

## FOCUS ON MEDIA & PUBLISHING:

Tom Langmyer '83 is at the top of his game at WGN Radio, The Voice of Chicago.

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# The Voice of Chicago

*Tom Langmyer '83 leads the Windy City's top radio station after finding roots at home and in Grove City*

By Amy Clingensmith '96

One day during his freshman year at Grove City College, Tom Langmyer '83 took a stroll down Broad Street and turned into the easy listening WEDA 95.1 radio station above Burdicks department store downtown. He asked the station manager for a job and WEDA had a new staffer. Langmyer sat behind the mic and ran the controls at \$3.10 an hour for four years while at Grove City. Some of his best college memories came from that small studio. And some of his best lessons in radio, too, mainly how to provide real local service and be a part of a community, were born there.

That was almost 30 years ago.

Today, Langmyer is vice president/general manager of WGN-AM Radio 720, a 50,000-watt station in Chicago that reaches 38 states. It's one of the largest AM stations in the country, dubbed The Voice of Chicago. With all local programming, a rarity today in radio, WGN has the largest staff of any station in the country and is the top revenue producer in Chicago.

For Langmyer, all of these attributes added up to an offer he couldn't refuse.

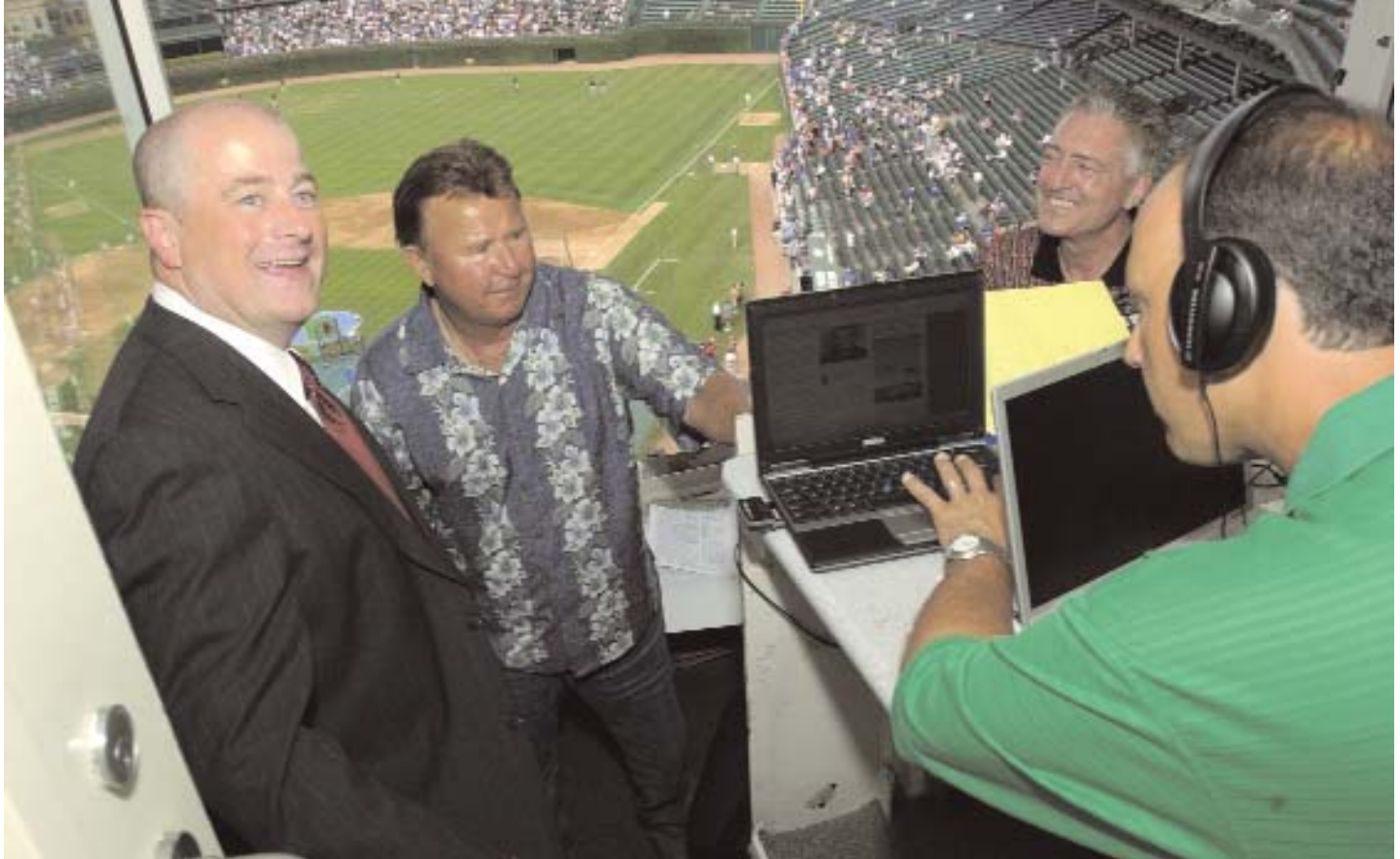
Before moving to Chicago in March 2005, Langmyer was vice president/general manager of KMOX-AM in St. Louis, a place he called home for many years. While he says it was hard to leave St. Louis, Langmyer knew the Chicago opportunity was



**TOM LANGMYER '83 IS THE VICE PRESIDENT/GENERAL MANAGER OF WGN-AM RADIO 720, A 50,000-WATT STATION IN CHICAGO.** / Photo by Randy Belice

too good to pass up, so he and his wife, Mary, and two teenage children, John and Meghan, made the move to the North Shore area of the Windy City.

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**TOM LANGMYER '83 TALKS WITH BROADCASTERS IN THE PRESS BOX AT WRIGLEY FIELD, FROM LEFT, LEGENDARY CUBS PLAYER AND CURRENT WGN GAME ANALYST RON SANTO, PLAY-BY-PLAY ANNOUNCER PAT HUGHES AND SPORTSCASTER DAVE KAPLAN. WGN-AM AIRS ALL CHICAGO CUBS GAMES. / Photo by Randy Belice**

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Also while in St. Louis, Langmyer was simultaneously vice president/programming for CBS Radio's News/Talk Stations Group, which included stations in Dallas, Philadelphia, Minneapolis, Las Vegas, Hartford and Pittsburgh, namely KDKA.

Langmyer says he certainly started to move toward his successful career in radio while at Grove City, working as both program director and general manager at the College's WSAJ.

"Working with the large staff and varied programming of the college station did much to prepare me to understand all elements of an organization and leadership," he says.

There were other elements of radio, however, that were shaped at Grove City College. There are lessons that are not learned in the booth, lessons that Langmyer has relied upon in many years of management.

"My values were instilled by my parents and reinforced at Grove City, preparing me to deal the right way with

**“ It was interesting to me that I could be transported from my bedroom to anywhere in the world. Even if you were alone, you were never really alone with the radio. ”**

**- TOM LANGMYER '83**

many dilemmas during my career," he says. "I've seen a lot since leaving Grove City College and had to manage and lead through many tough situations."

Langmyer's interest in the medium actually began as a child. While growing up in Buffalo, N.Y., he was fascinated with radio and listened to radio stations from all around the country.

"It was interesting to me," he says, "that I could be transported from my bedroom to anywhere in the world. Even if you were alone, you were never really alone with the radio."

In high school, he worked at WBEN-

AM in his hometown and carried his passion for radio to Grove City. After college, he worked as a program manager and an air traffic pilot and reporter at Buffalo's WGR-AM/FM from 1982 to 1986 and then spent six years as program director at WSYR-AM and WYYY-FM in Syracuse, N.Y.

But Tom Langmyer is more than just radio.

Besides a husband and father who loves to travel with his family, he's also an author and a volunteer.

And - striving to be the good, well-rounded Grove City grad - Langmyer is a private pilot and a hockey player, too.

The hat of 'author' is a relatively new accessory for Langmyer to wear. In early 2008, his first book will be published. The non-fiction work, "Lake Erie: History and Views," takes a close look at the Lake Erie region he grew up in, with its rich traditions, colorful landscapes and engaging stories.

Langmyer's book was actually conjured in his mind while working at WGR as an

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## Tom Langmyer '83 moves up the dial in radio career

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air traffic reporter. He was fascinated with the Lake Erie region and appreciated its beauty while flying over each day; he thought others might find an appreciation for it as well. Also an amateur photographer, Langmyer took most of the shots for the book himself, with a few contributions from his sister.

As for the hat of 'volunteer,' while in St. Louis, he served on the boards of directors of the Regional Chamber and Growth Association, Urban League of Greater St. Louis, the Boy Scouts of America/St. Louis and Forest Park Forever. He was honorary chairman of the Catholic Charities Christmas Appeal for the Archdiocese of Saint Louis, receiving the "Good Samaritan Award" in 2004.

Langmyer also carried his civic interests over from St. Louis to Chicago. He serves on the board of directors of the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce and is active with the Illinois Broadcasters Association, Radio Broadcasters of Chicago, National Radio Hall of Fame & Museum, Buffalo Broadcast Pioneers and the WGN Radio 720 Neediest Kids Fund. He also finds time to volunteer with the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation.

The 'private pilot' hat was first worn during his air traffic days in Buffalo. Even after some dicey flights, he developed a love for the sky and accumulated enough hours for his private pilot's license.

The 'hockey' hat, or helmet, came from growing up in the snowy winters of Buffalo. What kid along the frozen shorelines of western New York doesn't play hockey? But Langmyer continued the sport into his adulthood. In Missouri, he even served as director of Hockey North America/St. Louis.



ABOVE: TOM LANGMYER '83 WORKED AS PROGRAM DIRECTOR AND GENERAL MANAGER AT WSAJ WHILE AT GROVE CITY COLLEGE. BELOW: LANGMYER KEEPS ACTIVE IN AN ADULT HOCKEY LEAGUE. / Contributed photos



But these days, most of Langmyer's time is indeed taken up with radio. The WGN offices are housed in the historic Tribune Tower on Michigan Avenue near the Chicago River. The building was originally an entry into an international competition for "the most beautiful office building in the world." Today, it is home to the "Chicago Tribune" and the Tribune Company, the second-largest newspaper publisher in the country, also operating the "Los Angeles Times," "Newsday," "Hartford Courant," "Orlando Sentinel"

and "Baltimore Sun."

The company also owns Tribune Broadcasting, Tribune Entertainment and Tribune Media Services, along with its 11 daily newspapers and 24 television stations, reaching more than 80 percent of U.S. households. It is the only media organization with newspapers, television stations and web sites in the nation's top three markets.

One of Langmyer's major focus points is working with the publisher of the

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**TOM LANGMYER '83 SITS AT THE MIC AT WEDA IN DOWNTOWN GROVE CITY.** / Contributed photo

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Chicago Tribune to build cross-media synergies between the editorial staffs.

Presently, the Tribune Company owns the Chicago Cubs baseball team, although that will probably change by next season, and the partnership allows Langmyer to spend an evening or two at Wrigley Field, if he can get away from his hectic office inside the Tribune Tower.

The Tribune Tower has kept its charm since its birth in '22. Langmyer can wind his way through the maze-like hallways, from his office to a studio, with ease. Each doorway is still hugged by original molding and the intimidating boardroom of the original Tribune publisher is in tact, right down to a secret doorway.

The outside of the Tribune Tower is just as interesting and full of character. Incorporated into the façade of the building are stones from significant, historic and ancient structures from around the world, including rock fragments from the Alamo, the Colosseum, the Great Wall of China, Ground Zero in New York City and the Roman Baths.

Perhaps like his office building, Langmyer can be described as having



**TOM LANGMYER '83 SPENDS A RAINY MORNING OUTSIDE OF THE WGN OFFICES AT THE HISTORIC TRIBUNE TOWER IN DOWNTOWN CHICAGO.** / Photo by Randy Belice

many facets, interesting and full of character. The Nu Del brother admits he was not a “stellar student” while at Grove City but certainly social. Besides radio, he also dabbled in theater and was a part of Orientation Board but remained very focused on his goals, whether it was eventually running one of the largest AM

stations in the country or just having fun that weekend with friends.

In the media business, professionals never “make” news, but Tom Langmyer knows how to make memories.

*(Amy Clingensmith '96 is the Grove City College director of communications and GeDUNK managing editor.)*

