

They got it right with Brooks and Campbell

Written by Mark Dukes

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Bob Brooks and John Campbell. Metro area journalistic jewels, they are.

Both recently have reeled in deserved personal honors. The Kingston Stadium press box was named for Brooks, who has distinguished himself for decades behind the microphone. Campbell, KCRG's sports director, was honored Saturday at Kinnick Stadium as one of the newest members of the UI press box Wall of Fame.

Brooks, who writes a weekly column for Metro Sports Report among his other duties, has excelled at the most major of sporting events but he always has taken the time to cover local high school athletics. The booth on the north end of the Kingston Stadium press box was Brooks' Friday night refuge for years.

If an athlete ever was summoned to his post after a game, you relished it and remembered it. Brooks also often asked sportswriters to be his guest at halftime. He asked me to join him for the first time when I was a very young writer and he calmed my nerves quickly by making me feel welcome.

Campbell is a bit of a throwback television reporter in that he's not always looking for the best sound bites, despite having only a few minutes to be on the air. "Sideline Freddy," as he is called, always wants to capture the story of the game and be as thorough as possible.

John joined KCRG about the same time I joined The Gazette. One thing I have observed is that unlike some in the sports media business, John never has been afraid to ask the tough question. That is one of his most redeeming qualities as a journalist.

And the thing about Campbell, too, is that he's comfortable telling peripheral stories. His outdoor segments are gems, and he has forever carved his niche with his weekly segment "Big Ol' Fish."

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I'm not big on streets and buildings being named after people. Those decisions should be made carefully and thoughtfully. But if you want to memorialize people past and present with something like a Wall of Fame, that'd be all right.

Campbell certainly should be one of the next inductees at Kingston Stadium. I'm not so sure his sidekick, Scott Saville, is far behind. Scott has covered a multitude of games at Kingston and elsewhere, and his Athlete of the Week segments are keepers.

No one should be on the Kingston Wall before Jack Ogden, one of my first mentors at The Gazette. Jack's niche was high school sports, not only in the Metro area but also to the far reaches of the circulation area. In addition to covering games, Jack wrote a weekly column called "Meet The Preps," in which he featured high school athletes.

I can think of many others who should be on that Wall, principally Bob Hersom and Jeff Dahn from my newspapering days. Hersom, who died recently in Oklahoma, was an excellent writer and exhaustive researcher who covered many top sporting events. The same goes for Dahn, who covered a multitude of state tournaments and served on many all-state committees.

I suppose some of the people covering sports now in the Metro area also are deserving of some honors. But I know they got it right when they decided to honor Brooks and Campbell.

(Mark Dukes is former sports editor of the Cedar Rapid Gazette. He is co-host of The Gym Class radio show weekdays from 3-4 p.m. on KGYM-AM 1600.)