



THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF BROADCASTING
P I T T S B U R G H

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CONTACT: Rosemary Martinelli, for the National Museum of Broadcasting, 412-670-9942

**WQED-FM's JIM CUNNINGHAM HONORED WITH INAUGURAL FRANK CONRAD AWARD FOR
BROADCASTING AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA INNOVATION**

Pittsburgh Media Icons Talk Future of Broadcasting, Cable and Streaming Services During Museum Fundraiser Honoring Sesquicentennial of the Birth of Pittsburgh Broadcasting Inventor Frank Conrad

Wilkesburg, PA—Nearly 200 Pittsburgh broadcasting legends, community leaders, elected officials, and just plain TV and radio fans, converged on the historic Wilkesburg Train Station Saturday to celebrate the 150th birthday of Pittsburgh native, broadcasting pioneer, engineer and inventor, Frank Conrad, all part of a fundraiser to help the National Museum of Broadcasting (NMB) raise its profile and funding to help build a museum to Pittsburgh's legacy of broadcasting and media.

Descendants of Frank Conrad also came to Pittsburgh to celebrate the birthday and to help the board of directors of the NMB bestow the inaugural Frank Conrad Award for Broadcast and Electronic Media Innovation to WQED-FM's Artistic Director and Morning Show Host, Jim Cunningham. Cunningham, who was not told of the award until it was announced, also served as the moderator for the day's events, which included a panel discussion with long-time TV and radio broadcasters.

Cunningham, who has been involved with WQED-FM since his college internship in the early 1970s, is the longest-running regular morning radio host on any Pittsburgh market station, just one of the many reasons for his recognition. In presenting the award to Cunningham, Frank Conrad II, great-grandson of Frank Conrad, lauded Cunningham for his creativity and innovation in taking classical music to a new level and in finding the crossover with other genres.

Frank's cousin Jamie Conrad, a noted Washington, D.C.-based attorney, added "Our great-grandfather was a relentless innovator. He had over 200 patents. While some of his contemporaries thought radio would never amount to more than a quirky way for people to talk to each other, Frank was one of the first to see that broadcasting – a term he coined – had unimaginable potential."

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A Pittsburgh native who remembers listening to Jim in the late 1970s, Jamie Conrad said, “Jim’s remarkable career has demonstrated the wide range of roles that a broadcaster can play: running a radio station, inspiring and educating listeners as a host, building a crucial linkage with the Pittsburgh Symphony, writing for Pittsburgh magazine, interviewing influential people, teaching – Jim’s career exemplifies innovation.

Cunningham, who was greeted by many of his loyal fans who came to the birthday celebration, said “I am truly humbled,” as he accepted the award.

Earlier in the day, Cunningham moderated a panel of Pittsburgh broadcasting icons: KDKA-Radio’s Jack Bogut, retired WTAE-TV anchorwoman Sally Wiggin, and host of “Our Region’s Business” on WPXI-TV (and one of the Pittsburgh market’s first business and finance reporters), Bill Flanagan. The panel talked about the past, present and future of broadcast news and programming and the changes that AI and streaming services will have on how news and information is curated. The audience also had the opportunity to ask questions of the panel.

Following a silent auction of sports and TV/Radio broadcasting specialties and prizes, the crowd sang “Happy Birthday Frank Conrad,” and cut into three huge birthday cakes, festooned with Conrad’s image.

“We hope that we can bring more of these special events to the community and educate everyone about what broadcasting truly is,” NMB Board President and sports broadcasting legend, Bill Hillgrove, told the crowd. “Pittsburgh is a place of firsts, and our long-time dream of building a museum to showcase that history will, we hope, become a reality through our board’s tireless fundraising and communications, much like the tenacity of Frank Conrad himself,” Hillgrove added.

The National Museum of Broadcasting is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation and education of broadcasting and electronic media, in the city where broadcasting began in 1920. Last Nov. 2, the museum board announced plans to build an historic museum in an old bank building, just yards from where KDKA, the radio station that Frank Conrad inspired, conducted its original broadcast on Election Day, 1920. The location, in East Pittsburgh, PA, was also chosen with the goal to help revitalize the Turtle Creek Valley and its legacy of manufacturing and innovation through tourism, economic development and the museum’s educational programming.