

Recollections of Mike Cheever

I found Mike Cheever, via e-mail, and he sent me details about his time at WAND. One thing he is especially proud of is the creation of at least two very successful television advertising campaigns for two local car dealers. One of the most recognizable campaigns was for the local Perry Thomas Lincoln Mercury. Mike writes, "Perry Thomas' famous ending with Chauncey the Cougar growling began with a visit from the cougar and his handlers. We got the critter to roam the showroom and offices of Thomas' facility. Back at the studio we got him to growl on a blue screen which we inserted over Thomas' logo."

"We successfully used the cat on the sign for several months. Then the tape got mislaid and in a rush of frustration I got the bright idea to put Perry on the sign and have him growl. Around this time, Mary Tyler Moore and Bob Newhart were using kittens and humans to close (ala MGM's Leo the Lion), so Perry Thomas' growl became a kind of local phenomenon. Long after we both had left the limelight, I ran into Perry and (while) we were talking some (people) went by and growled. Perry said to me, "I sometimes wish you hadn't been quite so successful with that growling! Everywhere I go, people growl at me."

Mike also writes about his creation of "Tales of Terror" the Friday night feature from 1974 to 1978 on WAND. The idea began with the title of the American International Pictures series starring Vincent Price in features based on Edgar Allen Poe tales. He tried to come up with the name of a character to introduce the movie series and came up with "Dr. Terror."

He decided to wear a black turtleneck, black slacks and with the use of lighting created the "spooky look." The character of "Dr. Terror" went on to host the showing of many different horror and sci-fi movies over the years on WAND. The character's laugh was inspired by the laugh used in the classic radio shows, "The Shadow."

I'm sorry to say that Mike Cheever is no longer with us. Rest in peace....