster comitted his station to broadcasting the first World Series.

Today's WJPA Sport Director, Bob Gregg, got his start from Stanton. He says Stanton was happiest "when he was at a microphone, transporting people to the game in front of him. If there were local kids playing, you could count on Pete being there, right up to his final sportscast in 1984."

Gregg's first World Series was 1981, working with Stanton. He's seen a change in technology, but not a change in the way the job is done. "With the advent of the internet," he said, "the reach has greatly expanded. In recent years, we've been able to communicate with listeners by e-

mail during the games. But much remains the same. People still want to know what the score is, who's batting, who's on first, what inning it is. That will never change."

One thing that hasn't changed since 1984 is Gregg's broadcast partner. Mark Uriah has also been carrying on the WJPA tradition at Lew Hays Pony Field. "The longer I'm here, the more I appreciate what we have -- and what Pete Stanton started," he said. "You try to uphold that tradition, treat it with respect, and pass along to people who are new to it the things I've learned over the years."

While Stanton helped nurture the fledgling Pony League, Gregg and Uriah have witnessed the organization's maturation. That goes for the players, too. Said Uriah, "The game at this level is much more sophisticated than when I first began broadcasting the World Series. Managers now ask the kids to do more than they did in the past and the kids have shown that they're capable of learning and executing at a younger age than before."

Their job is to bring the game to the fans, so it's only fitting that the announcers' most memorable moments are fan-related. Uriah recalls Washington's trek to the finals in 1998 behind Justin Gregula's pitching. "Kids came out of the stands and climbed onto the fence, yelling and screaming. The atmosphere was unlike any other I've ever seen." Both Uriah and Gregg enjoyed 1985, when Tim Morgan gave a huge crowd a thrill with a 7th inning, game winning, three-run homer-- another moment of "fandemonium."

What's not lost on Gregg is the historical standpoint for the families of the World Series players. Tapes of the WJPA broadcasts are very popular, giving families an audio record of the event. "We've recorded most of our live sports broadcasts over the past twenty-plus years," he said. "Think of the great moments on those tapes, recorded as they happened."

Making it big in baseball is always a longshot, but Gregg and Uriah have seen some 14-year-olds who have reached the Majors. Uriah recalls a player from the 1986 World Series who took a different route to the big time. "I remember watching an Oklahoma football game and the quarterback was Cale Gundy. The name immediately came back to me."

Bob Gregg and Mark Uriah are enjoying a long run in the Lew Hays Pony Field pressbox. But their opportunity would not have been possible without the firm roots planted by Pete Stanton. Gregg says Stanton listens regularly to WJPA Sports, paying particular attention to the World Series.

"The entire world owes a huge debt of gratitude to Peter N. "Pete" Stanton for his unwavering support, from the very beginning of the Pony Baseball program. Thanks, Old Dad!"



Getting players and coaches involved in the broadcast was commonplace with Pete Stanton at the microphone.



Mark Uriah and Bob Gregg carry on the WJPA tradition.