

Political reporter Rollin Post dies at 81

By Nels Johnson

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Rollin Post of Corte Madera, a veteran television political reporter considered by many to be among the best in the business, died Monday at his home of Alzheimer's disease. He was 81.

Mr. Post, who began as a copy boy at CBS Radio in Los Angeles in 1954, switched to television in 1957 as a writer and producer at a CBS affiliate, launching a 43-year career in television journalism, most of it in the Bay Area.

He joined KPIX-TV Channel 5 in San Francisco as an assignment editor in 1961, became a political reporter and moved to Greenbrae. He covered the 1964 Democratic and Republican conventions and eight other election cycles, attending 18 national conventions in 33 years.

In 1973, Mr. Post joined the commentators on KQED-TV Channel 9's widely acclaimed "Newsroom" program. The program evolved into "A Closer Look," which he co-hosted with Belva Davis, a long-time colleague from KPIX. In addition, Mr. Post hosted "California Tonight" with Davis.

He moved to KRON-TV Channel 4 in 1979, where he was political editor until his retirement in 1997. For 16 years there, he worked with Davis on public affairs programs.

"He was a dear friend," Davis said, noting she worked with Mr. Post for 33 years, following him when he moved to another station. Davis, the first black female broadcaster on the West Coast, said Mr. Post was a mentor, sharing information and contacts and helping her advance in a tough business.

"He was one of the most gifted political reporters in the country," she said. "He was respected by people of all political persuasions."

In a fitting role, he played himself in Robert Redford's 1972 film, "The Candidate."

Although strictly nonpartisan, Mr. Post was active in a number of Marin County community events, especially election panels and those "that expanded the knowledge of the voter," Davis noted. His analysis of regional affairs was frequently cited in Independent Journal news stories at election time. He was active in the Marin County Historical Society and Marin County School Volunteers.

Rollin Kirby Post was born on May 27, 1930, in New York City, the son of a New York state assemblyman. He was named for his maternal grandfather, Rollin Kirby, a three-time winner of the Pulitzer Prize for editorial cartooning.

Mr. Post attended the University of California at Berkeley, graduating in 1952 with a bachelor's degree in political science. Two years later, while at CBS in Los Angeles, he met his wife of 57 years, Diane Opley Post. The couple lived in Greenbrae for many years, moving several years ago to Corte Madera.

He was a supporter of his union, the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, and joined picket lines twice, once serving as chairman of the strike committee.

Mr. Post was honored with a number of awards over the years, including honors for outstanding contributions to the industry, as well as the Sigma Delta Chi Award from the Society of Professional Journalists. The National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences inducted Mr. Post into its Silver Circle Class of 1990.

Mr. Post was a world traveler. He was active in Common Cause, the World Affairs Council and UC Berkeley Institute of Governmental Studies.

In addition to his wife, he is survived by two sisters, Wendy Moreton of Maui and Linda Post of Santa Monica; three children, Lauren Post of San Francisco, Cynthia Post of South San Francisco and Kenneth Post of Singapore; and five grandchildren.

A memorial event is planned in November. Email the family at www.rollinpost.com for details.