

# Louise "Scottie" Scott Stephenson

*Stress....what's that? It's spelled L-I-F-E.*

-Scottie Stephenson

Broadcasting pioneer and matriarch of Capitol Broadcasting Company Louise "Scottie" Scott Stephenson is to Raleigh broadcasters what Amelia Earhart is to aviators.

A native of Goldsboro, Scottie Stephenson graduated from Broughton High School and took classes at NC State University. She began her career at Capitol Broadcasting Company in 1944 as receptionist, secretary and record librarian for what was then WRAL-AM Radio. She quickly became an integral part of the company, handling tasks ranging from writing advertising copy and collecting daily birth announcements for Fred Fletcher's "Tempis Fugit" to fielding calls from listeners and balancing the books.

In an era and a profession dominated by men, she was the only woman on the five-person team to gain the first VHF television license in Raleigh. She prepared the 3,000 pages of application documents, testified before the Federal Communications Commission in Washington, DC, and was there every day of the seventy-five day hearing. The license to operate Channel 5 was granted, and the station went on the air on December 15, 1956. Stephenson's exhibits for the FCC became an industry model for aspiring license applicants, who flocked to Raleigh to examine the fruits of her labors.

Scottie Stephenson was the first employee on WRAL-TV's payroll and worked for CBC fifty-eight years, longer than any person in the history of the company, including founder A. J. Fletcher. She sat on the CBC Board and served as Corporate Secretary for CBC and its subsidiaries for forty-nine years.

Stephenson excelled as a civic leader, working hard as an advocate for the arts and the underprivileged. She served sixteen years on the board of the Tammy Lynn Center, chaired the Communications Committee of the Raleigh Junior Women's Club, and was a valued volunteer for the Raleigh Fine Arts Society and the NC Symphony. She coordinated the Raleigh Golden Age Club's annual Christmas luncheon for over four decades and saw that luncheon grow from fifty to over 1,500 people. She was a key figure in the AJ Fletcher Foundation, impacting hundreds of lives through support for education, the arts, health care and human services. She was devoted to helping young people through educational scholarships and mentoring.

She was recognized for her contributions as the first recipient of the Junior Women's Club's Outstanding Working Member Award, and by the YWCA Academy of Women as Business & Professional Woman of the Year in 1992. She was recognized in Business Leader's Impact 100 List for her role in Triangle broadcasting, and Senator Jesse Helms read a tribute to Stephenson into the Congressional Record. Capitol Broadcasting Company created a lasting memorial in her honor by naming the Louise "Scottie" Stephenson Amphitheatre at the Raleigh Little Theatre.

Stephenson never stood in front of or behind a camera, but she was as integral to Triangle broadcasting as the signal that went out over the air. She played a key role in paving the way for the television market in the Triangle today.

