

STEPHEN McKENNEY STECK



Stephen McKenney Steck's career in public media spans 51 years, with 41 years being spent with the public broadcasting stations of WMFE in Orlando, Florida. From 1972 through 2006, Steck served 34 consecutive years as WMFE's Chief Executive Officer. He now holds the position of President Emeritus, a status unanimously granted him in 2007 by the WMFE Board. Steck joined the stations in 1967 after a previous 8-year stint in commercial broadcasting starting in 1959. His tenure in the Central Florida electronic media ranked him as the most tenured broadcasting executive in Central Florida and, by some reports, the most tenured CEO in the public broadcasting field before his retirement in 2008.

At his retirement and with a 15-person board of trustees, Steck launched a non-profit Internet-based media foundation to develop, produce and distribute innovative and original local public media programming. The on-line service launched on August 27, 2009 and has recently celebrated its first full year of local program production. **Carroll McKenney Foundation for Public Media (CMF)** is recognized by the IRS as a tax exempt 501(c) (3) publicly supported charity. Steck's role as founder includes serving both as a trustee and as CMF's President and Chief Executive Officer as well as a producer and reporter for much of the on-line content. He serves on a non-paid basis in all of these roles. Please visit <http://cmfmedia.org/> to listen to the programming and to learn more about CMF.

A native Orlandoan, Steck began his career in Orlando commercial television in 1959 at WFTV (then WLOF) as a TV director and later as senior producer/director for news and special public affairs programs. He held various production positions with the major TV networks involved in national coverage of missile launches at Cape Canaveral and other programs produced throughout the southeast. Steck joined WMFE in 1967 as production manager. He was appointed operations manager in 1970 and was elected President in 1972. Under his leadership, WMFE's budget grew from \$250,000 to more than \$9 million annually at his retirement.

Major accomplishments during Steck's tenure – described by colleagues as a career increasingly focused on major donor fundraising – included...

- Gaining funding for and establishing WMFE's physical plant in a new \$3-million dollar broadcast center in East Orlando in 1977
- Activating public radio station 90.7 WMFE-FM in 1980
- Expanding both station's programming to a full 24-hour per day schedule
- Controlling a program schedule viewed each week by more than 485,000 households in Central Florida, and a radio schedule listened to each week by more than 194,000 Central Florida residents
- Developing and leading a \$4-million dollar fundraising campaign to expand the Public Broadcasting Center in 1992 and a \$2-million dollar re-expansion in 2003
- Launching a \$10-million dollar *Campaign for Program Excellence* in 2002 raising funds directed to local programming connecting the community in a manner not duplicated by local electronic media
- Initiating in 2004 a \$7-million dollar *Campaign for Digital Television* that activated WMFE-DT/Channel 23 and 4 multi-cast TV channels in 2006
- Raising funds for and initiating the launch of a \$2.4-million dollar program vision for the stations fully realized in late 2007.
- Leading the growth of WMFE's Endowment to more than one million dollars immediately prior to his leaving in 2007, and
- A transition to digital radio broadcasting – fully funded under his leadership – debuted in 2008.

Steck has previously served as Chair of the board of Florida Public Broadcasting Service (FPBS). He is a former chair of Southern Educational Communications Association (now NETA), public broadcasting's largest affinity group. A graduate of Harvard Business School's Advanced Management Development Program and the Orlando Regional Chamber of Commerce's *Leadership Orlando* and *Leadership Central Florida*, Steck was a recipient of PBS' National Award for Excellence in Major Giving and has been the recipient of an award by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting for leadership in state funding. The board of FPBS recognized him as their most effective lobbyist. The Jaycees have conferred upon him their Outstanding Distinguished Service Award. The local chapter of the International Association of Business Communicators selected Steck as a recipient of their EXCEL Award for Outstanding Communications and Leadership.

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Steck's current civic activities include serving as a gubernatorial appointee to the state board of Speech Language-Pathology and Audiology. Formerly, Steck has served as a director and officer on the board of Hospice of Central Florida, president of the Southern Ballet Theatre (now the Orlando Ballet), Human Services Planning Council, and the Associate Board of the Orlando Museum of Art. He has served on the board of the Civic Theatre of Central Florida, Florida Symphony Orchestra, Arts Services Council, Junior Achievement, PESO, the Orlando Science Center, West Orange YMCA, Council for Continuing Education for Women, the Green House, Central Florida Chapter of the American Cancer Society and the Space Business Roundtable. Steck has served with the Orlando Crime Prevention Commission as chairman of the Teacher Education Curriculum Task Force and chairman of its Neighborhood Watch Task Force. He has been chairman of the Ways and Means Committee of the Council of Arts and Sciences and a founder and past director of the Pine Hills Kiwanis Club. He was a member of the Rollins College Centennial Events Planning Committee, Goals 2000 Steering Committee, the advisory board of the Citrus Council of Girl Scouts, the Astronauts Memorial Foundation Inc., and the Rotary Club of Orlando.

Steck, 66, lives in Oviedo (since 1980) where, on many days, he can be found training for the 3rd stage of a 4-stage solo and self-supported bicycle ride across the U.S. From his mid-50's, he has completed 61 marathons (a 26.2mile foot race), including one in *each* state and *all* 7 continents. Steck is a member of the prestigious *50 States Marathon Club* and the *7-Continents Club*, the later created to recognize the 198 runners in the world who have officially completed such a global accomplishment. He has completed several state bicycle tours including Florida, Georgia, Montana, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, North Carolina and Tennessee.

He is married to Desta L. Horner, a former teacher at Winter Springs High School in Seminole County, FL. Horner is a co-founder of **Carroll McKenney Foundation for Public Media**. They have three adult children and five grandchildren.

