

Rich Bradley signs off at WUIS

By **CHRIS DETTRO**

THE STATE JOURNAL-REGISTER

Posted Sep 25, 2009 @ 11:30 PM

Last update Sep 26, 2009 @ 07:54 AM

Friday was pretty much like any other weekday for Rich Bradley, news director at WUIS radio at the University of Illinois Springfield. That is until the last 45 seconds of his seven-minute noon newscast, when he acknowledged he is retiring and thanked his listeners

Then back to business: "Now ... here's the weather for western and central Illinois...."

Bradley, 69, will officially retire on Oct. 1, which also is his 35th anniversary at the university's PBS station. And he expects to return to work occasionally on special projects. But Friday was his last newscast — he also did the station's first one on Jan. 3, 1975 — and his last taping of the popular "State Week in Review."

While his sons, a group of WUIS personnel and other well-wishers looked on, Bradley reflected upon his radio career.

He said when he made his decision to retire earlier in the year, he was steadfast.

"But now that the last day is here, it's something I'm really going to miss," he said. "That's so large a part of your daily routine."

Bradley's alarm goes off at 3:15 a.m. each weekday to allow him to get to the station in time to prepare for the morning newscast.

"People ask me if I'm going to sleep in now," he said. "Well, no, if the weekends are any example. I've been getting up at 3:15 a.m. for so many years, I seldom need the alarm clock to wake up."

"I'm sure there will be a period of adjustment and withdrawal, if that's the right word," he said.

WUIS general manager Bill Wheelhouse, who Bradley hired in the 1990s as Statehouse bureau chief, said Bradley has brought stability to the station over the years as it changed from WSSR-FM to WSSU-FM and now WUIS-FM (91.9).

"For public radio listeners, he's the only voice they've ever known in the morning at WUIS," Wheelhouse said. "He provides reassurance that the world's still here every morning."

Wheelhouse said Bradley has mentored countless people through the years.

"His employees would always say he also very concerned about the human aspect," Wheelhouse said. "If they needed time off for a family emergency, they always got it. He's very hands-off."

Bradley said he never sought glory for himself, although in 2005, he received from the national Leo C. Lee award for significant contributions to public radio news.

"My goal was to focus attention on the station," he said. "I've had a lot of help over the years. We're like cogs in a well-oiled machine."

In closing his newscast Friday, Bradley assured his listeners that a "talented and competent" staff remains at the station, and he urged the public to support them.

"Nothing will be lost by my retirement and departure," he said.

Judging from the response from those assembled Friday, others may beg to differ.

Chris Detro can be reached at 788-1510.

Copyright © 2009 GateHouse Media, Inc. Some Rights Reserved.

Original content available for non-commercial use under a Creative Commons license, except where noted.