

10 Questions With Jim Goodman



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RALEIGH - In our inaugural 10 QUESTIONS, we sat down with Jim Goodman over a cup of iced coffee in the gardens behind WRAL-TV. Mr. Goodman is CEO of Capitol Broadcasting Company, which owns WRAL-TV, 101.5FM, Fox50, and other NC TV and radio stations.

Capitol Broadcasting is also the parent company of the Durham Bulls ball club, American Tobacco Project, and CBC New Media Group.

Known as a trailblazer and a pioneer, Goodman explores new technology with fervor, seeking to bring the latest and best to his viewing public. He and his wife Barbara are known for their leadership and involvement in many Triangle charitable and civic organizations.

RD: What accomplishment are you most proud of with respect to Capital Broadcasting?

I think there are two. First, I am proud that for 50 years it's remained a family business. My grandfather arranged for me to start working here when I was twelve. That was 43 years ago, and I'm still here. My son Jimmy works here, and Michael works over at American Tobacco. I'm really glad that the kids live here. I have friends with children who live far out of town in Baltimore, Denver, San Antonio. Elizabeth lives in Oriental, NC, but I consider that close too. The notion of being able to work with the boys is just great and I'm really proud of them. I like to watch them develop and I can't imagine anything being more fun.

Second, I am also very proud of CBC's community service record. Staying involved in social, charitable, and cultural endeavors is important.

RD: What's your favorite movie?

This is really bad. I love The Sound of Music and went to see it fifteen times. That makes me old as the hills. I've got to do better than that... How about Bull Durham? It really is Julie Andrews and The Sound of Music, but it's so boring that I shouldn't say that.

RD: How about we put them both?

Okay!

RD: What's spectator sport do you enjoy watching most?

Baseball. It might really be soccer, but I think I might need to say baseball.

RD: What do you like to do to relax?

Read. Current events and I read mostly on the web. Barbara argues that you can really relax when you're reading a book, but not when you're surfing the web. Still, I'd rather lie down and read with my laptop than a book. I prefer catching up on the latest political speeches or the New York Times editorial page, or if there's something in the news, I might try searching on it. I'm just really interested in what's going on.

RD: Kind of goes along with your business, I guess?

Yeah, that's right. So that's what I do, web surfing. There's another terrible answer, what a geek. And I read Shakespeare! I told you I'm boring as hell; I'm very predictable.

RD: I think I'd have to argue you on that. What's one thing other than smoking in schools that aggravates you?

City government.

RD: What do you think TV and media will be like for the average consumer in ten years?

Well, I think we're seeing more of a trend toward on-demand. Believe it or not, there will be more choices and more video on the internet and on mobile devices. And, you will still get your local news from good ol' WRAL. In technology, it's the revolution and enhancement of digital high definition.

RD: What advantages have you had for being at the forefront of the HD revolution before anyone else? I believe WRAL was the first in the country to broadcast HD?

Yes, we were the first digital station in the United States. Conceptually, I've always believed that being first to market is important, and we've tried to establish that niche. The other thing that has been fun is that HD is so much better. A standard definition picture has maybe 300,000 pixels. A HD picture has 2,000,000 pixels. We didn't just go from 300 to 310, we increased quality by almost seven times! So it's been an unbelievable product improvement. I tell people any time you can improve your product, you do it. It just happened that this one was an enormous improvement. You know, I can watch Daytona on Fox in HD and I feel like I'm right there in the car.

RD: What is, or was, your favorite TV show?

Well, this is kind of a promotion for us, but we have a new network on 50.2, the digital channel called RTN, the Retro Television Network. It's got all the old shows, including "Perry Mason." It's in close competition with "Bonanza" for my favorite. See, I told you I was boring. Oh, and "Iron Sides" is a favorite too.

RD: Where do you do your best brainstorming for new ideas?

I'm like Alan Greenspan and his bathtub, but my place is the back porch.

RD: Why is that?

It's just quiet outdoors and it's relaxing. I can sit and think without interruption. I enjoy it.

RD: What is your favorite feel good food?

I really love steamed oysters with saltine crackers.