

Legendary broadcaster Hugh Downs, 99, has died at his Scottsdale home

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Hugh Downs

Left: Celebrating the "Today" show 60th anniversary in January 2012

Middle: November 1987

Right: On the set of the "Today Show" in March 1966

Source: AP file photos

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. (3TV/CBS 5) – Emmy Award-winning broadcaster Hugh Downs has died at the age of 99, according to a statement from his family.

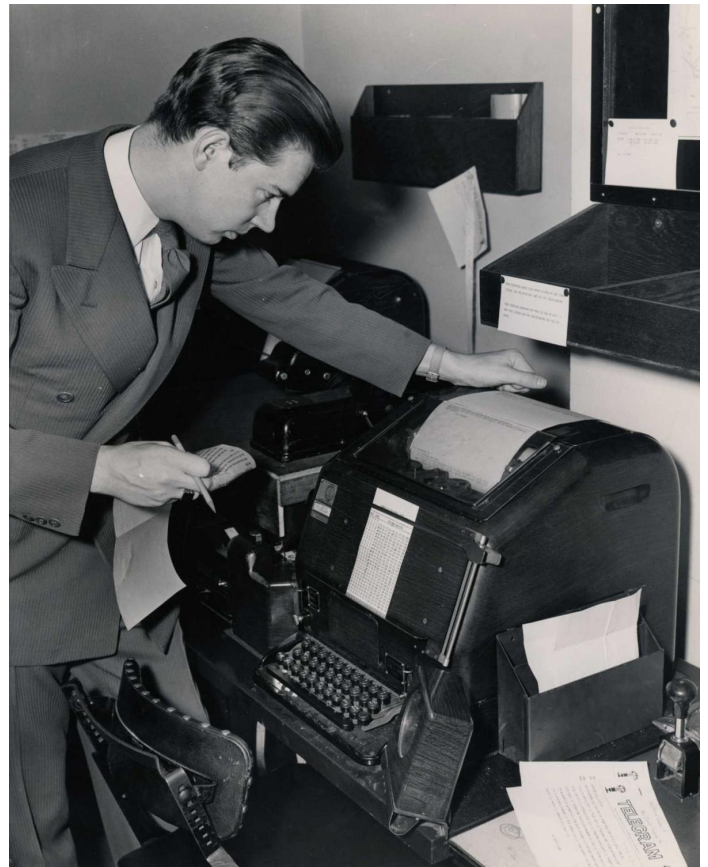
Surrounded by loved ones, he died at his Scottsdale home Wednesday evening. A spokeswoman for the family was clear that Downs did not have COVID-19.

Downs' broadcast career spanned more than 60 years, including work on "20/20," the "Today Show," "Concentration," and "Tonight Starring Jack Paar."

"In 1985, Hugh was certified by the Guinness Book of World Records as holding the record for the greatest number of hours on network commercial television (15,188 hours), until he lost the record to Regis Philbin in 2004," the family spokeswoman said.

Downs might be best known for his time co-anchoring "20/20" with Barbara Walters from the show's second episode in 1978 until he retired in 1999.

Downs was a big fan of space and was the chairman of the board governors of the National Space Society until 2019 and longtime president and chairman of the predecessor National Space Institute. A lifelong learner who enjoyed science, he even has an asteroid -- 71000 Hughdowns -- named after him.



Source: Downs family

The Hugh Downs School of Human Communication at Arizona State University was named in his honor in 1999. The school's web page described Downs as "one of the most familiar American figures in the history of television," saying he "has been a role model for communication effectiveness to the American public"

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