

The Bandera PROPHEET

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Gone Country

Welcome to the Land of Wayward Disc Jockeys

By Mikie Baker

The Bandera Prophet

In a couple of weeks, Very Best Friend and I are heading to Big D to attend the reunion of KLIF the Mighty 1190 retired disc jockeys, newsmen and account executives extraordinaire. You can bet all the men will still be sporting that one tight-fitting suit jacket they've had for 20 years and a tie that's not only too short, but it also has gravy stains on it dating back to 1973. Remember, DJs need to be heard, not seen.

How did I get involved with this motely, unkempt group of guys? When you're a 19-year-old girl who's the youngest female Music Director of a top 10 radio station in the country, you pay your dues. Trust me.

I blame the whole thing on Gordon McClendon and a transistor radio. McClendon invented Top 40 Radio, News Radio, Fantasy Baseball, Jingles, and Radio Contests among other things. On my eighth birthday, I got a transistor radio which never left my side. Excuse me, my left ear. I'd have it tuned directly to KLIF the Mighty 1190, listening to the disc jockeys and all those Top 40 songs. The Monkees sang in my ear continuously as did the jingles and contests. Right then and there I decided my life's mission was to become a KLIF disc jockey. Well, it's a better profession than dock worker.

The radio dream burned in me even after my transistor radio burned up. By then I was addicted to clock radios, headphones plugged into my stereo and radio jingles. I even chose my college by their radio station format because Top 40 was my king. I majored in Telecommunications though I never really did give a dang about Marconi and all those electronic tubes.

Then, over Christmas in my second year of college, I managed to get my dream job of working at KLIF. Ok, well maybe answering the hotline all night with 8-year-olds calling requesting, “I Shot Sherry” by Eric Clapton wasn’t exactly my vision, but I knew it was a door into my dream job and I was officially paying my dues with the younger likes of me.

In about six months I had worked my way up to weekend DJ and Music Director. This means you listen to all the new records and decide what you’ll play on KLIF the Mighty 1190. Now that I finally had a real office and lots of free records, all those male disc jockeys realized there was a girl right outside the control room and surely, she could type – for them! I told every last one of them I never learned to type. I had to close my door to type my 120 words a minute. Mama didn’t raise no fool.

It’s also where I met Very Best Friend. She was an Account Executive and sold radio spots. Not long after she got to the station, she headed up to my office, introduced herself, and we had the following conversation:

VBF: Hi! I heard a song on the radio, and I want to know the name of it.

ME: Ok, is it a girl singing or a guy?

VBF: I don’t know.

ME: Ok, do you know any of the words?

VBF: Nope.

ME: Ok, is it someone you’ve heard before?

VBF: I don’t know.

ME: Well, it must be “It Keeps you Runnin’” by the Doobie Brothers.

VBF: That’s it!

Looks like we had found each other – two halves of a whole idiot.

I must admit, my radio years were fun ones, so fun, I even went back to work in radio just a few years ago. This time it was the smart talking public radio station – a fact that makes me realize maybe even an old disc jockey and Music Director can grow up after all.