

A portrait of Jason Aldean wearing a light-colored cowboy hat and a dark, textured t-shirt. He is looking slightly to the left with a serious expression. He has a goatee and is wearing several necklaces, including a prominent one with a large circular pendant. The background is dark and textured, possibly a wall or a fence.

JASON ALDEAN

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SERVICE STATIONS

COUNTRY'S 2019 MARCONI NOMINEES



Honorees were celebrated Sept. 26 during the **NAB Marconi Radio Awards Dinner & Show**, but Country radio's 12 nominees are all worthy of a cheer, regardless of that night's outcome. Country Aircheck commends all the Country finalists for achieving broadcast excellence in ratings success, awards and community service.

The five who have been recently profiled in previous quarterly publications – **WHKO/Dayton, OH** (Medium Market Station); **KWYO-AM/Sheridan, WY** (Small Market Station); **KIIM/Tucson's Buzz Jackson** (Medium Market Personality); **WUSQ/Winchester, VA's Chris & Rosie** (Small Market Personality); and **KCLR/Columbia, MO's Scotty & Catryna** (Small Market Personality) – are represented in photos.

We take a deeper look at the other seven nominees: **WYCD/Detroit** (Major Market Station); **WKHK/Richmond, VA** (Medium Market Station); **WSSL/Greenville, SC** (Medium Market Station); **WYCT/Pensacola, FL's The Cat Pak Morning Show** (Medium Market Personality); **WDSY/Pittsburgh VP/Programming Mark Anderson** (Legendary Manager); **WXFL/Florence, AL GM Nick Martin** (Legendary Manager); and **KVMK/Bryan-College Station, TX VP/GM Ben Downs** (Legendary Manager).

TRADITION CONTINUES

WYCD/Detroit

Major Market Station

Entercom/Detroit VP/Programming and WYCD PD Tim Roberts explains how stationality and a heritage brand continue to propel the group forward while keeping the needs of listeners at the forefront.

WYCD is extremely active in the community, and that is a pillar of the station we are very proud of. Our staff and the listeners support hundreds of local community events annually, and we are always looking to find new ways to rally around the Detroit listening area. Entercom/Detroit, and WYCD in particular, support MDA, Susan G. Komen, Bravo fighting breast cancer and St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. We also support veterans with our *Stars & Strings* event, and we are tied to Make-A-Wish and Rainbow Connection.

The money we have raised and the impact we've had in the community this year have been overwhelming. Our *Musictown Songwriting School* with MCA's Kacey Musgraves was free to high school



Much Too Young Country: Pearl's Garth Brooks makes a memorable return to WYCD/Detroit's Hoedown.

and college-aged students, and it gave aspiring songwriters an opportunity to work with and learn from stellar writers. This cause is important for the future of our industry, but it also helps the community, because so many public school systems have been eliminating music programs and opportunities for music education. We were also named St. Jude station of the year and have raised more than \$500,000 to date – an achievement of which we are all extremely proud.

The annual WYCD Hoedown, the *Faster Horses Festival* and our *Ten Man Jam* events continue to solidify our heritage "Young Country" brand. The fun stationality we have is thanks in part to our production whiz, Terry Phillips, who keeps us relevant and sounding local with great imaging. *Hoedown* is our marquee event and will celebrate its 37th year in 2020. It has continued to evolve, and has served as a launch pad for multiple superstars. This year, Pearl's Garth Brooks returned to *Hoedown*, marking the 30th anniversary of his 1989 *Hoedown* appearance. It was a surprise for our attendees and a special moment for the staff; his appearance and performance are no doubt highlights of the year.

WON AT A TIME

WKHK/Richmond, VA

Medium Market Station

Keeping localism at the center by improving the community one family at a time is WKHK/Richmond, VA PD Garret Doll's priority.

It's a tremendous honor to be recognized by fellow broadcasters in this capacity, because it means we are making a difference. The Marconi Award is the one any programmer strives to live up to earning, and every member of the WKHK team has been unafraid to put in the work to make it happen. We all understand the responsibility we have to the Richmond community, and we take it very seriously.

Community service is a large part of our daily programming, and we have our benchmark events each year, but we also look for small ways to help people in our listening area. Every staff member is

involved in hosting community events and participates in community outreach. From helping a family get back on their feet after a trying time to utilizing the power of radio to raise funds for charity initiatives, our air staff are passionate about giving back.

One of our most important yearly events is *Feed Richmond*, during which we partner with a local grocery chain to collect food items. This year, we added a partnership with the local Boy Scouts and combined their brown bag door-to-door food drive with ours to help grow both initiatives. The result was more than one million meals being donated to feed central Virginia.

We also rallied around the family of Major Robert Gooch, who was killed outside of a convenience store in front of his daughter. Major Gooch served three tours of duty overseas and was set to retire the week after his murder. Our team held a community event called *Chesterfield Strong* and raised more than \$16,000 in one evening for an education fund for the Gooch children.



Just Kids-ing: WKHK/Richmond, VA's (l-r) Jason Paige, Jessie Wright, Lori Kelly and Garret Doll celebrate a successful Country Cares For St. Jude Kids radiothon.

In a world of disconnect and radio losing its localism through cross-market voice tracking and syndication, it is our goal to continue to serve the community and put our team in the neighborhoods we serve.

DIFFERENCE MAKER

Ben Downs

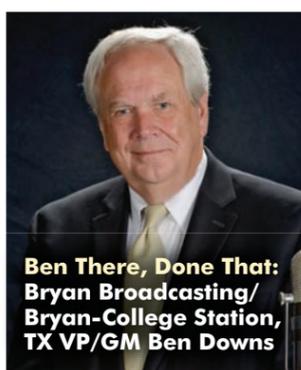
KVMK/Bryan-College Station, TX

Legendary Manager

Inclusion and innovation are always top-of-mind for Bryan Broadcasting/Bryan-College Station, TX VP/GM Ben Downs.

Community service is not just about what I say is important. Our staff are on community boards and involved in educational outreach throughout the area. They know the resources of our station are available to groups they are associated with when needed. We've always fought the battle of whether to serve the audience that wants to be community-focused or the audience that wants us to shut up and dance. Now we find ourselves in a world where the all-music people have a plethora of resources for music-intensive playlists, and we are the only way the other group of listeners can get what they want, which is personalities and community information.

We are the only locally owned media in town, so we have to compete with the largest groups in America. We can never become comfortable, and we continue to push ourselves to greater heights and tackle new challenges. We repurpose our morning shows into podcasts daily and stream everything. We believe in HD radio, even on an AM signal. We think being local means having an obligation to host a real, live news department, a sports staff, having management that lives in the same town as the station and providing



Ben There, Done That: Bryan Broadcasting/Bryan-College Station, TX VP/GM Ben Downs

20 percent commission to our sales force. It's not cheap or easy, but it's what makes our station different.

We have our local Congressman on the air every Wednesday (thanks, Congressman Flores), and we visit with the Mayors of both cities and the city departments regularly. During election season, we host and broadcast political forums, and we never yell at someone who disagrees with us.

You hear it said that just being nominated is an honor, and as trite as it sounds, this is about as cool a nomination as there is. I plan to put the nomination plaque in the very center of my door. Of course, if I do win the Marconi, I'll add flood lighting.

The staff is pretty proud that I was included in the first year of the Legendary Manager category. It's great to work with people who want the best for you – and aren't your mom. I've made a point of not reading the nomination they wrote for this honor, but I hope when I do feel comfortable enough to read it, I find that most of what they wrote is true.

WHISTLELAND DELIGHT

WSSL/Greenville, SC

Medium Market Station

WSSL/Greenville, SC PD **Kix Layton** describes what makes Whistleland a unique place to live, work and come together and how that unity provides for members of the community year-round.

There is only one WSSL Whistle 100, and we call this area “Whistleland.” It’s a geographical state of mind and, when you’re listening, you are a part of who we are. It’s a community made of those who love country music and work together to make a difference by doing good.

Our process is to identify a need then gather our listeners and sponsors together and rally for the cause. In 2018, we partnered with a local grocery chain to form a successful water and supplies relief effort for our state’s hurricane ravaged neighbors. That same chain helps us with our *Fill The Backpack* initiative to provide meals and snacks for school children who benefit from a weekday lunch program but whose weekend home life is a difficult one. Our morning team has also hosted their *Stuff The Truck For Toys For Tots* campaign since 2001, which has become the biggest one-day Christmas toy drive for the Marines and Marine Corp Reserves. The team also hosts *The Ellis And Bradley Turkey Fry* for the Miracle Hill Mission to provide a warm Thanksgiving meal for those who don’t have much over which to say grace. The event has grown from 47 turkeys fried in 2006 to nearly 700 turkeys fried in 2018, giving us the opportunity to feed thousands of men, women and children served by local missions.

WSSL also has a long history of supporting St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital via our annual radiothon, the *WSSL 100 Acoustic Jams* and *Pickin’ In The Park*. We produce these shows internally, which is something you can’t do unless you have strong relationships in Nashville and your local community to provide the artists and venues that host them.

Even though the technology has evolved exponentially since Guglielmo Marconi became the father of the wireless, the true benefit remains: to connect, to be a part of something and to share. As hometown broadcasters, it is what we do every day at WSSL, and to be honored by an award that bears Marconi’s name means a great deal.



Pickin’ Partners: Columbia’s Tenille Townes, BMLGR’s Riley Green, MCA’s Jordan Davis and Riser House/Columbia’s Mitchell Tenpenny with WSSL/Greenville, SC personalities during a *Pickin’ In The Park* event. Pictured (l-r) are the station’s Aaron Michael and Kix Layton, Townes, Green, the station’s Beth Bradley, Davis, Tenpenny and the station’s Bill Ellis.

PAK MENTALITY

Brent Lane and Candy Cullerton,

The Cat Pak Morning Show

WYCT/Pensacola, FL

Medium Market Personality

WYCT/Pensacola, FL PD/morning host **Brent Lane** reveals the secret to the duo’s ability to pull off big initiatives with zero budget.

Our show is about reflecting our community and has several community initiatives interwoven in its structure. Success through service has worked well for us. A Marconi nomination across all genres says that we are recognized by our peers as having a high standard in our craft and continually rising to meet the challenges of our community.

Christmas Wishes, which has grown to one of the largest pay-it-forward Christmas help programs in our community, has become a staple of our show. Each year, we start with no budget and let people wish for whatever they want. Every year to date, we have been able to pull off one wish per day – from the Monday after Thanksgiving through Christmas Day – with the help of local businesses and sponsors. Our show has granted wishes ranging from an adoption with the help of a local credit union to hosting a Christmas party for a local elementary school thanks to Whataburger. The program continues to gain strength each year.

We recently completed our first *Cat Country Cares For Kids Radiothon*, which raised funds for our four-month-old Children’s Hospital. With the support of our listeners, *The Cat Pak Morning Show* raised more than \$73,000 for The Studer Family Children’s Hospital. It was very inspiring, and our community responded.



Powers Cat Be: WYCT/Pensacola, FL **The Cat Pak Morning Show** duo Candy Cullerton and Brent Lane.



O-Kay: KIIM/Tucson’s **Buzz Jackson** (Medium Market Personality) joined the 10-gallon club of blood donors this year after having given more than 80 pints of blood since arriving in Tucson 18 years ago. “I have O-negative blood, which anyone can receive, so if you’ve ever had a surgical procedure, there might be some Buzz Jackson coursing through your veins,” he says.



Raise ‘Em Up: “Our radiothon for Dayton Children’s Hospital raised more than \$300,000 this year, we helped raise a similar amount for the Dayton Food Bank and we’re now partnering with the Dayton Foundation to raise money for the victims and families of the tragic mass shooting we recently experienced,” says WHKO/Dayton, OH VP/Market Manager **Nick Roberts** (Medium Market Station), pictured here with station staffers and Dayton Children’s Hospital staff and patients.



Think Pink: Following WUSQ/Winchester, VA morning co-host Rosie’s (r) March 2018 breast cancer diagnosis, she and **Chris & Rosie** (Small Market Personality) host **Chris Mitchell** (l) turned the entire year into an opportunity to raise awareness about the disease. “We had guests on the show discussing how to conduct self exams, how to get an affordable mammogram and highlighting all the local resources we’re fortunate enough to have for breast cancer patients in our community,” says Mitchell. “The result of Rosie sharing her personal story with our listeners was a noticeable uptick in local women getting checked, seeking mammograms and talking to their doctors about breast cancer. A fantastic win coming from such bad news!”

kelsea ballerini

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BLACK RIVER
RECORDS

GAME CHANGER

Mark Anderson
WDSY/Pittsburgh
Legendary Manager



Mark His Words: Entercom/Pittsburgh VP/Programming Mark Anderson

For Entercom/Pittsburgh VP/Programming Mark Anderson, community starts inside the building and reflects outward.

Localism is the heartbeat of everything we do at these stations, and there are countless great service stories, the pinnacle of which was December's *A Concert For Unity* produced by our stations and starring Warner/WAR's Dan + Shay. It was the first officially sanctioned benefit event for Tree of Life, the Pittsburgh synagogue that was tragically affected by the infamous mass shooting hate crime that October. The event raised more than \$56,000.

Today, Y108 is the market's top Country station with an 88% share lead over its closest competitor, but we struggle with the same "down 7% from last year" challenge that everyone else does. In such a competitive market, being No. 1 doesn't mean much when we're really seventh or eighth Persons 25-54 and outside of the top five. Unfortunately, most of the discussions I have with peers end up in blame shifting or denial, neither of which is going to solve any of our format's short or long-term problems. I hope we can turn toward each other to find great solutions to make country stronger than ever. I don't want us to squander this very special situation we have created, because I couldn't imagine doing anything else each and every day.

Getting involved in Country radio 10 years ago saved my programming career. The passion for charity, connection to fans, identity of community and camaraderie from artists, management, labels, concert promoters, programmers and personalities that are the lifeblood of this genre was reinvigorating and has helped me to appreciate all the good that we collectively do in making our local markets a better place.

The award may bear my name, but it reflects a team effort. I am privileged to have served with so many great broadcasters over the years, but the drive, innovation and community service orientation of the product teams are purely world class.

BIG GIVER

Nick Martin
WXFL/Florence, AL
Legendary Manager



Shoal 'Nuff: Big River/Florence, AL GM Nick Martin

Big River/Florence, AL GM Nick Martin thinks unity and individuality build stronger teams.

Big River donates more than \$500,000 of on-air support annually to organizations in the community. I am a firm believer that you get back what you put into it, and our team understands that philosophy. It is an integral part of what we do each day, and every on-air personality has causes they personally champion throughout the year.

One of our morning hosts, Big Farley, started a promotion last fall soliciting pledges for a 96-mile walk, which was tied to our 96.1 dial position. Leading up to the holidays, he raised money for Toys For Tots, and the 96th mile was tied to the Florence Christmas Parade. He gathered all available staff members to walk that final mile with him. It was a fantastic team-building event, and it showcased our united front to the community while also giving back.

From our Kix Cares and Q Cares platforms, we have launched *Pay It Forward Friday*, helped local animal shelters, started *Shoals Scholar Dollars*, assisted volunteer fire departments, partnered with the American Cancer Society and American Heart Association and championed St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. These programs provide a platform to increase awareness and garner support while allowing us the opportunity to create a unique bond with our audience and the communities we serve.

Among our most important initiatives is *Shop Local*, which emphasizes the importance of small business owners who create jobs and tax revenue for the area and keep money circulating throughout the community. Last year, we started airing messaging in support of local businesses, and the feedback and impact was felt immediately. After all, we are also a local business!

The first thing I thought when I saw my name in the Legendary Manager category was that I must be getting old! But, in all seriousness, to have this industry recognition for a small market station is validation of everything we try to accomplish each day as an organization – to serve the community and be the best we can be. It is a tremendous honor for our entire team, and I am personally honored and humbled to be considered.

CAC



When Mother Nature Calls: When surrounding communities were hit with spring tornadoes and massive flooding, KCLR/Winchester, VA morning co-hosts **Scotty Cox (r)** and **Catryna Craw (l)** of **Scotty & Catryna (Small Market Personality)** hit pause on programming as usual to share needed information in the immediate aftermath. "We're lucky that in today's radio landscape, we still get to work for a family owned company steeped in small market radio tradition," says Cox.



Damned Ol' Rodeo: KWYO-AM/Sheridan, WY (Small Market Station) Dir./Programming **Tommy Braaten** broadcasts live from the *Sheridan WYO Rodeo* during the station's 85th anniversary year. "Everyone is on board when the rodeo comes to town," explains Braaten. "We provide continuous, wall-to-wall coverage of the parade, activities and events surrounding the rodeo, and our live broadcasts are streamed with live video elements. We receive shout-outs from all over the United States and varying parts of the world as we keep our local community connected to its landmark, marquee annual event."



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