Tom Brokaw turned 71 on February 6, 2011, but the boyish good looks and deep, mellifluous voice seem unchanged from what we saw and heard when he ascended to the anchor chair of the NBC Nightly News in 1982, nearly thirty years ago. He has, for years, been the personification of NBC News—the only person to have hosted all three of NBC’s major news programs: The Today Show and Meet the Press, in addition to Nightly News. Brokaw “retired” from that anchor chair in 2004 to become a Special Correspondent for the network, which keeps him busier than most people less than half his age. On the January day before he spoke to the Silurians, he described his work schedule: “This week alone I went out to South Dakota and back on Sunday to profile a military family because I’m doing a taping with Oprah on Friday with Mrs. Obama about military families and their needs. So, yesterday I went down to Washington to have lunch with Admiral Mullen, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, to talk about that. Tomorrow night I’m going to Boston to kick off a year-long series on the 50th Anniversary of the Inauguration of John F. Kennedy, and then I’m going to Chicago and coming back. I’m working on a series for The Today Show and Nightly News on ‘America at the Crossroads: about the still difficult economic conditions that exist in this country, especially when it comes to dealing with unemployment and training a new generation of workers. And then in April, I’m going to go back to Iraq to catch up with people that we interviewed at the beginning of the war. One of them we continued on Page 1.
Arthur Schlesinger Jr: A Son Reflects

By Stephen Schlesinger

My father, the late historian Arthur Schlesinger Jr., might have seemed like the classic, bow-tied, cloistered, academic, but he secretly yearned to be a journalist. He was brought up in a family in which teaching American history was the main business, a tradition begun by his father, Arthur Schlesinger Sr., who was one of the leading US historians at Harvard University. My father faithfully followed his father into the same field, joining the Harvard history department after World War II in his mid-20s, despite never earning his Ph.D. Yet throughout his life, he was attracted to the work of reporters. This was not entirely surprising as his own father was active in the Neiman Fellows, an organization that brought newsmen to Harvard for a year. My father felt that journalists, with their fingers on the pulse of the nation, had interesting, rough and ready, careers, leading cosmopolitan and intriguing lives, often more so than academics. "The Front Page" was his favorite movie. And, from his historian's perspective, reporters were all writing the first drafts of history.


He encouraged all of his sons to go into journalism (though not his two daughters). My younger brother Andrew was a reporter for The Nashville Tennessean and The Rocky Mountain News and later a producer for ABC's Close-Up. Today he is a freelance journalist. My youngest brother, Robert, was a one-time reporter for The Washington Globe's Washington office and is now editor of the Opinion page of US News and World Report website. As for myself, despite having a law degree, I started freelancing for The Village Voice after graduation. Later I founded and edited my own magazine, The New Democrat, a monthly publication on the liberal-left of the Democratic Party in the late 1960s. Eventually I gravitated to becoming a columnist for The Boston Globe writing the "Literary Life" column. At one point, my father tried to redirect me to The New York Times but in my youthful arrogance I sought a chance to serve as deputy to Harrison Salisbury as he was setting up the New York Times Op-Ed page. Later I worked for Time Magazine. In 1978, I briefly reported on politics for The New York Post and worked on editorials with Rupert Murdoch who was then promising to keep The Post a liberal daily. In the 1990s, I became publisher of the quarterly publication, The World Policy Journal.

Though my father was well-known for his scholarly works, he, in many ways, practiced journalism almost as much as academics. In his extra hours, away from teaching and book-writing, he wrote movie reviews for Show Magazine, contributed articles to Life Magazine and Vanity Fair and Esquire, served as a monthly columnist for The Wall Street Journal, The New York Post and other publications, and regularly wrote Op-Ed pieces for a variety of newspapers. Through his work as a speechwriter and aide to Adlai Stevenson, full-time Special Assistant to John Kennedy in the White House, later as an occasional advisor to Robert Kennedy and Democratic presidential candidates ranging from George McGovern to Walter Mondale to Bill Clinton to Al Gore to John Kerry, he kept abreast of the central issues of his time and wrote incisive commentaries on them. He sought out newspapers and magazines that reached the largest audiences in order to have the widest impact on the national debate. Part of the enjoyment he took in this arena was stirring up verbal fistfights over his views. Toward the end of his life, in his late 80s, he learned how to blog and added commentaries for the Huffingtonpost.com to his editorial arsenal.

Oddly enough, within his own academic career, such worldly ventures earned him quizzical stares from his professional colleagues. Many fellow scholars felt that it was somehow demeaning or improper for a highly influential and respected professor like my father to write for popular publications. This attitude carried over, in some respects, even to the success of his best-selling books about such celebrated presidents as Andrew Jackson, Franklin Roosevelt, and John F. Kennedy. Certain academics regarded the braver reviews, enormous sales, and, on at least two occasions, Pulitzer Prizes he received, as proof of unscholarly work. But he never cared what his colleagues thought and he never flinched from playing a public role. He wanted to be an authoritative figure in the American marketplace of ideas, both as an observer and participant. He did this for over seventy years. He became a historian/journalist in the finest sense of both words.
ent, tough and self-controlled character.

"He was through and through a Russian nationalist and he had enormous pride in what the country was, and his KGB DNA was pretty self-evident from the first time I met him — very strong-willed — and it was clear that he was going to run the modern Russia as a tough cop. And he has."

Thomas John grew up as far removed from great matters of state and foreign policy as a kid could be — far out on the Great Plains of South Dakota in towns so small that they didn’t have a daily newspaper or even a radio station.

"But I was curious as to what was going on around me, and I was kind of a town crier. I’d pass along stories that I’d heard up and down our neighborhoods and so on, and my mother was the assistant managing postmistress. She was like the

The Space Shuttle Challenger explosion, a tragedy that stunned and gripped the nation, January 28, 1986.

The view was, he says, the collapse of the Berlin Wall. Brokaw was in Berlin when the wall was torn down — an event that he found truly stunning. "Most of us had grown up with the idea that the Soviet Union would be there well into the 21st Century and that Communism would be this impressive force."

He later landed an exclusive interview with Mikhail Gorbachev, the man who changed the Soviet landscape.

"What I was so struck by was — because I had covered the Keller Soviet leaders and they were men in cardboard suits who didn’t have anything to say to the press because they had never dealt with us — he was so self-assured and he could ease with himself. When I first met him I was changing his microphone and I re-alized that he wasn’t used to having anybody babbling around with his words. Mr. Gorbachev, you must understand that this is something I had to do in my job every day. And he looked at me and he said, ‘You wouldn’t believe what I have to do in my job every day!’ And we had a big laugh about that."

They are still in touch. He sees Gorbachev when he comes to New York and saw him in Berlin when he went back for the anniversary of the end of the Berlin Wall. He’s doing well. He’s a great man. He doesn’t get the credit in his own country for what he did, but he will at some point get the credit from historians for changing the face of Russia in a peaceful way. The tanks didn’t roll. There was not bloodshed in the streets and that was probably the best managing editor in town, because every-thing came through the post office. She would come home at night and tell us what was going on. And I think that peaked my interest.

"In the early days I listened to radio and heard Edward R. Murrow and all the great radio giants and Lowell Thomas, and when I was a sophomore in high school Hunter-Brinkley began, and that was a new world. We had our first tele-

Tom Brokaw at the fall of the Berlin Wall, Brokaw the sole network anchor on the scene in Berlin when the historic collapse occurred, November 1989.

To be a network correspondent.

He started anchoring and reporting in Sioux City, Iowa, and then in Omaha, earning next to nothing, but learning everything. "I would do the morning shows then write the noon show, then go out and cover stories." He went from there to Atlanta quickly to become the 11:00 o’clock anchor in what was one of the biggest markets in the country at the time, and very swiftly got picked up by NBC because so much was going on in the South that he was showing up on the Hunter-Brinkley Report. He did not go home af-ter the end of the late newcast. I would get on an airplane late at night from Atlanta and fly to Hanyville or Americus, Georgia, wherever the latest outbreak was, and work until three o’clock in the morning.

All in all, Tom Brokaw has had the perfect career. He rose to the pinnacle in television news in a way that is unique, as his golden age, although he thinks there have been significant improvements. "When I was first starting, we were a dukopoly. It was only CBS and NBC. ABC was not even a player in those days. I liked that. Who wouldn’t? I often tell people, you think about it as the glory days, but all the decisions that were made at network news were made by white middle-aged men living on the eastern sea-board, and that was their prism. There were no women on the air. There were no women in the decision-making process. They were not producing anything, so that’s been a welcome change, frankly. At the same time, there was, I think, much more of a commitment to providing a por-trait of the world everyday — what was going on in foreign areas. The Chinese premier’s visit to this country will not get a lot of attention, my guess is, in the next couple of days. It would have in the old days.

"The big change, however, is that net-work news is increasingly a niche in this vast universe of cable, the internet and blogging and so on. We still have a big audience. Katie Couric anchoring The CBS Evening News is third among the three, but she still has twice the audience that Bill O’Reilly does on a nightly basis. People don’t stop and realize that. She’s at about 6 million viewers. Brian (Williams on NBC News) is 9-million nightly — he’s got a big lead, and Diane (ABC News with Diane Sawyer) is about a million and a half behind him. Between them they’ve got about 20-mil-lion viewers a night and cable does even come close to that. The big night the other night for Piers Morgan was 2.3 — or whatever that was — and Hannity had a little better number with Sarah Palin at 2.4 — something in that margin. The article said “A Big Win for Hannity,” but it was 100-thousand viewers. A big win in the evening news is a million viewers, so people have to look at the real numbers."

Nevertheless, Brokaw is well aware of the troubling fact that the young are not watching the evening news, clearly evi-denced by all the commercials for erectile dysfunction and dentures. As he sees it, the young don’t have time to sit down at 6:30 p.m. and watch a program. But they are getting news: on PDAs, BlackBerries, iPads and PCs, off any number of websites. This is why Brian Williams an-nounces that the news will continue on nbcnews.com at the end of every broad-cast. A more serious issue, says Brokaw, is to help the young understand the sources of the information they get on the internet, to discern between fact and opinion.

"There are opportunities now that didn’t exist before, as bloggers or as contributors to websites — the aggregators that are out there: The Huffington Post or The Daily Beast or other places you can carve out. It’s the new frontier. You can start an entire business on your own. I think that journalists of my generation have to be what I call the outsiders for the place of journalism in our life. We have to remind people what journalism is important. The mechanics for getting the news are changing, there’s no question about that. But we still are going to have to know about what’s going on in our world, and that’s the governmental level and in the popular culture so that we can move forward — so that we have reliable information on which to make a decision."
My Favorite Liberal Republican: Louis J. Lefkowitz

Continued from Page 4

took about two minutes, saved TIME probably hundreds of thousands of dollars. That was in 1976, when a few hundred thousand meant something. My brief chat with Lefkowitz also revealed me a stay in the dog house of my then-boss at TIME. That would be Henry Grunwald, a rather demanding editor whose canine qualities I have always respected.

How did Lefkowitz get to play savior? It’s a tale that should be told in journalism school classes on the importance of maintaining sources and hoarding unlisted phone numbers.

Back in 1958, I was the Herald Tribune’s youngest (and greenest) general assignment reporter, aspiring to cover politics. Lefkowitz had just emerged from obscurity— a Jewish Republican in Tannenbaum-dominated Manhattan who wasn’t going to make it on his looks or social connections. He was a guy who had served briefly in the legislature when Al Smith ruled Albany, and briefly as a low-level judge. Also, he knew the acquired expertise in state election law and a reputation for party loyalty. Javits’s ascension to the Senate had left the A.G. spot open. To the surprise of many, the legislature chose Lefkowitz to serve out the term. It was rewarding to chat him up at political gatherings because he had a good ear for anecdotes. He also wanted validation as he prepared to run for a full term. When a Tribune story mentioned him favorably, he was grateful. “Call me anytime,” he said, while bestowing his home phone number.

Nearly 20 years later, after a variety of assignments in New York and Washington, I was TIME’s New York regional bureau chief and also the magazine’s liaison with state politicians. As the 1976 election approached, TIME became a co-sponsor of an innovative demographic analysis system that would help us parse the results as votes were still being counted.

If worked, the gleanings would be invaluable in what was the longest and most difficult night the staff experienced every four years. TIME, like Newsweek, published a special election issue in that era. Alternative cover portraits and story packages were prepared. The edition was supposed to go to press before dawn the weekend after the big night (as opposed to the normal Saturday closing). The magazine was to be on newsstands Thurs- day and in the mail to subscribers.

The Great Louis J. Lefkowitz, Attorney General of the State from 1962-1978 — the longest tenure since the office was established. He was known as “The People’s Lawyer.”

Any delay — even a few hours — would be costly in terms of dollars and missed deliveries. When an election threatened to be close, as the context of the 1976 big night, former Attorney General Ford and Jimmy Carter had become, our collective anxiety level rose dramatically.

My assignment that night started at the offices of ABC, our partner in the new polling operation, and I report back. After going over the computer printout with their geographic and geographic sampling were revealing. Soon after midnight, the pieces are falling into place and there is a new telling of the pre-election polls, both the popular vote and electoral margins are close. But Carter will win.

By about 3:00 a.m., I’m back in the TIME Life Building. Grunwald, several other editors and I spent the night live reading the material one more time and the lead story explaining how the whole thing was almost done. Grunwald had suggested to TIME’s main office in Chicago to roll the Carter cover picture. Boring that much news is button is pushed, however, a wire service bulletin intrudes. Lyndon B. Johnson, the medical conspiracy theorist turned political party member, had found a New York State Supreme Court judge willing to listen to his petition to table the state’s electoral votes because of alleged irregularities — this is the biggest consequence of the election.

If it worked, the gleanings would be invaluable in what was the longest and most difficult night the staff experienced every four years. TIME, like Newsweek, published a special election issue in that era. Alternative cover portraits and story packages were prepared. The edition was supposed to go to press before dawn the weekend after the big night (as opposed to the normal Saturday closing). The magazine was to be on newsstands Thursday and in the mail to subscribers.

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The 1993 World Trade Center Bombing

By Mark Marchese,
Former Director of Media Relations
Port Authority of N.Y. and N.J.

Shortly before the New York Press Club’s 50th anniversary dinner in 1998, Gabe Pressman asked a committee of veteran newsmen to name the ten biggest stories of the last half century. The response for number one was almost unanimous—the February 26, 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center.

That terrorist attack left six dead, more than a thousand injured and tore a hole through five basement floors half the size of a football field. Cost of damage was almost 400 million dollars.

As incredible as it may seem, the “biggest” local story in fifty years has all but been forgotten except for those directly impacted by it.

I recall it was midday when the quiet of a snowy Friday was interrupted by an explosion that rocked Tower One.

I was in my office on the 68th floor talking to Tom Poster of the Daily News when the blast occurred. The office seemed to shake, computer screens went blank, lights went out and I remember shouting, “What the hell was that!”

Colleagues complained that they were unable to reach police or anyone in our operations control center.

None of us knew at the time that an enormous bomb equivalent to 1,200 pounds of TNT had blown the core out of our sophisticated emergency system.

As smoke started to seep into the hallway, phones started to go dead.

I remember exchanging information by phone with reporters.

Rich Lamb of WCBS Radio was especially helpful in those early moments by alerting us to the progress and location of five rescue units.

We couldn’t even use portable radios to get news broadcasts because of an electrical field interference created by the building’s antennae.

Smoke now entered the office and we knew we had better head for the stairwell.

Together with staffer Joy Faber, I met with the Port Authority’s executive director, Stan Brezenoff, who was as perplexed as everyone else as to what was happening.

We joined crowds of tenants slowly down the darkened staircase, lit only by an odd flashlight. The trek down was surprisingly calm despite heavy smoke and uncertainty caused by the lack of communication.

Heavy smoke forced us off at the 49th floor, the offices of Daiwa, a large Japanese banking firm. There were about a hundred persons there. Some were lying down with their faces pressed against the cold windows; others chose to breathe through wet paper towels.

The massive 1993 World Trade Center explosion in which a truck bomb was detonated beneath the North Tower. Above, the underground parking garage in its aftermath.

61 Years on the Sports Beat!

By Frank Litsky

I started working for The New York Times in 1958, not as some have gestured, when Teddy Roosevelt climbed San Juan Hill or when Gutenberg did whatever he did. I retired in 2008 (I still write sports advance obits) after 61 1/2 years in the business and 50 years with The Times before it became United Press International.

The legendary sportswriter, Red Smith.

When I started at The Times, Raymond J. Kelly, the sports editor, had just retired, but the stories about him stayed fresh.

Supposedly, he had an elevated chair in the corner of the department so he could sit on that perch and make sure all his troops were working. Supposedly, he would walk up to a reporter on a Friday evening and say, “You are on one week of vacation starting Monday.”

In those typewriter days, with a messy ashtray on every desk, most reporters wrote in the office. Those covering games would file via Western Union, and I remember my stories being sent dot-dash before teletype machines were utilized.

The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey

Arthur Daley and Dave Anderson. I have watched such sports copy boys as Robert Lipsyte and John Corry become distinguished writers and authors. I have learned from such prolific sports geniuses as the experts-on-everything Leonard Koppett and Allison Danzig and the slotman-with-all-the-answers Steve Tyso.

I have seen the emphasis in The Times sports section change from the unexciting results and stories about making plans to the present collection of less game coverage but more analysis (or maybe plain opinion) of what it means.

My professional career started with 11½ years of writing sports for the radio wires and later the news wires of United Press before it became United Press International.


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Light on Prostate Cancer
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not prostate cancer but prostate tissue. The very common condition called BPH — the non cancerous swelling of the prostate — is in fact a frequent companion of aging, the usual cause of an elevated number.

It is critical that neither the American Cancer Society nor the American Urological Association, the American Medical Association nor the federal Government's Agency for Health Care Quality recommend that men get regular PSA tests. They all offer the meaningless “talk to your doctor about it” advice. But most general practitioners give men a PSA test with no questions or conversation.

If the level is elevated — and I could write a separate article about the arguments over what constitutes “elevated” — the false or potentially unprovided pathologist usually gets radiation. Hormone treatments are becoming a third new option.

The beginning of the PSA era of massive overdiagnosis was the introduction of an endoscopic strip biopsy. A few enlightened urologists suggested the concept of “watchful waiting” or “active surveillance,” monitoring the disease over time in a much more thoughtful way, but no one would seek that treatment.

As a journalist, over the years, I grew to know a number of both prostate cancer victims and some of their family members. The stories were as varied as the patients, and some of the families had so much energy and determination that they did things on their own. And sometimes it worked.

Some families watched carefully and did nothing. And sometimes it didn’t work.

So what is a man to do? The most important point about the entire prostate cancer issue is that it IS important to have a PSA test. It IS important to know where you stand. If you have yet to have a PSA test (a rarely done desire) you do want to go down that road. If a doctor suggests a biopsy, do it. If the biopsy is positive, do another one. It is likely to find it. If you have a diagnosis of cancer do you need treatment.

Conservative risers don’t like a concept of “worst-case treatment.” Even at its worst, prostate cancer grows very slowly.

Recent studies reveal genetic markers that may make for a better assessment of how aggressive the cancer is. There is a wealth of information on the Internet and in books to help you decide. (I highly recommend “Invasion of the Prostate Snatchers” by Mark Scholz and Ralph Blum.) You have time. Take your time.

In Memoriam
Paul Kolton

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Paul Kolton

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SILURIAN NEWS MARCH 2011

READER'S LETTERS

Writing was generally dull and quotes were scarce. Then, starting in the mid-1950s, I began writing about the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

I didn’t bury the news, but at the same time I did not necessarily put all of what-I-know-when-where-in-the-how-in order to highlight the glorious features. He had an ear for quotes and the ability to let them tell his story.

He was so successful that several old-time reporters tried to duplicate the way he did. One tried so hard and so unsuccessfully that a friend told him, “When the world ends, you probably won’t have it in your column.”

That young reporter was Gay Talese. He left us early in his career, and I don’t know whatever happened to him or if he is still writing.

One depressing fact was the amount of space provided (or not provided) for the daily sports section. In 1971, to prepare for the first annual pitcher for more space, Jim Roach, then the sports editor, asked me to determine how much space we had for sports by the end of 1970. I measured every page of every day that year and found that we had carried 224.364 inches of sports copy, headlines, photographs and ads. Monday through Saturday we were averaging 20.1/2 columns a day. Those were the days of eight columns to a page, so the New York edition carried less than 24% of its space to sports. Now the New York edition has more than twice that space.

As teams and leagues grew but space didn’t, I began to yearn for more space. When I was laying out the daily paper in the late 1960’s and early 1970’s, my rule of thumb was 300 words for most stories; 450 words for the big tasks; 500 words for the Yankees and Mets. George Vecsey covered the Yankees and, to this day he calls me Frank, but 910.

1993 WTC Bombing
Continued from Page 5

of almost one inch thick windows could be heard as Brezenoff gave comforting assurances to the group. A large crowd group approached at the arrival of the first rescue firefighter.

As we made our way down the remaining 49 floors, we found that about 400 workers appeared and when I finally reached the street three and one half hours later, it was ablated with the red lights on the wall. The next media response was similar, with teams of reporters and photographers everywhere.

I thought to myself in all my years as a reporter and information officer, I never faced a more difficult and complex public relations problem.

Some information officers were in the building when the bomb went off. They took anywhere from two to four hours to reach the street.

I was 700 feet above the blast site and for four hours knew less than the general public. In those early hours we had no offices, desk, phone, typewriter or computer. We called in hourly quarters to make telephone calls.

Our first priority was to rush the remaining 49 floors and disseminate the information. We relied on the fireman searches so as to dispel rumors of massive numbers of deaths.

The best reporting of acts of heroism like the two Port Authority attorneys who remained with their wheelchair-bound colleague and carried her down 66 floors through a smoke-filled stairwell.

Then there was the Port Authority police officer who rappelled into a massive crater created by the bomb — amidst exploding gas tanks and burning vehicles — to rescue survivors, including a New York City firefighter who fell into the crater.

Shortly after 9:00 p.m., almost nine hours after the blast, the possibility of another tragedy was narrowly averted when the newly created Command Post in the Westin Hotel Ballroom had to be abandoned.

Hundreds of key and high ranking emergency personnel, including Fire and Police Commissioners, the regional director of the FBI and the Executive Director of the Port Authority were forced to quickly evacuate. Engineering Director Eugene Facullo noted that the ballroom was directly above the crater and that the room’s supporting steel columns were unstable, leaving the ballroom in danger of imminent collapse.

It wasn’t until the next day that confirmation of — what everyone now suspected — came that it was a bomb.

Several days later, I ran into a friend, General Manager of Tenant Services for the World Trade Center, Doug Karpoff. He stood right there and said, “We were lucky, really lucky.”

Doug, as it turned out, ran out of luck when he showed up for work on September 12th.

Now eighteen years later, the bombing takes its place among other notable, all but forgotten, Metropolitan area stories sparked by terrorist bombings including members of the New York City Bomb Squad killed when a bomb exploded outside of the British Pavilion at the 1939 World’s Fair and 12 killed and 74 injured in 1975 when a bomb exploded in a locker at La Guardia Airport.

New Members

David Andraikov,

Marvin Appel,
President, APBA/Public Relations, Director of Public Relations, New York Yankees, Publisher, Vice President of Public Relations to President, SI, President of the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, Author.

David Credol,

Nancy Dernan,

Joe Galdston,

Charles Kerner
Columnist and Editor, Sidewalk Foundation, Website, TISToffT thinnerfoundation.com, Columnist, Reuters, Columnist, Columnist, Columnist, Columnist, Columnist, Columnist, Columnist, Columnist, Columnist.

Joyce Wadler

Valerie Falchi, How to Angles Times Angles.

Barry S. Kanner

John J. Lennon

William Whitten
Chief of The Atlantic Times, Reporter, SFR, Rulers, Bloomberg, German Press Agency, Newsweek, Newsweek, Newsweek, Newsweek, Newsweek, Newsweek, Newsweek, Newsweek, Newsweek, Newsweek, Newsweek, Newsweek.

Jill Wagner

Faye Rasiper

Jimmy Walker
Reporter, New York Post, New York Correspondent, Washing Post, USA Today, USA Today, USA Today, USA Today, USA Today, USA Today, USA Today, USA Today, USA Today, USA Today, USA Today.