

Davidson explores impact of AM radio on culture

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Randall Davidson, a noted radio historian and lecturer in the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh's radio-TV-film (RTF) department, will share his expertise at 7 p.m. Monday, Nov. 23, at UW-Fox Valley's Communication Arts Center.

Davidson's presentation will focus on the impact of AM radio on the history and culture of the United States during the first half of the 20th century. His appearance is planned in conjunction with the current exhibit UW Fox-Valley's Aylward Gallery. "On the Air: The Vintage Radio Collection of Clyde Stephenson" runs through December 4.

Davidson spent 18 years at Wisconsin Public Radio, serving as the network's chief announcer, and was heard weekday afternoons as the network's statewide newscaster. A native of Neenah, he began his radio career at WRST-FM, UW Oshkosh's student radio station, where he currently serves as the University's director of radio services. He also worked as a disc jockey at commercial station WHBY-AM in Appleton and was a reporter for United Press International. He is the author of "9XM Talking: WHA Radio and the Wisconsin Idea."

According to Davidson, his book provides the first comprehensive history of the University of Wisconsin radio station, WHA; the affiliated state-owned station, WLBL; and the post-World War II FM stations that were the backbone of the network now known as Wisconsin Public Radio. The book covers the programs that allowed the medium of radio to benefit farmers and homemakers, to bring world-class educators into isolated rural schoolrooms, and to teach people all over Wisconsin everything from literature to history to touch-typing, long before anyone came up with the term "distance learning."

Davidson's presentation is free and open to the public. The vintage radio exhibit in the Aylward Gallery will be open before and after the presentation for visitors and guests to be able to view free of charge.

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