

# Pete Stanton: Pony broadcast pioneer

The fledgling Pony League was big league baseball to Pete Stanton, who put the program on the radio in Pony's first season, 1951. Like Pony, Pete Stanton was a Washington institution. He called the Pony League World Series action from the first series until his retirement in 1984. Pete Stanton was synonymous with WJPA and the Pony League World Series. Pony recognized his immense contributions by presenting him with the Pony Media Award in 1995.

Pete Stanton died at age 87 in March. His strong faith assures us that he remains...



## HIGH ATOP PONY FIELD

*The following is a reprint of the Byron Smialek column that appeared in the Observer-Reporter upon Pete Stanton's passing.*

The late Pete Stanton was a lot of things, pioneer among them. Stanton, who died at 87, was a radio sports announcer for more than 40 years.

If your son played high school sports in or near Washington from 1942 through 1984, it's a good bet that Stanton said your kid's name more than once-- a lot more than just once, to be sure, because that was Stanton's style-- on game nights on WJPA.

He was a pioneer in that he brought high school wrestling to the radio in a day when to broadcast any scholastic sport was little more than a novelty. Only a handful of stations carry live wrestling to begin with, but then again, this area has long been the hotbed of high school wrestling, and there just aren't that many radio stations as committed to local sports. But none had a Pete Stanton barking into a microphone from the very beginning, either.



Putting players and coaches on the air was common practice for Stanton.

From 1942, when the station went on the air, until he retired in 1984, Pete broadcast it all, football, basketball, wrestling, and baseball in his distinctive hundred-word-a-minute style.

"That's what you did in radio; you talked a lot," said Bob Gregg, sports director at WJPA and a Stanton acolyte. "Radio is an audio medium, and if you didn't talk, nothing was being said.

"The thing he always said was to remember we were talking about kids and not million-dollar athletes," Gregg said. "They play because they love to play. Our job was to take people from wherever they were to wherever we were and to tell them what we saw. He always said that."

"I know that what I do today is because he gave a 16-year-old boy a chance," said Gregg, who worked at the station part time while going to Geneva College and turned that into a full-time job in 1981. "I will be forever in his debt."

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That breathless, every-talking style Stanton had easily led to his somewhat derisive nickname of “Pantin’ Stanton.” He was also a guy who was forever in a hurry and always late, getting into the broadcast booth for a sports segment with just moments to spare and the *Observer-Reporter* sports page his only script.

Stanton is best remembered for the word picture he always painted describing his broadcast location as “high atop home plate” for a baseball game or “high atop Hershey Arena” for a state wrestling tournament.

“Pete always talked about a game he called from ‘high atop Madison Square Garden,’” Gregg said. “It was his biggest moment in his broadcasting career, when W&J’s basketball team played in the 1942-43 National Invitational Tournament.”

Another important aspect of his radio career, Gregg recalled, was announcing the Pony League World Series games every August.

“Pete was really proud of his contributions to Pony League. He treated every Pony League World Series game like it was the Major League World Series.”



Stanton received the Pony Media Award from Lew Hays in 1995.

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