

Miller, Jack

# He shoots, he scores! Miller on air 25 years

By Tom Gavey

The Intelligencer

Intell p. 8  
Sept. 16/99

Jack Miller remembers looking at a plaque at the old Quinte Broadcasting building on Bridge Street that honoured 25-year employees with the company.

The names included Jack Devine, Phil Flagler and Hammy MacDonald.

He never dreamed at the time he'd join their ranks.

Today CJBQ and Mix 97's sports director celebrates his 25th anniversary on the air with the local radio company.

"I never dreamed when I came to Belleville I'd be here 25 years. I thought I'd be here a couple of years and then move on," says Miller.

The 45-year-old was a fresh faced youngster of 20 when he was interviewed by then program director Milt Johnston for CJBQ's afternoon show between 3 and 7 p.m.

"He originally told me I was too young. As I was leaving town I told my wife we wouldn't count on that job," Miller remembers.

Two days later, Johnston called offering Miller the job.

In 1979, with the Belleville Bulls Tier II team born, he moved into sports to help then sports director Jack Devine, who was travelling with the team.

When Devine retired in 1982, Miller inherited the sports director's post.

"What's interesting is that CJBQ has been on the air and there have been just two sports directors, Jack and myself," says Miller.

His radio career began in his hometown, Cornwall, where he worked at CJSS radio while still in high school. That included a stint as colour man on Cornwall Royals games.

"I went to Queen's University for a year to study political science, but I had the radio bug and wanted to give it a try," Miller says.

His career in sports at CJBQ nearly ended before it ever started.

While doing a Belleville Bobcats playoff game in 1976, Miller and colour man Mike Bradshaw (a sports reporter at The Intelligencer) misinterpreted something that happened after the game.

"I shot off my mouth and took things too far. I quickly found out what a slander suit was," he laughs.

Miller ended up making an apology, but was told he'd never do sports on CJBQ again.

Instead, after taking over from Devine he also began a play-by-



Intelligencer photo by Tom Gavey

Jack Miller, the voice of the OHL Belleville Bulls.

play career that's included a long stint on Global TV's Saturday afternoon games and last year 21 games as colour commentator on radio broadcasts of the NHL's Ottawa Senators contests.

"I always enjoyed play-by-play on the radio more than I did on TV. It seemed to me that hockey was the best sport to describe on radio," says Miller.

During his career at Quinte Broadcasting highlights have included spring training reports from the Montreal Expos camp, morning shows from Montreal at Expos home openers, Gold Cup boat races and, of course, the Bulls playoff runs in 1986 and 1999.

Last year with the Senators, Miller worked on the Sen's division clinching game and Wayne Gretzky's last game in Canada.

Every year, he says, he hears rumours he's heading somewhere else to do play-by-play.

"There have been some opportunities. I was offered full-time work in Ottawa last year but I

have no desire to leave Belleville, it's home," says Miller.

He's seen the business change.

"At one time people got their sports scores in the morning from radio. Now, there are numerous highlights shows on television every night. That's why it's important we focus on the local sports," says Miller.

In fact, Quinte Broadcasting is one of the few companies with a sports department left in radio.

Miller has also been active in the community during his tenure here, including working on the Waterfront Festival, Let's Get On With It committee, Rick Meagher-Medigas Benefit Golf Tournament and numerous other events.

Miller looks forward to another Bulls season and will return to Global on Saturdays again this year. Since the Senators broadcasting rights were sold, he isn't sure of the situation regarding Ottawa this year.

"I haven't lost my enthusiasm. I enjoy the job as much today as I did on my first day," says Miller.

Intelligencer Sept. 16/99