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AR&D Consultant Jim Willi Retires After 50 years in Broadcasting

Fifty sounds like a pretty good number to AR&D's Jim Willi. He has announced his retirement after 50 years in broadcasting – the last 28 at international consulting firm AR&D. At AR&D, Willi was an owner who served in a number of executive roles including President, Senior Vice President of Multimedia Innovation and Senior Station Strategist.

“There are very few consultants, in any industry, who are beloved by their clients,” said AR&D President and CEO Jerry Gumbert. “His clients applauded when Jim arrived for a station visit and hugged him as he departed. He was one of the ‘good guys’ in consulting with a nurturing and guiding hand that newsroom managers and employees respected and appreciated. Still, Jim prided himself at being ‘the burr under the saddle’ when needed.”

Willi also built successful strategies for cable powerhouse CNN and upstarts MSNBC and The Golf Channel. He felt most at home inside a local TV station newsroom though – 76 of them to be exact. Willi's vision and insights helped make most of them number one and he is best known for engineering historic turnarounds and leading many stations from last to first place.

“I'm really proud and thankful for the long-term partnerships with many of my clients lasting nearly 20 years – very unusual in the consulting business,” Willi said. He continued, “I had the greatest job in America for nearly three decades at AR&D – working with the sharpest minds and sometimes the greatest characters in media. Together, we created winning game plans in more than a hundred markets across the country. Seeing my clients have great ratings success was the most satisfying feeling in the world. I'm also happy to say that many clients became great friends over the years.”

Added Gumbert, “Jim Willi belongs in the Broadcasting Hall of Fame. His impact on our industry and his unmatched success at TV stations is profound. I've stood beside Jim for more than 25 years and have also worked with dozens of consultants through the years. I can say without pause that Jim Willi is truly the best of the best.”

A few other highlights of Jim's broadcasting career:

- General Manager at WSYX-TV in Columbus, OH.
- News Director WGRZ-TV in Buffalo and VP/News at KPNX-TV in Phoenix. KPNX won numerous EMMY awards and a national Edward R. Murrow award under his guidance and was the #1 rated newscast in Arizona.
- Assistant News Director, Anchor and Reporter at WLUK-TV in Green Bay, WI.

- News Director at WDUZ radio in Green Bay, WI where he traveled with the Green Bay Packers and was the Press Box P.A. Announcer at Lambeau Field.
- News and Sports Director at WEVR radio in River Falls, WI during his senior year in college and General Manager at 22 years old.
- News Director and Play-By-Play Announcer for the University of Wisconsin-River Falls radio station at 19 years old.

Jim will be keeping busy in retirement serving as president of his homeowner's association and on the board of directors of the local water district. You can find him either fishing or playing Texas Hold'em near his home on Cedar Creek Lake in Gun Barrel City, Texas.

Jim's new email address: Jim.Willi150@gmail.com

For more information, contact Jerry Gumbert at jgumbert@ar-d.com or 817.924.6922.