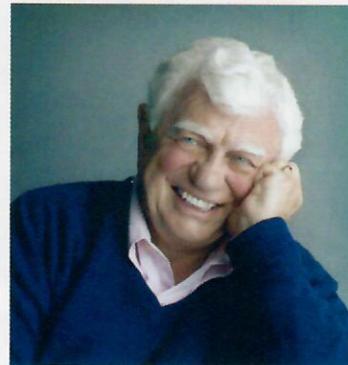
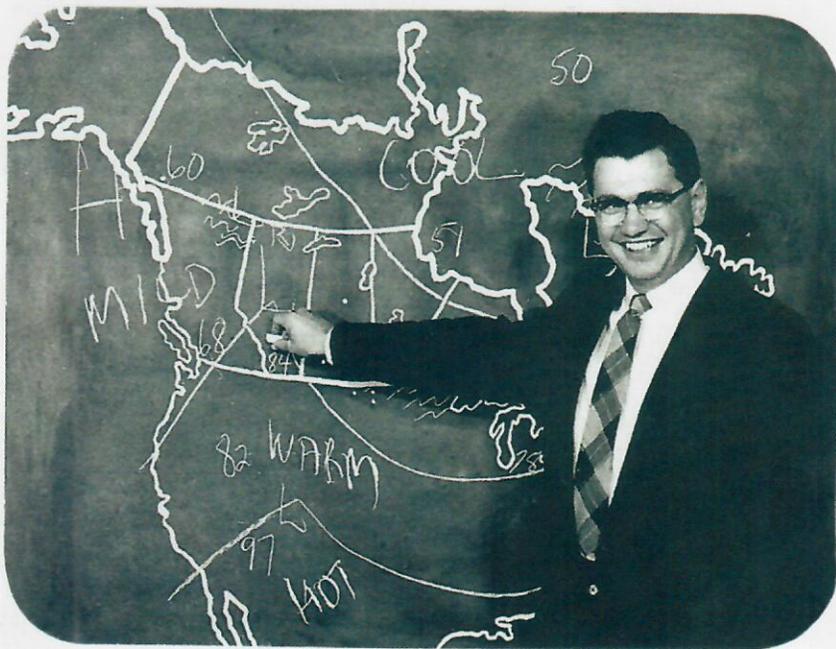


# FORCE OF NATURE

## Hugh Delaney



In 1954, Calgary Rotarian Hugh Delaney was one of Canada's first TV weathermen. Today, he marvels at how the business has evolved.

In 1954, Hugh Delaney stood before a blackboard in the studios of CKCK-TV in Regina and delivered the first weather forecast on private TV in Western Canada. Delaney spoke to viewers for 10 minutes, without any formal weather training. To prepare, he'd gone to the local airport's weather office and talked to the pilots and meteorologists there. "I just borrowed their knowledge," he recalls.

Delaney, a member of the Rotary Club of Calgary South, was working as an announcer at CKCK radio when the station became one of the first private radio outlets in Alberta and Saskatchewan to receive a TV broadcasting license.

He says he owes his start in the field to the Rotary Club of Regina and Rotarian Harold Crittenden, a pioneer in Canadian broadcasting. While attending Champion College, Delaney participated in a Rotary-sponsored program in which student representatives learned about Rotary and its role in the community by attending a club meeting every six weeks.

"We were, in effect, junior Rotarians," Delaney says. At the end of the year, he helped organize a mock Rotary club meeting, where he had to lead songs and levy fines. There, he recalls, he was "discovered" by Crittenden, the manager of CKCK radio, who invited him to the station to audition. Delaney began working there

part time in college, and was hired full time as an announcer after he graduated.

When CKCK acquired its TV license, Crittenden told Delaney that he would be the station's weatherman. When Delaney said he didn't know much about weather reporting, Crittenden replied, "You'll figure it out."

The early broadcasts were divided into three 10-minute segments – news, sports, and weather, Delaney says. "Initially, I went through the elaborate job of explaining how we got the weather, but as time went by, the report took only three or four minutes, leaving me with time to fill." He began promoting local events and improvising, even donning a Santa suit at Christmas and a yarmulke for Rosh Hashanah. "TV was rustic in the early days," he says.

Delaney moved to Winnipeg in 1960 and signed on at CJAY-TV and later at CKRC radio. In 1980, he reached his final stop, Calgary's CFAC-TV, where he served as general sales manager until he retired in 1993. Delaney, now 84, says he feels privileged to have had a career that spanned more than 40 years. "To be there at the beginning and grow with the industry as it changed – it's incredible," he says. "Back then, we could not conceive of how far it would evolve."

– PAUL ENGLEMAN 