

30 years experience puts a gilt edge on the selling credentials of Ted Walworth

Broadcasters get into broadcasting in many ways: some by easy choice, others by hard decision; some by careful planning and preparation, others by calculation or inheritance or accident. Ted Walworth counts himself among the accidental ones, or, more to the point, the lucky ones.

"I had a friend, a pilot," he recalls, "who wanted to go into publicity. He knew Edward J. Noble, who gave him a job. He said I should go see Mr. Noble, too, that Mr. Noble would be glad to give me a job. So after a semester at college, I did. And my friend was right, Mr. Noble thought he could place me."

That was in 1946 and Mr. Noble was chairman of the Life Savers Corp. and was also the owner of ABC. Hence it did not seem unreasonable for young Ted Walworth to accept Mr. Noble's surmise at face value and believe that this man could indeed find a place for him. So he did as he was instructed and went home to wait. For three weeks he waited while nothing happened, and he may be forgiven if he developed, perhaps, a twinge of doubt about Mr. Noble's leverage with his own personnel departments.

"Then I got a call from ABC," he says. "They gave me a job in the mailroom at \$85 a month—a job I could have got by myself by walking in off the street.

I learned a lesson from that experience: Do it yourself."

He was not entirely free of the beneficent influence of Mr. Noble, however. After the obligatory tour of mailroom duty and stint in network research, he had an opportunity to go into ABC Spot Sales, which in those days encompassed both radio and TV. Mr. Walworth was assigned primarily to the Life Savers account. "Mr. Noble had put Life Savers into television," he explains, "but he wanted it watched."

By the time ABC started splitting its radio and television operations into separate units, Ted Walworth was ready to make a conscious choice of his career field, rather than have it picked for him by accident or someone else's design. Radio was then the dominant medium, the primary source of broadcasting revenues. Television was the upstart. Radio was the profit center that paid television's way. So what?

"I wanted to be in television," says Mr. Walworth. "Television was a frontier business. That's what I wanted. And instead they put me in radio."

Then came a timely opportunity—a word, incidentally, that Ted Walworth obviously prefers to "chance," or, for that matter, to "problem" except in extremely stressful circumstances. His liking for the word suggests a challenge-oriented per-



Theodore Holton Walworth Jr.—president, NBC Television Stations division and member, NBC board of directors; b. July 19, 1924, Greenwich, Conn.; sergeant, U.S. Army, European Theater of Operations, 1943-45; attended Nichols College, Dudley, Mass., 1946; ABC trainee, in network research and sales executive, ABC Spot Sales, 1946-50; sales executive, Edward Petry & Co., 1950-52; with NBC since 1953, as sales executive, NBC Spot Sales, 1953-54; TV sales manager, WNBK(TV) Cleveland (now WKYC-TV), 1954-56; director of sales, WRCV-TV Philadelphia, then owned by NBC, 1956-61, and also station manager of WRCV 1959-61; VP and general manager, WNBC-TV New York, 1961-71; present post since July 1, 1971; m. Joan Petersen, Oct. 15, 1949; children—daughter, Wendy, 25, and son, Theodore III, 22.

sonal and business approach that a longtime associate has also described as very thorough and very cool, adding that "I've never seen him really angry, although certainly I've seen him when things were hot going exactly as he wanted."

The timely opportunity to move into television full time was an opening for a TV salesman at Edward Petry & Co.

"I was reluctant to leave ABC," he explains. "I was doing very well there, and of course I was there with the backing of E.J. Noble. But I really did want to get into television. So I talked to Ed Petry—what a spellbinder! And salesman! I liked his individualism, too. So I moved over."

His first boss at Petry, he recalls, was Tom Dawson, later president of CBS-TV, since retired. That recollection reminds him that a lot of today's names were just beginning to move up the ladder in those days. Among them: Elton Rule, now president of ABC Inc., who was selling for ABC's KABC-TV Los Angeles when Petry represented the station and thus sometimes teamed with Mr. Walworth on sales calls; and Jack Schneider, now president of the CBS/Broadcast Group, who was then a competitor selling spot television for CBS.

The same chain of thought brings him to the reflection that there seemed to be "only a couple of hundred people" in television when he was breaking in—an observation that makes him sound a bit older than his 51 years. Actually his time in the business started somewhat earlier than it might have, because he virtually skipped college. World War II and the

Army had intervened when he was just out of high school, and when they released him—after service in Europe as a sergeant with the Army medics—he was 22 years old. "My father wanted me to go to college, and at my age I thought I was a little beyond that," he says, "but I gave it a try and went for a while. But I didn't find it very challenging." That's when he took his friend's advice to go see E.J. Noble.

He spent two and a half years with the Petry company, where his contemporaries recall him as being noteworthy good at station relations as well as sales. "Ed Petry thought he was good," said one associate from those days, "and you couldn't do any better than that."

In the end, however, he accepted a friend's offer to move to NBC Spot Sales. Almost by the time he had got settled in he was startled by an offer to transfer to Cleveland as sales manager of NBC's WNBK (TV) (now WKYC-TV).

"That job was an eye-opener," he explains. "It opened up the station end of the business for me for the first time. I found it was the most gratifying business I had ever been in. I decided then that I'd stay on the station side. Since then I've had offers to go into other fields, including network, but I've turned them down because this is my field."

The field enlarged for him on his next stop, which was WRCV-TV Philadelphia, then owned by NBC. He started there as director of sales, then was given broader responsibilities as station manager in addition. The affability and outgoing nature that colleagues call Walworth hallmarks were also evident in increasing activity in local civic and charitable organizations as well.

He was called from Philadelphia back to New York and installed as vice president and general manager of WNBC-TV, which was having more problems than any station needs. Over the next few years he not only got it turned around—for which he credits the development of a solid news and public-affairs reputation in particular—but then went on to set what may be a longevity record of 10 years at the station helm. As for WNBC-TV's recovery, he says that "it became the largest station in the world—and you can put your own connotation on that."

When the presidency of the TV stations division opened up with the late Ray Welpott's retirement, Theodore H. Walworth Jr. was regarded as a natural choice. NBC Chairman Julian Goodman calls him "a rare combination of a splendid businessman and a fine human being." His division includes NBC Spot Television Sales as well as the five TV O&O's, and associates say he has a fine grasp of all that goes on. He is the first to say he loves it and has no other ambition: "This is the last job I want at NBC—and I've told them so."