

## Rod (Roderick) Belcher



Rod had a long career in the Pacific Northwest as a sports and news broadcaster and also had been an advertising executive, a public affairs officer for the WA Dept. of Transportation, and a freelance writer/columnist. He attended schools in San Francisco, Oakland and Fortuna CA, and then Humboldt State College (now Univ.) from 1937-42. At Humboldt he was a letter-winner in three sports, and was selected to the All-Far Western Conference basketball team on the championship squad of 1942. He was active there in drama, music and as a publications writer-editor. He had briefly dropped out of college at age 19 to become sports editor of the Humboldt Times, a Eureka CA morning daily, but returned to college to pursue courses leading toward a radio career. In 1942, he landed a job as news and sports director of a Missoula MT radio station, but later that year he entered military service, spending 39 months in the Army Air Corps at various stateside posts and finally on Guam, before his 1946 discharge. He resumed his Missoula radio job, but in late 1946, he was hired as sports/news/disc jockey broadcaster at Tacoma's KMO where he stayed for four years. He played on a Tacoma basketball team that won the Northwest AAU championship in 1948 and participated in the National AAU Tournament in Denver.

Rod briefly moved to San Francisco, where he was hired as the radio broadcaster for the S.F. 49ers. This move prompted an extra "15 minutes of Bay Area fame" when he was forced to use the name "Rod Hughes" at the behest of a brewery sponsor who frowned on the name Belcher as a spokesman for the product. After the 1950 season he lost that job when the brewery fell on hard times and dropped its sponsorship of the 49er broadcasts. Rod (as Belcher again) returned to the Northwest and from 1951 to 1970 was Seattle's most active radio and television sports broadcaster---the final nine years as Sports Director for KING-TV & Radio. He did play-by-play announcing on UW football, basketball and track; for Seattle U. basketball during the glory years of the O'Brien twins and Elgin Baylor; Seattle Rainiers baseball, succeeding the legendary Leo Lassen for two seasons; boxing, hockey, hydroplane and UW crew racing; as well as high school football and basketball, and one season (1969-70) doing WSU major sports. He was the original public address announcer for the Seattle Supersonics (1967-68-69) and later did the same for both UW and Seattle U. basketball. Rod worked for 28 years as the informational press box announcer at all Seattle Seahawk home games. He composed (both music & words) "Go, Go You Pilots", fight song of the 1969 Seattle major league baseball team that moved after one year to Milwaukee. For 12 years he wrote a "Trivia" column in for the Seattle Times.

Rod's special avocations were stream fishing for steelhead, salmon and cutthroat trout; and appreciation of traditional jazz music. He was, for many years, vice-president of the Puget Sound Traditional Jazz Society. He also served in 1956 as President of the Puget Sound Sportswriters & Sportscasters Association and was three times winner of the state's "Sportscaster of the Year" award, during the 1960s. A celebration of Rod's life will be held at The Ballard Elks, 6411 Seaview Ave NW on Tuesday, February 10 from 2:00 to 5:00pm.

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