

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

Dick Smith

Following a two-year stint in the Army (during the Korean War) and his graduation with a journalism degree from Stanford University, Richard K. (Dick) Smith joined the west coast bureau of NBC News in January 1958.

Starting as a production assistant, Smith entered the newsfilm apprenticeship program with NBC. Within months he had his first notable assignment, covering atomic bomb tests at the Nevada Test Center. He worked alongside cameraman Gene Barnes.

After becoming a staff news cameraman in 1961, Smith covered a brush fire near the old zoo in Griffith Park and received a 1962 Golden Mike Award for his photos of the distressed animals.

In 1964, Smith spent seven weeks covering the war in Vietnam, accompanying South Vietnamese troops in fighting the Viet Cong. His newsfilm was used almost nightly on the Huntley-Brinkley news program, also on an hour long “special report” in primetime for the network.

After his stint in Vietnam, Smith worked with correspondent Robert McNeil covering the Barry Goldwater presidential campaign, five weeks of grueling cross-country travel. The campaign airplane stopped in every state with the exception of Hawaii and Alaska.

In 1966, Smith joined the staff of the network show “First Tuesday,” a two-hour primetime documentary program. Alongside correspondent Tom Pettit, he made trips to the USSR (filming the first American tourist allowed in Siberia), to Johnston Atoll (America’s Nerve Gas Arsenal), and Tahiti (French President Charles DeGaulle inspecting French Foreign Legion troops stationed there).

In 1975, Smith traveled to Fort Dietrick, Maryland, to give NBC’s “First Tuesday” viewers a look at the U.S.’s Germ Warfare Program, which earned him a “Photographic Excellence Award” from the NPPA.

As newsfilm was phased out in 1976, Smith moved over to electronic journalism (EJ) and joined “KNBC’s Unit 4,” an investigative group headed by Pete Noyes.

Significant at that time was a trip Smith made to China with reporter/anchor Jess Marlow and soundman Jim Coughy to document, among other things, Bob Hope’s activities in preparation for an hour special on NBC.

These “other things” resulted in the Chinese government’s confiscation of their videotape as well as placing the group under house arrest in Beijing. After pleas by both Hope and Marlow they were released and sent home with their videotape.

Smith accumulated 11 awards in his 36-year career, the most notable being his photographic contributions to the Emmy-winning “First Tuesday” story on “America’s Nerve Gas Arsenal.”

Equally as important as his professional accomplishments are his personal accomplishments as a father and grandfather who has instilled in his family the value of hard work, commitment over the long haul, and the art of listening and not judging. Smith retired in 1994 and continues to live in his Studio City home with Ann, his wife of 53 years, and his four adult children and three grandchildren living nearby.

