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MONUMENT

# Mark "Hawkeye" Louis

## Make Them Laugh

*With more than three decades in Country radio under his belt – all of them in either San Antonio or Dallas – Mark "Hawkeye" Louis has combined a love of sports, well-honed stand-up comedy chops and a passion for community service to create a personal brand that sets him apart, even amid the most decorated of colleagues. During his career, Hawkeye has worked alongside two previously inducted Hall of Famers, Randy Carroll and Terry Dorsey, and now takes his place next to them while continuing to helm the longest-running FM morning show in Dallas.*

**My brother and I each got** our own small portable radios when I was in fourth grade, and I would listen to baseball. In high school, I thought I wanted to play sports professionally but realized quickly I wasn't anywhere near good enough. My sophomore year of college, I decided to pursue radio and transferred to San Antonio College, because they had a great radio, television and film department at the time.

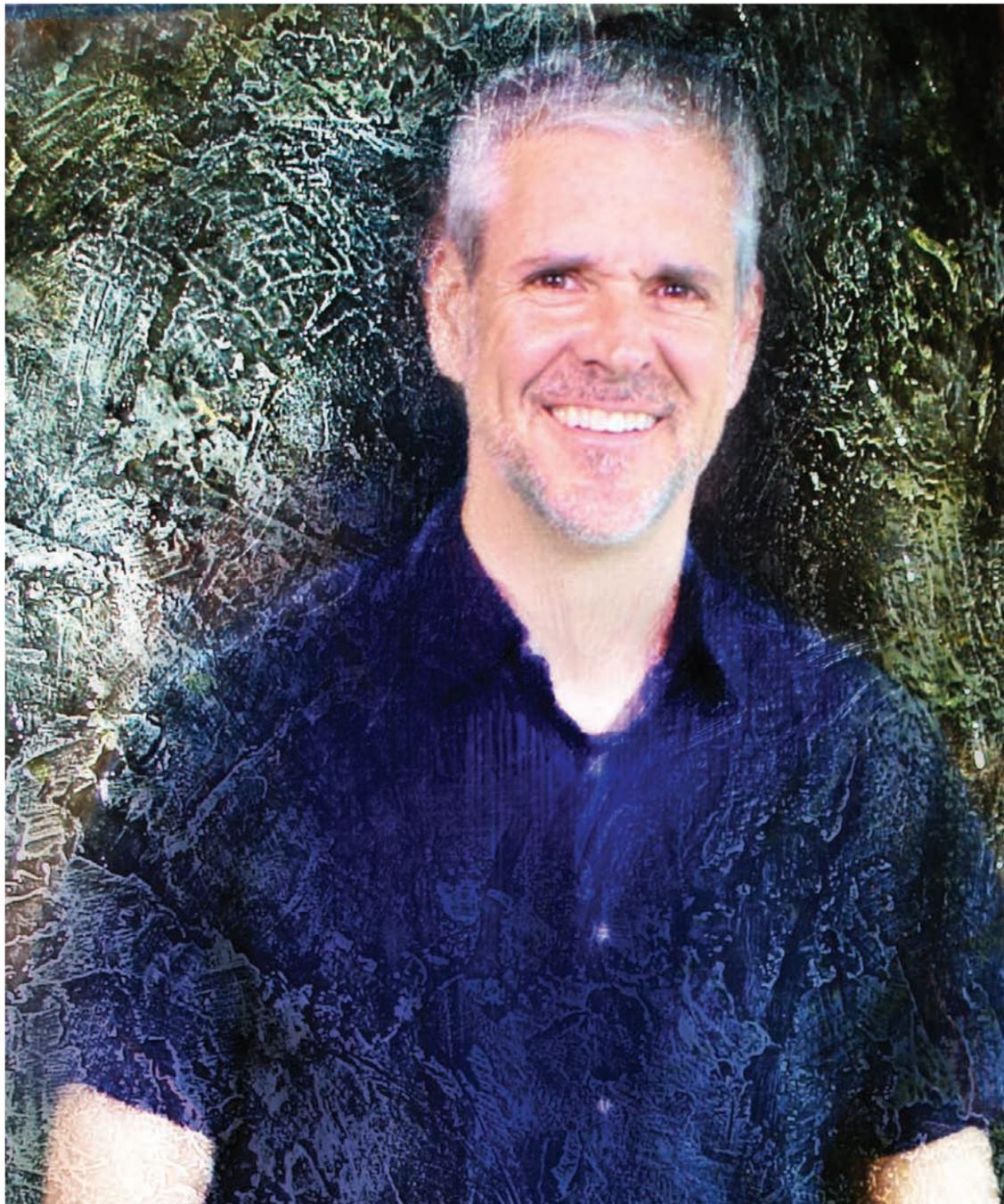
**Ms. Jean Longwith ran the department** at San Antonio College. I was working in the college radio station and was in Ms. Longwith's office when she received a phone call from a station looking for a weekend jock. As she was telling her secretary about the opening, I said, "Hey, I would like that job!" She wrote the information on a piece of paper and told me to call the program director. That's how I got my first job – at Christian **KSLR**. Shortly after I got there, they purchased a Spanish AM. We had to take shifts playing Spanish Christian music on the AM station with only six albums, and I spoke zero Spanish. My girlfriend's dad at the time was Hispanic, so he wrote out six phrases for me to rotate throughout the night. For a while, I was the most fluent jock on the station!

**Later, I transferred** to the University of North Texas. After graduation, I took a job in New York City doing video production, but I didn't really enjoy it, so I moved back to San Antonio. Within a week, I found a weekend job at a Rock station and worked at a record store during the afternoons. We had an in-store with Dwight Yoakam. I loved him and the music immediately, and I started buying records from different groups at that time. I still have the autographed Dwight album from that in-store back before I came to Country radio!

**I eventually shifted to doing traffic**, which gave me the chance to interact with morning talent and showcase a bit more of my personality – and gave me the name "Hawkeye." I got a call from [KAJA/San Antonio morning host] Randy Carroll, who is in the Country Radio Hall of Fame Class of 2015. I had known him from working at KSLR, and he said they were looking to take the show to another level. He asked if I'd thought about going full-time on a Country station, and I honestly never had. But ... they had health insurance! Within the first ratings period, we were No. 1 25-54.

**At KAJA, our consultant was Ted Stecker.** A new GM came in who let Ted go, but he was also the OM for KSCS/Dallas at that time. I decided to leave radio and start pursuing my stand-up comedy career full-time, as it was going quite well. Then the phone rang, and it was Ted asking if I wanted to work with Terry Dorsey at KSCS. To get that call was like a high school kid getting a call from Derek Jeter asking if you wanted to come play for the Yankees!

**It was 1988**, and I had never seen anyone do a show the way Terry Dorsey did. He never had consultants but created a modern morning show in 1988, well before anyone and was doing those things. Terry had been on KPLX but moved to KSCS when I arrived, so we actually started on that station at the same time.



Soon, the format blew up, the station was gaining, and our show was huge. I was learning new things all the time and seeing the possibilities for morning radio were greater than I'd ever imagined.

**Terry was already so far ahead** of the curve, the country boom fed into what we were already doing. Terry showed me how he laid out his show, and we planned bits and benchmarks. He had his own subscription service, and before I worked with him, I knew how far Terry could take things. Until I was doing it every day, though, I didn't realize how much I would thrive in that environment. I fit into the system Terry had, and my background in stand-up comedy played into his plans.



**Sweet Music Men: Mark "Hawkeye" Louis (r) joins Kenny Rogers (l) and Terry Dorsey for an in-studio interview in the morning co-hosts' early years together on KSCS.**

**It was never a conscious decision** to marry the market. I had job offers to leave the area, and I did consider a few, but what kept me at KSCS was Terry. My only goal each day was to make Terry laugh. If I could do that, I figured his audience had the same sense of humor, and that would be the mark of success for me. If I

could sum up my job description for those decades with him in one line, that was it: Make Terry laugh.

**Things have obviously changed in radio** over the years, and since Terry retired in 2014, I've served as the host with different partners. I always thought when Terry retired, I'd leave, too, but I wasn't ready to retire at that point. I didn't know what my future would be at KSCS, but I have lucked out getting to stay and continue to build my brand. The show had to evolve, of course, because it's not *The Dorsey Gang* anymore.

**Radio needs to be part of your overall brand.** I have a YouTube channel and thousands of followers across various social media platforms. The technology is in everyone's hands, so a great personality has to be able to elevate the product. When I speak to students, I tell them radio is very much a viable career, if they are willing to work hard and use it as part of a big-picture career as a multimedia personality. You need to be great on the radio, but you also need to be compelling in front of the camera and convincing on paper – video, social media and blogs are all part of the overall radio product now. I'm still passionate about radio and have established a scholarship fund at my alma mater. I spoke in 2019 at a scholarship award ceremony, and the work the students are doing there blew me away.

**Throughout my career**, I've been involved in several charities, and I've served on multiple boards and worked in various capacities throughout the community. I got involved with the Dallas Marathon raising money for the Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children. It started as a station promotion but led to me being on the board and eventually being named Chairman of a multi-million-dollar charity. It's outside of my comfort zone, but I bring a different set of skills that nobody on the board has. When I retire from radio, it's a passion I'd like to continue to pursue. We may retire to Utah; I wouldn't mind working in some capacity for the Olympics organizing committee. As a guy who started thinking about broadcasting because of my love of sports, it would be a full circle ending to an amazing ride of a career.

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