Paley, William S. (1901-1990) Encyclopedia Article

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For more than 50 years, CBS and William S. Paley were synonymous. In 1927, Paley was involved with the formation of the Columbia Broadcasting System, and in 1928, his family purchased the company. The network grew quickly under Paley's leadership. Within six years the upstart challenger to the National Broadcasting System had almost 100 affiliate stations, nearly equal to that of NBC. By 1940, CBS was being recognized as the leader in the broadcasting field, in large part because of balanced mass entertainment and highly respected reportage, first in radio, and later in television. Reporter/broadcasters hired by Paley included Edward R. Murrow, Eric Sevareid, William L. Shirer, Howard K. Smith, and Walter Cronkite. Paley's leadership kept CBS as the leading network well into the 1980s.

William S. Paley

Further Reading:

Barnouw, Erik. *Tube of Plenty: The Evolution of American Television*. New York, Oxford University Press, 1982.

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Emery, Michael and Edwin. *The Press and America: An Interpretive History of the Mass Media*. 7th ed. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice Hall, 1992.

Weaver, Pat. *The Best Seat in the House: The Golden Years in Radio and Television*. New York, Knopf, 1994.