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## Jerry Lubin, Detroit radio "Air Ace," dies at 80

By Gary Graff [ggraff@medianewsgroup.com](mailto:ggraff@medianewsgroup.com); @GraffonMusic on Twitter  
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Longtime Detroit radio personality Jerry Lubin, right -- in December with longtime friend and onetime employer Steve Milgrom in California -- passed away Thursday, Feb. 4, at the age of 80 (Courtesy Steve Milgrom)

One of Detroit's beloved radio Air Aces came to rest this week.

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Jerry Lubin, who was among the pioneering air personalities in the city's burgeoning FM radio scene during the late 60s and 70s, passed away Thursday, Feb. 4, at the age of 80 in La Quinta, Calif., from COVID-19.

"Jerry was one of the original pilots," said Kim Sulek, who's working on a documentary film about Detroit radio during that era. "There's a handful of legendary underground disc jockeys in Detroit, and Jerry is one of them. He had a different way of talking to people, and he knew his music."

Longtime friend and colleague Harvey Ovshinsky, added that, "Of all the Aces, what impressed me was that Jerry was such a family man -- very rare in our circles. He will remain forever a legend in Detroit radio history. When we worked together I always envied how relaxed and comfortable Jerry was on the air...'Try smiling when you read the copy,' Jerry taught me. 'They won't see the smile, but it'll help the medicine go down.'"

His brother-in-law Mark Beltzman, a fan of Lubin's radio work before he married the disc jockey's younger sister Beverley, noted that, "He had a great gift for being 100 percent honest and truthful and real and as authentic you could possibly be as a human being. I loved that about him, and I learned so much from him."

Born in Detroit and a graduate of Mumford High School, he briefly attended Wayne State University before enlisting in the U.S. Army. He began his radio career as Jerry O'Neal in Rogers City, Mich., where he also acted, before moving to Flint and then to WABX when it launched as Detroit's first "progressive" FM radio station. There he was one of the Air Aces, a corps that included air personalities such as Larry Miller, Dan Carlisle (the sole surviving member of the station's original roster), Dennis Frawley, Jerry Goodwin and others.

Lubin later moved to WXYZ-FM, which became WRIF, and then WWWW-FM, where he spent time as the station's program director. "Jerry was a mentor to me," said Detroit radio veteran John O'Leary, who started his career working weekends at WWWW. "I was really raw, nervous as hell, and one day Jerry took me out for a meeting -- which consisted of 'John, let's get in your car and go to Belle Isle.' And he said to me, 'When you're on the radio, just be yourself. And remember you're just talking to one person, not a big group of people.'

"That was the best advice I ever got in radio."



Lubin's path took him to the west coast for a time, where he worked in San Diego and spent time with his young family on a commune in Washington State. He returned to Detroit for a second stint at WABX, hosting the popular "Lunch With Lubin" mid-day shift, and then spent time in Toledo and at WLLZ-FM back in Detroit. He also worked for Sam's Jams record store in Ferndale.

"Jerry was just the nicest guy, never said a bad word about anybody," remembered owner Steve "Sam" Milgrom. "And he helped the bands. He had relationships with record labels and would tell them, 'You've got to sign this band. These guys are awesome!'"

After leaving radio, Lubin – who was married for 45 years to his late wife Rosalie -- worked for many years for the United States Postal Service, before moving to California to be closer to his sons Adam and Ethan. Lubin is also survived by their spouses -- Lauren and Erika, respectively -- four grandchildren, his sister Beverley and younger brother Vincent.

The family hopes to hold a memorial celebration at some point in the future when such gatherings are possible.

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