

Ben Aycrigg

2011 WPHS Alumni Circle of Distinction

One of the most locally familiar graduates of Winter Park High School was Ben Aycrigg, who was considered King of Television in the Orlando Area for years. He was probably the most recognized man in Orlando.

WDBO-TV Channel 6 went on the air with regular programming 1954. To honor the 50th anniversary of television's start in Orlando, a list was compiled called the Central Florida Television's Golden 50 in 2004 – 50 people whose work made an impact on the region and its viewers during television's first 50 years in Orlando. Number #1 on that list was Benjamin T. Aycrigg.

He's been called the "Walter Cronkite of Orlando." And for 35 years, that's the way it was. Ben Aycrigg was the face of Channel 6 news for many Central Floridians. He reported with authority and knowledge as someone who grew up in the region. After graduating from WPHS in 1944, Aycrigg began to work at WDBO-AM as a radio announcer. He went on to attend Rollins College, and after graduation he landed a job at WLOF-Channel 9 as a reporter in 1959. He worked there for two years before jumping across town to the more popular WDBO-Channel 6 that was the start of a long and distinguished career.

Ben became the WDBO's first reporter for its news department that he would head as director from 1968 until 1976. After anchoring solo most of his career, he began to be paired with co-anchors in 1976. After a brief period as a special projects director, Ben was put back in the anchor seat for the station's noon show and then its 5:30 pm news for years. When he retired in 1996 at the age of 70, Ben was still anchoring a noon show. He is a thoughtful journalist who is remembered as a nice guy who was both well-respected and well-liked. He is retired and lives in Maitland and he has written three books.