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"I'd hate to leave this world without having made a few waves."



















Al Ackerman was named Sports Director of WDIV July 20, 1979. He spent the previous seven was as Sports Director of WXYX-TV, and prior to that was with WWJ-TV Chamuel 4. Ackerman hosts WDIV 5600 and 11:00 P.M. sports and the half-hour "Sports and the half-hour "Sports and Show:" A native of Chicago, Illinois, Al holds an M.A. degree in Education from Chicago Teachers College, He is married, and father of two girls and two boys.

How did you get started in broadcasting?

AL: As a dee-jay at a radio station in Holland, Michigan. Holland is a very quiet, very quaint little town. I enjoyéd it very much. Besides playing music, I did football play-by-play for \$5.00 a game.

When did you get into TV? AL: About a year later. I landed a job with a Grand Rapids TV station. I ended up doing Michigan State Football, commercials and two sportcasts a day.

cals and two sportcasts a day.

How you chways wanted to be a sportscaster?

AL: No, Originally I wanted to be a sportscaster?

AL: No, Originally I wanted to be a businessman, because, like most people. I wanted to make money and I believe in the American system. That's one reason why I'm so outraged nowadays by people who say our top athletes aren't worth that they're makets aren't worth that they're makets aren't worth that they're makets aren't worth that they're maket will bear. However, I feel very strongly that when athletes turn professional and start earning big money, they should perform. Otherwise you're paying top dollar for a you're paying top dollar for a mediocre product.

How did you become in-terested in sports?

terested in sports?

AL: We'll have to go back a long way for the answer. I used to teach eighth grade English in an all-ghetto school in Chicago near the Cabrini Project. That's where Chicago's Mayor

Jane Byrne now lives. It used to be, and still is considered to be a very rough area. But I learned very quickly that, by staying after school with the kids, and playing with them and coaching them. But with the beautiful the sports became very important tone. It became an entree into a different world.

How does this background rotate to your current citiude?

AL: Seeing what so many of

ctithude?

AL: Seeing what so many of these kids go through, I guess I ve always had supportive feelings for the underdog. There are so many instances of an athlete being good enough to play the game, then being held back because of race or other issues that have nothing at all to do with his ability or desire to participate. I deplore such actions, and that's why I identify with the underdog.



eversion?

AL. Yes. The only one. But the point was, that as long as they havent closed the jail door, you have every right to work while out on appeal. As it turned out, Ali won his appeal 9-0 in the Supreme Court. And I felt that any other decision would have been a discredit to the Constitution.

How do you feel about tak-ing unpopular positions?

ing unpopular positions?
AL: Ibelieve my integrity is at
stake, as well as my popularity. And after 17 years in the
business, III still stand on my
record. If I'm wrong I'lb et he
first to get on the air and say
so. And I've done it several
times. There's nothing wrong
in saying you're wrong.



What do you think of Detroit sports fams?

AL: I love the sports fams here. They've been very good to me, and have given me tremendous support and understanding. There have been occasions when I've been touched to tears by the letters and response from people of this area. I love 'em. Who are some of your favorites in the Detroit sports world?

AL: There are many. But one

sports world?

Al: There are many, but one have special admiration for is Manny Stewart. The whole renaissance of boxing is because of him. And of course, there's Thomas Hearns. Include the coall him to the thomas the state of the coall him to the coal h

Al.: I have an extensive record collection and listen to a great dead of music. In particularly found in dissent of a great dead of music. In particularly found in the second of the se AL: I have an extensive record

being controversicd?

AL: When I say something controversial, you might not agree with me, but perhaps you might get angry and do something. At least maybe you won't look at me like a piece of white bread. My hope is that you'll think about what I said, and whatever your point of view.



you'll learn more about the issue and respect me for taking a stand. Id hate to leave this world without having made a few waves. I don't know a but I can tell you the formula for failure. Try and please everyone.

