



Bob Stoldal, Chair

Bob is an icon in Nevada television news. He most recently retired as News Director of KSNV News 3 in Las Vegas. Bob first went to work as a radio announcer at KLAS radio, and later became the station's News Director. At the same time he was part-time sports and weatherman at KSHO-TV, Channel 13. In 1967, he was hired as a reporter and anchor at KLAS-TV, Channel 8. Bob was promoted to News Director in 1968. Beginning in 1992, Bob helped the parent company of KLAS to expand operations at a newly acquired CBS affiliate in Nashville, TN, as well as launch three 24-hour regional all-news cable channels in Virginia, Tennessee, and Las Vegas. In April, 1998, Bob launched Las Vegas ONE, a 24-hour local news television operation, owned by Cox Cable, KLAS and the *Las Vegas Sun*.

Bob became Vice President of News for KLAS, and in 2009, he became Vice President of News for the Sunbelt Corporation overseeing the news operations in the television company's stations in Nevada, Idaho, Arizona, and Montana. He attended Las Vegas High School where he wrote for the school newspaper. Later, he was the editor of the student newspaper at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. His first paying job in the media was sweeping the floors in the pressroom of the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*.

Bob is the also Chairman of the Board for the Nevada State Museum and Historical Society and the City of Las Vegas Historical Preservation Commission. He also sits on the Board of Preserve Nevada and the Nevada State Commission on Cultural Affairs.

LAS VEGAS SUN

Vegas TV pioneer, newsman, historian Stoldal retiring

Dedication to accuracy will keep him busy correcting government Web sites

By **Ed Koch**

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Bob Stoldal knows how a single inaccuracy on a Web site can cascade across the Internet, out of control and all but uncorrectable.



Stoldal knows this because he's been in the facts business for five decades, including his current stint as the top news executive for KLAS-TV Channel 8.

He's 66 now, and retiring from the station June 30 after 36 years there.

But he's not retiring from facts. He's launching a crusade to go after one of the big producers of Web site inaccuracies: the U.S. government.

Stoldal is launching a Web site to point out significant inaccuracies on government agencies' Web sites — the kind of primary sources that everyone from schoolchildren to other Web site operators can turn to for supposedly accurate information.

So inaccurate reporting needs to be spotted and nipped in the bud, Stoldal says.

He's still working on how, but says he will not only post inaccuracies as he discovers them, but will post on his Web site government Web site inaccuracies forwarded to him by others.

Stoldal has purchased 40 domain names for potential Web sites. The one he's working on now will be called "Bigfootnote.com."

Stoldal also owns the domain names "captainhistory.com," "vegasarchives.com" and "weshallover.com," which he also plans to develop into Web sites that will set the record straight on historic events.

Stoldal has worked for each of Channel 8's three owners: late Sun Publisher Hank Greenspun, who founded Channel 8 — the state's first TV station — in 1953; reclusive billionaire Howard Hughes, who

purchased it from Greenspun in 1968; and current owner Landmark Communications, which purchased the station in 1978.

Landmark is in the process of selling off its news media empire, including KLAS and The Weather Channel. Stoldal says he figured it was a good idea to retire along with Landmark.

Stoldal, a member of the Nevada Broadcasting Hall of Fame, also has served the past 10 years as general manager of KLAS' sister cable channel, Las Vegas ONE, which is partially owned by the Sun.

Stoldal will remain at Channel 8 as a news consultant for at least one year, he says. His duties will include producing history projects and at least two documentaries.

Stoldal also serves as chairman of the Nevada State Museum and Historical Society and the Las Vegas Historic Preservation Commission, which plans to open a mob museum in 2010 at the historic downtown post office next to City Hall.

Stoldal says there are historical inaccuracies about Las Vegas and other places "because of lazy journalists and lazy historians."

He says misconceptions about Southern Nevada's history — the biggest of which probably is that mobster Benjamin "Bugsy" Siegel envisioned Las Vegas as a gaming mecca — "are framed by historic accounts that are inaccurate."

Serving in 2005 as a historian for Las Vegas' centennial celebration, Stoldal successfully fought to have inaccuracies about Siegel and other issues corrected on historic markers created by a city department that apparently did not thoroughly check its facts.

"Las Vegas has a wonderful history," Stoldal said. "Its vibrancy echoes around the world. There is no reason to distort that history."

Stoldal has spent most of his adult life covering it — first as a deep-voiced reporter on KLAS radio in the early 1960s, before moving to TV.

"Bob gave me a career," said Channel 8 news anchor Gary Waddell, who was hired by Stoldal 28 years ago. "He is known in markets throughout the country for his ethics that are above reproach and for his efforts to get cameras in courtrooms, expose the mob and establish the largest investigative (reporting) team in the country."

Emily Neilson, KLAS president and general manager, said of Stoldal, "No one person has had more impact" on local broadcast journalism.

"His passion ... and his competitive spirit have shaped hundreds of journalists," Neilson said. "You'll find graduates of the University of Stoldal spread throughout the state and around the country."

Born in San Francisco, Stoldal worked as an apprentice in a butcher shop after school and on weekends from age 12 to 15, although he wanted to become a librarian.

He was drawn into the news business as a teenage reporter for KSPO radio in San Francisco. Soon he was printing his own neighborhood newsletter.

After his family moved to Las Vegas in 1957, he worked as a busboy at the Stardust, Dunes and Riviera hotels before landing a job in 1960 at the Las Vegas Review-Journal, first as a janitor and then as a typesetter.

The next year, because of his deep voice, Stoldal was hired as the graveyard-shift disc jockey at KLAS radio — he went by the name Bob Free — and read news off the Teletype.

In 1966 he moved to what is now KTNV Channel 13 as a part-time sports reporter and weatherman, and a year later moved to KLAS-TV as a reporter and anchor. One of his duties starting in 1968: Research and record additional details of his stories for Howard Hughes.

Except for a five-year stint when Stoldal worked at a sister station in Nashville, Tenn., he would finish his career at the station, moving up the executive news ranks. Among his achievements: delivering the first one-hour nightly local news program in Nevada to allow for more in-depth news reports, launching Las Vegas ONE as a 24-hour local news TV operation, and leading KLAS-TV’s transition as the valley’s first high-definition news show.

News anchorwoman Paula Francis, who was hired by Stoldal 20 years ago, said you don’t replace a newsman like Stoldal, who has “the experience, the enthusiasm to carry things out and a love of history, specifically for Las Vegas.”

“You cannot fill a void like that,” she said. “All we can do is live up to the standards Bob set.”

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Bob Stoldal ends retirement to join former rival KVBC-TV

By STEVE BORNFELDLAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL



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Retired? Ridiculous. The man merely took a lengthy vacation.

Now local broadcasting legend Bob Stoldal, following up a 36-year tenure at KLAS-TV, Channel 8, is coming out of retirement to take the newsroom reins of rival station KVBC-TV, Channel 3.

“I never really retired, there was just a period when I couldn’t work in my chosen field,” Stoldal said today, after Channel 3 general manager Lisa Howfield announced Stoldal’s appointment as executive vice president of news. The position puts him in charge not only of the Channel 3 newsroom, but hands him responsibility for coordinating the news operations for all stations owned by Sunbelt Communication Co. in Idaho, Arizona, Wyoming, Montana and Nevada, especially KENV-TV in Elko and KRNV-TV in Reno.

“I had a noncompete (contract clause) for a year and that expired July 1,” Stoldal said, referring to his departure last June from Channel 8, where he was vice president of news, the apparent end of a five-decade career. “I did have conversations with a couple of stations in this marketplace.” Channel 3 became the destination when the station fired its news director, Deborah Clayton, on July 24. Assistant news director Kim Sherwood also has been dismissed.

“When I announced it at the editorial meeting, everybody’s eyes got really big, big smiles and bumping knuckles and high-fives,” Howfield said. “I’ve gotten e-mail messages saying this is the best news (they’ve) gotten in a long time, people saying thank you.”

Stoldal, who turns 67 in September, inherits a news organization at low ebb, with stagnant ratings — on weekdays, only the 6 p.m. newscast wins with any consistency — and staff discontent, much of it over budget cuts, personnel decisions, departing newsroom staff and dissatisfaction with Clayton. “They have a good team over there, but every news department is like the army, there’s always some discontent,” Stoldal said. “But being a journalist is a pressure job. I have never been inside the Channel 3 building, but I look forward to being part of that organization.”

Stoldal declined to speculate on whether more layoffs will follow once he takes over. “No more that I’m aware of, but I don’t get into the loop-loop until Tuesday.”

What is certain is that Channel 3 management wants Stoldal to take the news department in a new direction. “I’m determined to take our news to the next level, make it the very best you’d ever want to watch, so we’ve got to change the way we do news,” Howfield said. “The only way that’s going to happen is to bring in someone who’s got a lot of experience, who’s well-respected and can put some plans into action. You get all that with Bob. If you talk with him for five minutes, he’s got really great ideas and fresh approaches.”

One of those might be a turn toward online interactivity. “If you look at CNN, they have significant elements on their newscasts from

Twitter, from Facebook, they get instant feedback on news stories from viewers, so you have that additional tool,” Stoldal said. “But that can’t override everything. You still have to have at the top of your list the fundamental elements of journalism, which is to cover the news.”

A member of the Nevada Broadcasting Hall of Fame, Stoldal has lived in Las Vegas since 1957. He had his first media job with the Las Vegas Review-Journal and was a reporter, anchor and eventually news director at Channel 8. He was overseeing that newsroom, as well as operations at cable channel Las Vegas ONE and LasVegasNow, the Channel 8 Web site, when he left last year. A historian for Las Vegas’ centennial celebration in 2005, he also has served as chairman of the Nevada State Museum and Historical Society and the Las Vegas Historic Preservation Commission.

“People have respect for Bob,” Howfield said. “When you work for someone who’s got that aura of respect, you work a little harder for them.”

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