

Allen appreciates role as 'Voice of the Ducks'

Kris Henry

Oregon Daily Emerald

A soda jerk job across the street from a music store and an interest in the Beatles made Jerry Allen who he is today—the "Voice of the Ducks".

While in high school, Allen unintentionally fell into the field of radio broadcasting one afternoon during a lunch break from his soda fountain job in Grants Pass.

"One day I was looking through some records at the music shop," said Allen, "and one of the announcers from the radio station was in there picking up some records. I just happened to be standing by him and he looked at me and said, 'Young man, you really seem to like music. Do you think you would be interested in being a disc jockey on the radio?'"

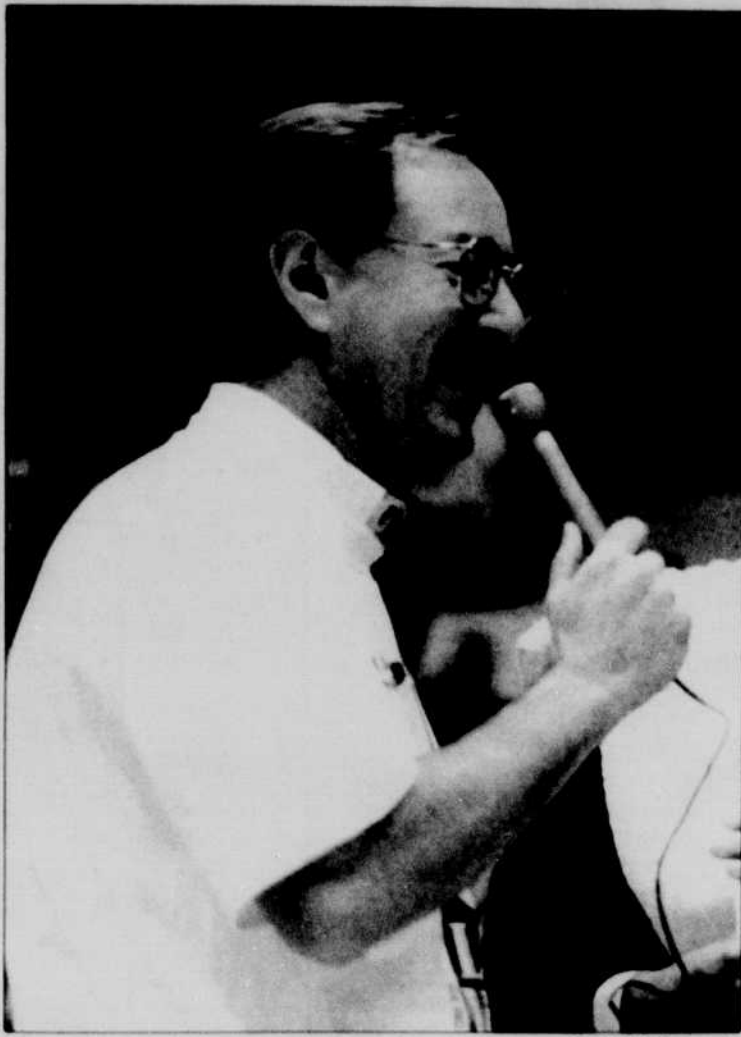
Allen's eyes lit up and it was then that he made the transition from soda jerk to pulling news copy at a radio station for six months. Allen got a weekend job on the radio and, after graduation, he went full-time into the radio business.

The first night with an open microphone was an experience the Grants Pass native remembers to this day.

"I was petrified," said the 46-year-old Allen. "My voice was so high because I was nervous. I was so scared that I probably sounded like a 4-year-old or a girl."

Allen has become a veteran Oregon sportscaster for more than 20 years now and has been the play-by-play voice of the Oregon Sports Network for both Duck football and basketball games since 1987.

"I try to do the broadcasts in a positive way and try not to nitpick and tear people down by being critical," said Allen. "I try to talk to the very average sports fan and make it simple for the lis-



Jerry Allen describes his radio stylings as not flashy and directed toward the average sports fan.

GARY GRASS/Emerald

tener to understand what I see happening.

"When I first got the job I thought that I had to separate the emotion and be objective. I soon realized that I was hired by the University and that I'm talking to Oregon fans. The listeners are fans of Oregon who don't want me to be as objective as I would be if I were doing a national broadcast with fans of both teams

listening. I'm a Duck and I can't hide that fact."

Allen feels a huge sense of pride to be a part of Oregon athletics and deemed the "Voice of the Ducks" but, at the same time, views his role as a very small part of a larger picture.

"Some people may not look at it as a small part because I'm who they hear and their connections to the game," said Allen. "I con-

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— Jerry Allen

"Voice of the Ducks" on the Oregon Sports Network

sider myself a small part because the real heart of it is the players who are putting in the hours and the effort in the games."

He has been in many exciting situations since coming to the University. The most unusual coming in Shreveport, La. when the football team went to the 1989 Independence Bowl, the team's first bowl appearance in 26 years.

The Ducks pulled off an exciting 17 point comeback victory in the bitter cold behind the direction of then junior quarterback Bill Musgrave.

"That was a huge moment in the school's history and to be a part of that was just exciting," said Allen. "The cold sort of destroyed all of that for me to the point that I wasn't thinking clearly. When the game was over, my whole focus was on survival because I was just so miserably cold."

That is how Allen ended up returning to Eugene with the band on their airplane instead of staying overnight like he had planned. He left his belongings at the hotel in Shreveport and didn't realize his mistake until thousands of miles in the air.

"I still can't believe I did that," said Allen on missing one of the greatest post-game celebrations in the University's history. "I just wasn't thinking clearly. When people freeze to death out in the wild now I understand why it happens. You just lose all your senses."

Allen has had several "favorite moments" in his sportscasting

history, the most recent coming at last season's final basketball game against UCLA at McArthur Court.

"I was almost in tears," said Allen. "It was hard to talk at the end of that game because I knew how hard the coaches and players had worked and how badly they wanted that win."

"It's more than just a win. It's knowing the feelings and emotions of the people involved and the time they put in. When it happens, it's like watching one of your own kids succeed I guess."

The toughest part of Allen's job is his absence from his wife and three children. Allen and his wife Sharon recently celebrated their 23rd anniversary. The couple are the parents of Tami, 21, Wendi, 17, and Geoff, 13.

"Sharon has been the difference in my life," said Allen. "There are not a lot of people that can put up with the hours and the pressures and the frustrations of this business."

Allen places most of the credit on his co-workers for making his job enjoyable and easy to do. Former Oregon quarterback and OSN color-analyst Mike Jorgensen particularly doesn't get enough credit for the outstanding job he has done, Allen said.

"It's a new experience for me each year," said Allen. "Sportscasting is a great business to be in. It's a lot of hours but there are a lot of rewards. I never dreamed that I could be in the position that I'm at."

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