



Photo by Linda Hahn
As a former Oregonian and long-time Duck fan, KUGN 'Voice of the Ducks' Hal Ramey is no foreigner to the greener grasses of Autzen Stadium.



Spotlight

His voice is new, but he's no stranger

By Linda Hahn
Of the Emerald

A red light flashes and the tape deck whirls. The man behind the control panel leans back in his swivel chair, acknowledges a nod from behind the glass window, while simultaneously talking with a visitor in his booth.

"Hold on a minute, okay?" Without belaying the activity surrounding him, he adjusts black earphones and swings the microphone to his face. A controlled rap flows smoothly onto the AM airwaves, out to the easy-listening crowd of Eugene.

"Hi folks, this is Hal Ramey of KUGN..." After a little more than a month at his new job, the 15-year broadcasting veteran admits that little can rattle him. But the big transition for Ramey began with the Sept. 8 opening game of the Duck's football season.

Ramey, the former radio voice of the San Jose State University football and basketball teams since 1972, has changed teams

and colors. He's entered the 1984 collegiate football season as the new "Voice of the Ducks."

An SJSU graduate, Ramey began his sportscasting career as Spartan play-by-play announcer on the school radio station. He also served as sports information director at SJSU before his employment at a succession of Bay Area stations. But the stability and the success of KUGN lured him from his home in California to the greener pastures of the Emerald City.

"The station and the University are committed to a first-class job broadcasting the game," Ramey says. "It's a good opportunity for me — and here I am."

Just as Ramey is no stranger to the control booth, he is also no stranger to Oregon or the Ducks. Both his parents grew up in this state — his mother in Clatskanie and his father in St. Helens. During the Depression, his father attended the University. But economic pressure took him from academia to more lucrative ventures in San Francisco. However, father and son still kept tabs on the Ducks. "We'd catch them whenever they'd play at Stanford or Cal," Ramey says.

He has relatives all over the state, including a cousin in Eugene. "So it's not like I'm moving into totally foreign land," Ramey has also vacationed extensively in Oregon. "In fact, let me see... yes, 1983 is the only year in my life that I haven't visited Oregon."

Ramey thinks the move from the Bay Area will benefit his two children as well as his career. "This is really pretty country, and the people here are so nice wherever I've gone. It's a lot friendlier than California, and the Bay Area is getting so crowded. This will be a great place for kids to grow up."

Enthusiasm for the move has trickled down the family. "The

little guy, my two-year-old already knows how to say, "Go Ducks!" Ramey boasts. The family recently bought a home in Eugene after spending a month in a hotel. "I wouldn't recommend a month in a hotel to anyone. But we survived it. But I don't know if the hotel did," he adds.

Moving a family of four, plus a 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. air show has hampered Ramey's ability to accept speaking engagements. Public relations work is a big part of his job, he says.

"We'll be having him speak before community organizations and take part in local activities. We want the name of Hal Ramey to be synonymous with U of O sports," says KUGN General Manager Jim Torrey.

During football practice, Ramey was out at Autzen three days a week researching his team.

"The Ducks have an excellent chance for a winning season," he predicts, though he admits that the Pac 10 is a tough conference. And who will he root for when his alma mater, San Jose, competes with the Ducks?

"Well, that's not for a year," he says with relief as his face flushes and his constant smile fades. The facade of the "controlled professional" momentarily dwindles. He admits that he will miss all the friends that he made during his 12 years at SJSU. In a rare space of seriousness he says, "It's difficult leaving friends behind. And I wish them well." But then the smile quickly returns.

"But when my team hits the field, I'll be wearing green. I like my team to win. When you're broadcasting for three hours, it's more fun talking about a winning team," he says.

"We're delighted to be here. People at the station and the University have been great. I hope to be here a long time." And with a twinkle in his eye he adds, "And I hope the Ducks win a lot."

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