

The regional cable news business lost a true believer Sunday, when Dick Splitstone lost a year-long battle with cancer. Dick was my Senior Executive Producer at Northwest Cable News, and he could not have been a better second in command. I always told Dick that he was 'avuncular'....uncle-like... to a host of young people who came and prospered at our cable channel in Seattle under his many years of mentoring

His experience dated back to radio in Kenosha, WI; the old WIXY-1260 rocker in Cleveland; WTOL-TV in Toledo; WKBW in Buffalo; WVEC (and the local news cable channel) in Norfolk and KIRO in Seattle, when it was under different ownership than today.

In 1999, Dick migrated to Northwest Cable News, and when I arrived as ND in 2004, he had been thru a rough professional patch, as had the station. But he vigorously helped put the channel back together with his work ethic, patience, talent, dedication to and belief in cable news. Dick also was a leader for NATAS NW, rising to a trustee of the larger organization after years of service on the regional board and as president. Last Saturday night, as he rested in a sick bed at his suburban Seattle home under the watchful eye of his beloved wife Margaret, he received the NATAS Silver Circle Award, honoring his long service to the business. It is almost as if his life pressed on just long enough to receive that honor at two Emmy ceremonies over the past weekend.

Dick had an amazing knack of telling frustrated producers leaving the booth after a bad show: "It's just TV news, you will be all right." Wiser words were never spoken. Thank you Dick for your mellow, easy, collaborative personality and the ability to teach the elements of journalism to eager young up and comers. You are beloved and already greatly missed. Rest in peace.