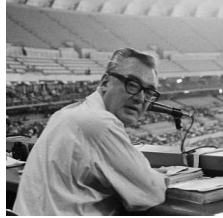


Costas interview 1980

HALL OF FAME FOR FORMER TOWN AND COUNTRY RESIDENT AND THE INTERVIEW FROM 38 YEARS AGO OR THE REST OF THE STORY: Bob Costas was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame's media section last weekend. He is the only baseball play by play announcer in the HOF who did not at sometime in his career work as a daily play by play man for a specific team. The fact that he did not surprised a lot of people in 1980.



At the time the Cardinals had a deal with then KSD-TV to broadcast at least 40 road games a year. KSD's sports director Jay Randolph was in the TV booth for all nine innings. Mike Shannon would do the first three and the last three innings with Randolph and Jack Buck would do the middle three innings. (Ron Jacober, the number-two guy at KSD was a better play by play man but he was banned from the broadcast booth after he interviewed Harry Carey the day he was fired by the Cardinals at Busch's Grove with Harry prominently holding a Schlitz Beer can during the interview. The Cardinals owned the rights to broadcasts and Gussie Busch was pissed.)



Back to 1979/1980; the TV arrangement left just one guy in the radio broadcast booth. So Bob Starr the play by play voice of the Football Cardinals would be in the radio booth for all nine innings when games were on TV. In 1979 Starr quit to take a play by play job with the Los Angeles Angels, in the country's number 2 media market. That left the play by play job in the radio booth during 40-plus games a year open. We were all sure the job would go to Bob Costas, but it didn't. It went to the Blues play by play man Dan Kelly.



Bob Starr



Dan Kelly



Jack Buck



Bob Costas

Most people think (including some recent articles in the Post-Dispatch) that Costas' network broadcasting had always been at NBC. But that was not the case. He started doing NFL football games on CBS in 1977 from the TV markets with the lowest amount of viewers (not counting Green Bay of course) just being broadcast to two cities. Bob would usually get stuck with a new former player trying out as a color commentator. In 1979 the top team at CBS was Pat Summerall on play by play and John Madden in his first years as an analyst. Bob was at or near the bottom. In 1980 he moved to NBC, things changed. He also did one year of Chicago Bulls basketball on WGN-TV.

The word around the media was that Jack Buck picked Dan Kelly because he wanted someone his own age to go out with for dinner and drinks after games and Costas was too young. At the time I was a cop and I was also writing feature articles for St. Louis Magazine under various pen names (Strode Wilder, Clayton Webster and Ed Wallace) hoping my second job would not be discovered. (It was)

Here is an interview I did with Costas at KMOX and O'Connell's Pub that got edited down and appeared in the May 1980 issue.

interview

Young Man Costas

By Ed Wallace

In October 1974 Robert Hyland, CBS regional vice president and general manager of KMOX radio, had just negotiated a contract to broadcast the games of the St. Louis Spirits. Should he hire an experienced play-by-play man or gamble and hire a young sportscaster with little experience who might turn into a major talent? The choice was between Neil Funk, an experienced pro basketball announcer, and Bob Costas, a recent Syracuse University graduate with no big league background. Hyland decided to gamble and signed the 22-year-old Costas to a one-year contract for \$11,000. If Costas didn't work out little harm was done.

St. Louis basketball diehards, who had lived and died on every word of Buddy Blatner, Jerry Gross and Skip Carey during the Hawks era, were pleased that Costas was able to make a no-count ABA game played before 1,200 people sound like the seventh game of an NBA playoff. Costas' career began to climb when he became a regular on the Jack Carney Show. Later he hosted KMOX's Sports Open Line and in 1976 began doing NFL football games for CBS Television.

In December 1979 Bob Starr, the second man in the baseball Cardinal's play-by-play team behind Jack Buck, announced that he was leaving KMOX to broadcast baseball and football in Los Angeles. With Costas' popularity at an all-time high, most local sports fans believed that he would replace Starr. Insiders at KMOX claimed that Costas had Hyland's backing for the baseball job, but the ultimate decision rested with the Cardinal hierarchy. In February it was disclosed that Dan



Kelly had been picked instead of Costas.

Shortly after Kelly's hiring, Jack Buck was quoted in the Globe-Democrat as having said that Costas may have seemed "too pushy" to the powers that be and that he might have "stepped on a few toes." Rumors then surfaced that Buck had been instrumental in Costas not getting the baseball job and had slowed Costas' fast-rising career.

Q: What do you think caused your almost immediate acceptance by listeners and fans?

I honestly don't know. I think they probably thought I did a pretty good job on the Spirits' play-by-play, but obviously the Spirits were not the hottest ticket in town and that didn't give me as much exposure as I'd wind up getting later on. I think that coming on the Jack Carney Show during my first year here and being presented in a very favorable light on that

show was a big key and maybe my style was just a little bit different from what people had been used to and maybe they found the change interesting.

Q: People are amazed at your almost total recall of sports data.

A: There's no secret. It's just that I've liked sports since I was five or six. I make no conscious effort to memorize, it just sticks there in my head. I can be pretty scatterbrained about things that don't interest me. I'm likely to forget what day the garbage goes out, but for some reason I remember who led the National League in doubles in 1948. The only time I make a conscious effort to memorize is before doing the play-by-play of a game.

Q: KMOX sportscasters have been accused of being pro-management and team cheerleaders. How do you respond to that?

A: I think that each person can only speak for himself. I don't

think I fall into that category. Everybody has his own style and approach but my idea is that if somebody calls and asks you a legitimate question they deserve as direct and as honest a response as possible. I will never make a gratuitous critical statement about anybody. I don't enjoy being controversial and I don't think about myself as being a very controversial figure. But if I'm put on the spot and if I'm asked a direct question, then I'll give as honest an answer as I can. But I think that people should understand that there is a big difference between responding honestly to a direct question and just firing from the hip, taking potshots at people for no reason just because you feel like it. I don't enjoy criticizing anybody but sometimes you have to just to keep your credibility.

Q: What's your relationship with Joe Sullivan and Bill Bidwill?

A: Joe Sullivan I like very much. I find him a very personable and engaging guy and I think in terms of knowledge of the game he's a very good football man. He may have been hamstrung a bit by having to work within Bidwill's guidelines. My relationship with Bill Bidwill is no worse or better than that of a number of other sportswriters and sportscasters in this town. I'd guess that I'm not on a list of his favorites.

Q: Why's that?

A: Oh, I think that in the past, not because I wanted to but because it was unavoidable, I had to be critical of Bidwill and the football team on the air. I'm not at all reluctant to give them credit and I want to be as fair as I possibly can, but I guess in the past I was critical and maybe that's something they've resented.

Q: Why do you think you lost the play-by-play job with the Cardinals?

A: I really don't know. I was surprised by some of the

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<p>speculation on that whole subject which came out in the newspapers. Everybody likes to imagine that there's all sorts of political intrigue involved in a situation like this, even if it doesn't exist. I'm not fully aware of why the decision was made as it was. I know that there were a number of important people who were in my corner but apparently there were some other people who pull some weight who weren't so sure that I was the right choice at this time. So you just have to accept that.</p> <p>Q: How had did you want the baseball job?</p> <p>A: I wanted the baseball job more for personal than for professional reasons. I wanted the baseball job because I'm a baseball fan. Because broadcasting baseball on the radio was a childhood dream of mine. From a professional standpoint not getting it isn't a major setback. Everything else has been breaking my way ever since my career started and I've been so lucky that it's hard to</p>	<p>view this as a big deal in that context.</p> <p>Q: How did you react to Jack Buck's statement in Pete Rahn's column in the <i>Globe</i>?</p> <p>A: I think that Jack meant the statement kindly and if taken in the right context it's an accurate statement, in that there are probably some contacts within the broadcasting and sports structure here in St. Louis that I could have cultivated and haven't up until this point. So if you take it in that way it's true. But what bothered me about it was that I think Jack's remarks could have been easily misinterpreted and people could have gotten the wrong impression of me as a person. I don't think that anybody who knows me well would use the words "pushy" or "a wise guy" to describe me. As a matter of fact I think that I've minded my P's and Q's pretty well ever since I got here.</p> <p>Q: You call yourself an old-fashioned sports announcer, a "young Mel Allen." What do</p>	<p>you mean by that?</p> <p>A: Yeah, I think I'm kind of like a young Mel Allen in a Jim Lampley world, in that my tastes lean toward classic old-time play-by-play. Being a sportscaster to me means doing play-by-play of an important NFL football game or NCAA basketball game or calling a double off the left-field wall at Fenway Park. The kind of things that I dreamed about as a kid. My sportscasting idols are Mel Allen, Red Barber, Jack Buck, Lindsey Nelson. The guys who were great radio announcers in the 40s and 50s and then were also able to swing over into TV later. The guys who are truly knowledgeable about sports and convey a feeling of excitement when doing a game. I think there are a lot of people now who are called sportscasters who really are TV personalities first and sportscasters second and they seem to be just as comfortable doing a roller-disco or wrist-wrestling program on CBS Sports Spec-</p>	<p>tacular as they would be doing play-by-play of a baseball game.</p> <p>Q: Is there any antagonism between you and Buck?</p> <p>A: I don't think so. I was dismayed to see that hinted at in the papers. I can only tell you how I feel. Ever since I've gotten here I've treated Jack with a respect that has bordered on reverence and I'm still in awe of him to a certain extent. He was one of my all-time favorite sportscasters even before I came to work here at KMOX and I consider it an honor to work at the same station with him and I've learned quite a bit by just observing him. So I know there's no ill feelings on my part toward him and I certainly hope that he feels the same way about me.</p> <p>Q: What do you see in the future for Bob Costas?</p> <p>A: I plan to have lunch tomorrow at O'Connell's and then hopefully sometime in the near future I'll land the role of Alfalfa in an Our Gang Comedy revival. □</p>
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Without coming out directly about Jack Buck killing his chance to replace Bob Starr, I fished around the subject and asked several questions concerning Costas' relationship with Buck.

Costas went out of his way to be a good guy. A neighbor of mine on South Maple Avenue in Webster Groves was Andy High, who served in World War 1 and World War II in a combat unit with the Army Corps of Engineers. He was also an outfielder/first baseman for the Cardinals in the 1920s and after WW II was the chief scout for the Dodgers until 1963 (the era of the greatest Dodger teams ever). Andy was a widower with failing eyesight. After I did the interview with Costas I had the phone number to his Georgetown apartment in Shrewsbury. I called him and asked him if he could stop by and chat with Andy. He said sure. But before it happened Andy had a stroke. Bob was nice enough to call him at the hospital. Andy died a few months later at his son's house in Ohio.



Andy High

When Bob got married to Carole “Randy” Krumenacher in 1983 they eventually bought a house at 2739 Turnberry Park in Town and Country one block west of Clayton Road and Ballas. They divorced in 2001. She kept the house in the divorce, but sold it in 2015 and moved to Crystal Lake Park,



The former Town and Country home of Carole “Randy” and Bob Costas.

Costas moved back to New York after the divorce and remarried three years later.

Here is a link to the column by Dan Caesar of the Post-Dispatch from July 27 on Costas without the information about him not getting the Cardinal broadcast job.

https://www.stltoday.com/sports/baseball/professional/media-views-hall-of-fame-inductee-bob-costas-years-to/article_e27bfd1d-2eb1-5af1-8e35-10cbc13297e7.html