

## THIS MONTH IN THE HISTORY OF ROCKY MOUNTAIN PBS: NOVEMBER

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**November 7, 1967** is a date to celebrate as a pivotal moment in the history of all public broadcasting stations.

On this date, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Public Broadcasting Act in the East Room of the White House. William G. Harley, President of the National

Association of Educational Broadcasters and KRMA's Director, Jack Schlaefle, both commended President Johnson for his support. The fiftieth anniversary of this milestone act will be celebrated in 2017.

This landmark act led to the establishment of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) and subsequently the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) and National Public Radio (NPR) allowing them to serve as the national distribution networks for public television and radio. The Public Broadcasting Act led to broadcast excellence and the continuation of educational enlightenment that is enjoyed by today's supporters of public media.

The Public Broadcasting Act charged the Corporation for Public Broadcasting with encouraging and facilitating program diversity while expanding non-commercial broadcasting. CPB would receive federal funds to help local public media stations create innovative programming throughout the country. Given such award-winning national PBS programs as *Frontline*, *Independent Lens*, *Washington Week* and *American Experience*, the 1967 Act is considered by many historians to be one of the most important factors of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the preservation of U.S. Democracy.

The final acceptance of the Public Broadcasting Act was a combined result of idealism, timing and politics. As an owner of broadcasting properties in Texas, former Senator Lyndon Johnson had supported the 1958 *National Defense Education Act* to fund educational television facilities.

In December 1964, Educational Television leaders approached the Carnegie Foundation to create the Carnegie Commission on Educational Television. The commission studied ETV for more than a year and released the report, *Public Television: A Program for Action*. Their report popularized the phrase "Public Television" and helped further the campaign for federal aid. The commission urged immediate action to strengthen educational television that could reach a national audience while also being responsive to the

needs of their local communities. For further details, see: Carnegie Commission on Educational Television at <http://current.org/1967/01/carnegie-i/>

Lyndon Johnson's remarks on November 7, 1967, when signing the **Public Broadcasting Act** can serve as a reminder of the historic importance of this legislative action and the reasons that public broadcasting continues to be a national treasure:

*"I believe the time has come to stake another claim in the name of all the people, stake a claim based upon the combined resources of communications. I believe the time has come to enlist the computer and the satellite, as well as television and radio, and to enlist them in the cause of education.*

*While we work every day to produce new goods and to create new wealth, we want most of all to enrich man's spirit.*

*{This act} will assist stations and producers who aim for the best in broadcasting good music, in broadcasting exciting plays and in broadcasting reports on the whole fascinating range of human activity. It will try to prove that what educates can also be exciting.*

*It will get part of its support from our Government. But it will be carefully guarded from Government or from party control. It will be free, and it will be independent – and it will belong to all our people. So, today we rededicate a part of the airwaves – which belong to all people – and we dedicate them for the enlightenment of all people."*

Lyndon B. Johnson | 36<sup>th</sup> President of the United States\*

\* To read the complete remarks by President Johnson when he signed the 1967 Public Broadcasting Act, go to: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=28532>

*Station's Archived Memories (SAM) serves the past, present, and future of Rocky Mountain PBS by assuring that the history of the station and its importance to the Colorado community will survive for generations to come. SAM is a volunteer-driven project preserving the history of Rocky Mountain PBS. To learn more about the station's history and how to volunteer or donate items to the archives, please visit [www.RMPBS.org/SAM](http://www.RMPBS.org/SAM), contact the SAM office at Rocky Mountain PBS 303-620-5734 or email [SAM@rmpbs.org](mailto:SAM@rmpbs.org).*