

INSIDE RADIO®

Monday, August 17, 2009

“Personalities INSIDE RADIO”

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DEDE'S DOUBLE DUTY DESERVES A SOLID “A”

by Mike Kinoshian, Special Features Editor

It is often stated records (as in achievements) are merely temporary and simply set to be shattered.

Talk to a dedicated hardball fan though and very few will proclaim any pitcher will soon hurl back-to-back no-hitters as Johnny Vander Meer of the Cincinnati Reds did in 1938.

Should someone (somehow) match that staggering feat, it would still only tie the lefty's record – not break it.

Players themselves believe Joe DiMaggio's 1941 streak of hitting safely in 56 consecutive games will never be toppled.

Focusing back to our industry, although admittedly gaining extensive acclaim at the time, an extremely strong case can nevertheless be set forth that Tom Joyner's Herculean accomplishment of doing a daily Dallas morning drive program and then flying to Chicago for afternoon drive duties was actually underrated.

If such a scenario which Joyner faced (not wanting to say no to either position) were to surface today, technology would be the easy answer thus “Fly-Jock” Joyner's unique accomplishment appears to be protected.

A select handful of local talk hosts including Thom Hartmann, Michael Smerconish, Lars Larson and Todd Schnitt are adding national platforms, usually broadcasting from the same local studio – or – even better from the comfort of their own home.

Through voice-tracking, several FM music personalities (i.e. KIIS/Los Angeles' Ryan Seacrest and WHTZ/New York's Elvis Duran) are parlaying their local shows to multiple markets.

Proud Partner

There's an especially intriguing inside out circumstance involving Citadel Media's “The Ride With Doug (Banks) & DeDe” co-host [DeDe McGuire](#) who three months ago (May 2009) tacked on morning drive responsibilities for Service Broadcasting Urban Contemporary “K-104” (KKDA-FM), ironically the very facility and day-part that helped propel Tom Joyner into national prominence.

Not only that, for a portion of the time Joyner was doing the “fly-jock” routine between KKDA-FM/Dallas and Chicago's WGCI-FM, K-104's afternoon driver was one ... DeDe McGuire. “Tom was celebrating five years being the fly-jock and Doug Banks came

to town,” she remembers. “If you were reading the trades, you knew Tom Joyner and Doug Banks were unbelievable pioneers in the business. I couldn't wait to meet Doug and we became friends.”

Many have attempted to conquer the Urban Contemporary and Urban AC syndication arena yet only a few have thrived. “Doug and Tom have succeeded at it,” declares McGuire who's worked with both of them. “It sounds hokey but Doug Banks is the best in the business. I'm grateful to have learned so much from him. This man is so witty and smart. He's a truly great radio personality as well as being gracious and giving.”

Precursor to the afternoon “Ride” was “The Doug Banks Morning Show” which enjoyed a ten-year run. “When we went to afternoons, it was his idea to [include my name in the title],” McGuire stresses. “I don't know too many [other] guys who'd share the limelight but that's what he did. Doug hates the term ‘sidekick’ and calls me his ‘partner.’ He gave me a chance to show what I could do on a larger, national scale.”

Long Distance Dedication

Home has been all over the map for the positively fetching McGuire. “When I was ten years old, my mother remarried and we moved to Germany for three years,” she explains. “It was the best experience ever.”

Most likely it's where her passion for radio commenced. “Armed Forces Network was the only thing we had there,” McGuire recalls. “I loved listening to Casey Kasem doing the countdown. It's how we stayed connected to the States. As a kid, I'd live for the weekend to hear Casey.”

Media interest is pervasive among her siblings and isn't limited to the newest member of K-104's morning team. “My sister does radio voice-tracking in Connecticut and is a news anchor in Atlantic City,” explains McGuire whose brother Michael has ample experience as a Program Director. “He'd been in Hartford and North Carolina and is now in Shreveport. Another brother used to work for Radio Disney and left radio about a year ago.”

Hopeful of being a news anchor/reporter, McGuire majored in Journalism at Texas Women's University/Denton before transferring to a Killeen (TX) community college in the late-1980s.

While a student there she worked as a receptionist at Country

KOOV. "I'd go in [the studio] and hang out with the [on-air talents]," McGuire recalls. "Someone said I had the [ideal] personality to be on the air and I began [to like that thought]. The next thing I knew I was being trained and [management] wanted me to go on the air."

A midday opening however cropped up on the cross-town Urban Contemporary day-timer.

After presenting a tape McGuire was hired, notwithstanding the fact she didn't possess any on-air experience. "I was there for a year and the numbers shot through the roof," she proudly states. "It was great and I moved on to San Antonio [where] I worked for [then rhythmic CHR] KTSM."

Play It For Me, Misty

Just one year later she'd begin a two-year afternoon drive tenure at her current morning drive address before departing to Chicago where she spent two years at Windy City Hot AC WPNT. "I [subsequently] went to Philadelphia as [CHR] WIOQ's Music Director/afternoon drive personality."

Aliases in our industry are not only perfectly acceptable, they're highly commonplace, a fact to which "Misty Morgan" can readily attest.

That was to be McGuire's KOOV on-air moniker but she switched stations before ever getting a chance to try it out.

Virtually no perceptible difference exists between her actual first name and one commonly reserved for men; therefore, the consensus was using her real name would lead to confusion.

Furthermore it was mentioned there might be a problem with her true last name. "One guy said he liked 'McGuire' and [Program Director] Bill St. John agreed," the on-air talent the industry has come to know as DeDe McGuire recounts. "People there kept thinking about a first name for me. The receptionist walked in and said my sister had called and I asked which one [she was referring to]. She said it was DeDe and I instantly [became] DeDe McGuire."

Drudging Through The Web

In gearing up for K-104's 5:30-10am "Skip Cheatham & Da

Playground" wake-up show, McGuire is up at 3:45am and usually scampering out the door about 30 minutes later. "The station is 45 minutes away and I punch around the dial to hear what's going on," she explains. "I generally get there at 5am."

Show prep finds her sorting through a surfeit of internet sites including the Drudge Report, MSNBC, allhiphop.com, CNN and Perez Hilton. "I do the full spectrum," McGuire states. "We have a quick after-show meeting every day."

Typically back at her residence by 11am McGuire naps until 12:45pm and then retraces her steps to "K-104" where she typically arrives 30 minutes before her 2-6pm Citadel Media "Ride" shift with Doug Banks. "I've looked at things in the morning [but] do a quick re-check," she comments. "I'm usually in bed between 9-10pm. I promised Citadel and Doug [my morning show job] wouldn't interfere with what I do in the afternoon. I love doing mornings because it offers a little bit more creativity and is more wide open. You're not as restricted. I like [the fact you're] kicking-off a person's [day] and you get to express yourself."

Both programs in which McGuire is involved are music-intensive yet each format clock supplies sufficient room for her to disseminate information. "Morning shows are generally heavy with news and entertainment – that's what 'K-104' does," McGuire explains. "In the afternoon, Doug and I are talking to a 25-54 Urban AC audience. We're finding African-American adults are paying attention to the news and want a little bit of talk. Luckily for us because of the demo we're going after, we're able to give out information and an entertainment value. We give people fun on their way home."

Those believing rap is a brand new genre are commonly astonished to discover it's approximately a quarter of a century old. "It came out when I was in middle school," McGuire remarks. "I can respect rap as well as R&B. My mother can't respect the rap side [while] young kids can't respect R&B. I'm in that wonderful age group which can respect both. I have the best of both worlds with what I'm doing."

Shining Star

Given that Banks and McGuire are the main principals in Citadel Media's PM "Drive" endeavor, they are the two voices most

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 • ASCAP Members Wrote 8 of Top 10 Modern Rock Tracks*
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frequently heard. Part of that includes McGuire's hourly "Five Things You Need to Know Right Now" feature.

Conversely, K-104's morning affair boasts a larger cast with McGuire functioning more as an as-needed contributor. "My input in the morning may not be as consistent as it is with Doug," acknowledges McGuire who tends to be her worst critic. "The pressure I feel is [self-imposed] and it's to do a great job and to be #1 on both shows. The PPM world is new and ever-changing. Every now and then there are some inconsistencies [so] I try my best not to be too sensitive to [swings] when [the numbers] come out. Depending on sampling, the results are good one week and not so good another."

Feedback from a one-person focus group however easily trumps those PPM notices. "I look forward to getting a report card my mother gives me [twice] every day when I get off the air," McGuire explains. "It's a [letter grade] some days [while on others] it's on a scale of one to ten. She listens online from Killeen-Fort Hood to 'K-104' in the morning and [to Chicago's 'V-103'] for the afternoon show."

Precise functioning as a team player is one of McGuire's strongest assets and she concedes, "It's an incredible dance to make sure everyone can get their 'shine' on. I learned from Doug that there are times you have to step back and give someone else the floor. You have to know how to get everyone involved [and be sure each person] looks good. When Doug and I did mornings together, we added many different cast members such as comedians but it was amazing that they didn't realize how delicate things can be. It's something that has to be learned. It is timing and understanding the rhythm of the show and the people you're working with – I know how to 'work' that."

Recent ethnic estimates indicate Hispanics comprise 24% of Dallas' population and African-Americans 14%. "[KKDA-FM] became #1 by opening up things so we're not talking strictly about black artists or things that interest only African-Americans," McGuire comments. "The morning show is very broad. It's the same thing in the afternoon. We play unbelievably great R&B music. It's very easy to listen to for people working in offices. We play many crossover artists so we have a large [non-black] listenership."

As striking as she is talented, McGuire would be a natural in the visual medium and admits she's been following another eye-popper – ex-WBLS/New York 2-6pm talent and soon-to-be Radio Hall of Fame inductee Wendy Williams - now doing her own daily television talk show. "That's something I've always wanted to do and am ready to explore it even more so now. It's going to be a matter of going through things to see what feels right and will work for me. It's definitely something I want to achieve."

Audacity To Live Life's Game

Time is clearly at a premium for McGuire who loves to travel and can usually be found on the beach. "I love looking at the ocean and hearing the [waves crash]," she states. "If I can get a three-day weekend, I try to go to my favorite hideaway, Playa del Carmen. At one point, it was Mexico's fastest-growing city. I've been going there for nine years and it's a real gem – just perfect and very quaint. I'm also an avid reader and will go from [books about] relationships to politics."

Recent favorites include Eckhart Tolle's "The Power of Now" ("It's one of those books you have to re-read") and "The Game of Life & How to Play It," authored by Florence Scovel-Shinn. "I've also read Steve Harvey's ['Act Like A Lady – Think Like A Man'], Jane Austen's 'Sense & Sensibility' and Barack Obama's 'The Audacity of Hope,'" McGuire notes.

Critical to McGuire is that people realize she's paid her dues and she's earned whatever she's achieved. "I don't skate by on half-talent," she emphasizes. "Radio is a profession – it's a business. It can be a wonderful career but you always have to take it seriously. I would be lying if I said there weren't prejudices because I'm a woman."

Not surprisingly at least three different offers came her way when she and Banks were doing the morning show. "One reason I got irritated [about the attempt to lure me away] was it would have been a lateral move," McGuire remarks. "It wasn't like I was being offered much of anything. With the background I had, I felt I could have been offered the lead position. I'd worked in three top markets and on a national show and was getting offers to be a co-host. I went through that for a while but am over it. I know what I have is a blessing and I'm very thankful for it."



WHO: DeDe McGuire

WHAT: "The Ride With Doug & DeDe"

WHERE: Citadel Media

WHEN: M-F, 2-6pm (CT)

WHAT: "Skip Cheatham & Da Playground"

WHERE: Service Broadcasting KKDA-FM "K-104"/Dallas

WHEN: M-F, 5:30-10am