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[Mike](#)

### [Raising a final 'color-tini' for an all-time great](#)

In a [post](#)

a few months ago, I recognized the passing of one of the greats of Rochester sportswriting and broadcasting, George Beahon. (You might recall my personal connection to Mr. Beahon, who had generously recorded a "drop," or liner, for my old request show, "The Jukebox," which ran 1995-2000 on WKLX-FM and WBBF-FM.)

With sadness, we learned this week of the passing of another broadcasting legend—and another with whom I shared a small connection in that he, too, had graciously agreed to record a "drop" for my request show: Tom Snyder

As I stated last December, because we're in the news business—and many of us in [University News](#) have strong ties with the media from previous jobs—I feel it's fitting to recognize the giants from our field on their passing. So, here are some of my recollections of Tom Snyder.

Although I'm too young to have memories of him on "The Tomorrow Show," the late-night NBC talk show on which he gained national fame in the 1970s, I became a big fan after he started hosting the "The Late, Late Show," on CBS, in the mid-1990s. (It was also then when I realized just how good Dan Aykroyd's impressions of Snyder were on "Saturday Night Live" in the '70s.)

For a while a decade ago, I spent my mornings watching traffic—from a couple thousand feet. I was the morning airborne traffic reporter for the company that provided traffic reports to almost every Rochester TV and radio station. It was pretty cool being the *only* person reporting traffic from that unique vantage point. But, on the downside for a person like me (a night person), the job required me to be out of bed at a ghastly hour in order to be in the airplane by 6 a.m. (contrary to popular belief, we didn't use a helicopter). Needless to say, back in those days I was rarely awake at 12:35 a.m. to catch "T.S." (as Snyder was affectionately known)—so I taped him . . . *every night*.

Like most traffic reporters, I often worked split shifts: morning and afternoon drive-times. So, by 9 a.m. when most people were just arriving at work, the first part of my day was over. I have fond recollections of my morning routine back then: After landing and making the short drive home, I'd put on coffee, rewind the VCR, and enjoy the "The Late, Late Show." And I'd often laugh out loud at Snyder's dry-witted quips.

He could do light interviews probably better than anyone, and he could do serious interviews as well as anyone. But perhaps what made him the best was the passion that shone through—his passion for his guests, for the topic being discussed, for his audience, *for what he was doing*.

It was sometime in 1996 when I asked Snyder to record a "'70s at 7" liner for my show. I had also invited some old-time local celebrities (such as Beahon, Joe Altobelli, Ron DeFrance and Bob Mills)—but I knew that getting one from a big-time national celebrity like Snyder would be a coup (and kind of a long shot). And I can still remember the feeling I had one day upon opening my mailbox and discovering a package with a "Late, Late Show" return address.

Here's what it sounded like:

[Tom Snyder - WKLX '70s at 7 drop](#)

Also, check out this CBS tribute (click "A Tribute to Tom Snyder"):

<http://www.cbs.com/latenight/latelate/comedy>

Here's to you, Tom Snyder—and thanks for the many great words and pictures flying through the air.

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