

Rollin Post dies at 81; veteran Bay Area political reporter

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By Mark Z. Barabak, Los Angeles Times

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Rollin Post, who covered generations of local, state and national politicians from his perch as one of the Bay Area's most enduring and respected TV journalists, has died. He was 81.

Post died Monday at his home in the Marin County suburb of Corte Madera from complications arising from Alzheimer's disease, his family announced.

In an era of fluffy news and blow-dried personalities, Post remained a throwback to the era of his broadcast hero, Edward R. Murrow. He was not always perfectly coiffed or properly pressed.

But Post had a deep knowledge of politics, a love and respect of history and an impressive roster of contacts from the local precinct to national campaign levels.

Quietly, and behind the scenes, he played an integral role in helping his friend and broadcast partner, Belva Davis, blaze a pioneering path as the first black woman hired to appear on the TV airwaves in California.

"Rollin was the closest thing to a brother that I could have had professionally," Davis said Thursday from San Francisco, where the two worked together for decades. "He never talked about the roadblocks that he had to remove, most of them based on race and gender. It was only possible to get the kind of inside stuff I did because of his willingness to share. He was an absolutely marvelous partner."

Post grew up in New York, then moved west to attend college. After a year in the Army, he graduated with a political science degree from UC Berkeley in 1952.

He started as an usher at CBS Radio in Los Angeles, then worked as morning copy boy for the news bureau. While at CBS, he met his future wife, Diane Opley.

In 1961, the couple moved to San Francisco, where Post began work as a morning producer and assignment editor for KPIX-TV. Within a year, he became an on-air reporter.

In his 40-year broadcast career, at KPIX and, later, TV stations KQED and KRON, Post covered nine presidential campaigns and 18 national political conventions, as well as a multitude of state and local contests.

In a testament to his renown in political circles, Post played himself in the 1972 movie "The Candidate," which starred Robert Redford as a vacuous — and successful — candidate for U.S. Senate.

Besides his wife of 57 years, Post is survived by two sisters, three children and five grandchildren.

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