

DON HUSING: 1941-2013

Friends 'remember KSCO's Husing

Longtime radio personality
dies at age 71

By **WALLACE BAINE**

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SANTA CRUZ — Don Husing, an enduring voice in local broadcasting for close to half a century, died Thursday at his home in Capitola after a short illness. He was 71.

Husing was a news reader, reporter and anchor at Santa Cruz's KSCO (1080 AM) for 47 years. "I can't say this for sure," said the station's owner Michael Zwerling, "but that's got to be some kind of record." He survived three changes of ownership at the station, covered such big local stories as the flood

of 1982 and the Loma Prieta earthquake of 1989, and showed up to work every day at the same building on Portola Drive from the



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golden age of Top 40 to just last week.

KSCO's Rosemary Chalmers, Husing's close friend and longtime on-air partner, said that Husing, who had diabetes, was taken with a flu-like illness a week ago. A co-worker discovered his body at his home on Thursday morning. He had no surviving family.

"We are all devastated," said Chalmers on Friday. "People have been coming in and out of the station all day, just sobbing."

For generations of listeners of the station, Husing was the silken-voiced morning local news reader. For the staff at KSCO, he was a font of institutional memory, having been hired by the station's founding owner Vern Berlin in 1966.

"He was what you would call a radio squirrel," said long-time co-worker Bill

BIOGRAPHY

DON HUSING

BORN: Nov. 26, 1941

DIED: Aug. 29, 2013

HOME: Capitola

MILITARY SERVICE:

Served with the U.S. Army at Fort Ord, and wrote for the Army's Stars and Stripes newspaper

CAREER: Reporter and anchor at KSCO (1080 AM) for 47 years

INTERESTS: Broadcasting history, old-time radio dramas, Coca Cola memorabilia, Hawaiian music

MEMORIAL: Details pending

Graff, now KSCO's production manager. "For years, he would take these little tidbits of sound or tape and squirrel them away in the archive somewhere."

"He knew where everything was around here,"

said Zwerling who was in high school when he first met Husing at the station. "He was our official audio museum curator."

Off-mic, Husing was as cerebral and unflappable as his on-air persona suggested. "I can't even think of anyone who possibly have a bad word to say about him," Zwerling said. "He was a great person, a wit that couldn't be duplicated."

"He was a punster extraordinaire," Chalmers said. "He would hear talking about something and he would have a one-liner for it instantly."

She also said that Husing cultivated a deep love for music and that he was largely responsible for live music being broadcast on KSCO. He was also a devoted fan of old-time radio dramas, particularly radio cowboys.

"He wouldn't go see the new Lone Ranger movie with me," said "Sleepy John" Sandidge, one of Husing's closest friends, and his on-air part-

ner at KSCO in the 1990s. "He thought it would be a mess."

Sandidge said that Husing had a talent for comedy. He wrote scripts with another former KSCO staffer years ago, and with Sandidge on KSCO, proposed comic ideas in which he happily played "second banana."

"He was the best straight man you'd ever want," said Sandidge, host of KPIG's "Please Stand By" live music radio show. Husing was a volunteer at "Please Stand By" for many years.

Chalmers, who called Husing her best friend, said that Husing was a lover of music, and was most deeply attached to Hawaiian music.

"Every year, we would all get this extraordinary holiday CD of music he put together," she said. "I know that he had already done the CD for this year, so we'll still get our holiday CD."

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