

MEDIA



HEROES



**DIRK KONING**



# Dirk Koning

*b. 31 Jan 1957, Zuni, NM .... d. 10 Feb 2005, Grand Rapids, MI*

*Community media visionary; founding director, Grand Rapids Community Media Center*

---

Whether at home in Michigan or helping launch community media facilities around the world, Dirk Koning was always busy spreading an idealistic and generous vision of community media and its importance for living culture and participatory democracy. The Grand Rapids Community Media Center, which Dirk founded in 1981, quickly became an international model for integrating community TV, radio, digital photography and Internet production under a single high-tech roof. Training programs taught technical skills, but also how to use media tools for community empowerment and cultural development. On the other end of the technological scale, Dirk knew that community media could mean a megaphone, a fistful of magic markers, or a mobile lab to bring media tools to those who didn't have them.

See [www.grcmc.org](http://www.grcmc.org)



MEDIA



HEROES



**MEDIA JUSTICE**

MEDIA



HEROES

# Media Justice

*b. 8 Aug 2002, New Market, TN*

*Organizing framework for just media representation and rights*

---

As citizen activism for democratic media reform gathered steam in the early 2000s, a number of grassroots organizations began discussing the need to link media policy advocacy to long-term goals of social and economic justice, communications rights, and effective movement-building among communities often marginalized from spheres of power. The term ‘media justice,’ first discussed at a Highlander Center gathering in summer 2002, soon became an organizing focus for regional grassroots media activist groups sharing similar values and working for justice through media policy change, fair media representation, and the use of grassroots media production as a tool for civic empowerment. A number of these organizations now coordinate efforts under the banner of the Media Action Grassroots Network (MAG-Net), linking media justice groups in Oakland, Seattle, Minneapolis, New York, Philadelphia, San Antonio, rural Kentucky and Albuquerque.

See [www.mediagrassroots.net](http://www.mediagrassroots.net)

---



*Media Heroes is a project of Reclaim the Media in Seattle. Learn more and join the fight for media justice at [www.reclaimthemedial.org/mediaheroes](http://www.reclaimthemedial.org/mediaheroes).*

MEDIA



HEROES



**IDA B. WELLS**



# Ida B. Wells

*b. 16 Jul 1862, Holly Springs, MS .... d. 25 Mar 1931, Chicago, IL*

*Journalist; educator; civil rights crusader; suffragist;  
co-founder of the NAACP*

---

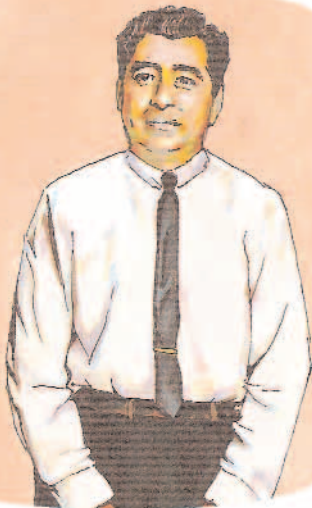
Muckraking journalist Ida B. Wells is legendary for her passionate pursuit of truth and justice—documenting the horrors of lynching in hundreds of carefully researched and courageously reported articles, at a time when such critical voices were rare in American journalism. Born into slavery, Wells lost her parents as a teenager, and supported her family by teaching school. While a student at Fisk University, she took to journalism as a vehicle for expressing radical opinions about women's rights and racial injustice. Throughout her career, Wells viewed her writing as a tool for social change, publishing articles for her own anti-segregationist paper in Memphis, in self-published pamphlets, and in other newspapers. Threats of censure and physical harm, even the destruction of her office by fire, did not deter Wells from her sense of mission. Progressive journalists and media justice activists continue to be inspired by her fearless, insistent advocacy for justice.



MEDIA



HEROES



*M. Salazar*

**RUBEN SALAZAR**



# Ruben Salazar

*b. 3 Mar 1928, Juárez, Mexico .... d. 29 Aug 1970,  
East Los Angeles, CA*

*Reporter*

---

A longtime reporter for the *Los Angeles Times* before becoming news director for Spanish-language TV station KMEX, Ruben Salazar devoted himself to covering issues in the Latino community, including immigration and border issues, the poverty of inner-city schools, prison conditions, and black-brown tensions. Salazar was killed by a police-fired tear gas canister after covering an East L.A. protest against the Vietnam War. Charges were never filed, and the case remains controversial. Salazar was no political activist, but he embraced his position as a principled advocacy journalist—self-consciously breaking through the silence which most of the establishment media imposed on the Latino community. His death made him a martyr, and spurred other Latino journalists to form the organization that eventually became the National Association of Hispanic Journalists.





MEDIA



HEROES



**DEMOCRACY NOW!**

MEDIA



HEROES

# Democracy Now!

*b. 1996, New York, NY*

*National daily independent news program*

---

Hosted by award-winning investigative journalists Amy Goodman and Juan Gonzalez, *Democracy Now!* has become an indispensable part of the American media landscape. The Pacifica Network's hour-long daily news program prides itself on being the fruit of a broad, ongoing collaboration, drawing upon the work of a large number of independent journalists and community media outlets. Founded in 1996 as an election-year project at WBAI-FM, the program quickly became Pacifica's most essential investigative news program. *Democracy Now!* routinely outdoes most national corporate broadcast news in its diversity of voices, its depth of coverage, and its courage to challenge powerful interests. After Sept. 11, 2001, and as war began in Afghanistan and Iraq, US audiences found that depth and courage were often in short supply among national news programs; *Democracy Now!* has expanded rapidly to meet public demand. The program now appears on more than 700 radio and television stations worldwide, in addition to satellite channels and the Internet.



*Media Heroes is a project of Reclaim the Media in Seattle. Learn more and join the fight for media justice at [www.reclaimthemedial.org/mediaheroes](http://www.reclaimthemedial.org/mediaheroes).*

MEDIA



HEROES



**DEEDEE HALLECK**



# DeeDee Halleck

*b. 5 Jan. 1940, Oak Ridge, TN*

*Media activist; filmmaker; educator; organizer*

---

In four decades as a filmmaker, teacher, and international communications rights activist, DeeDee Halleck has helped place new technologies—from home video and cable television to Internet journalism and digital satellite broadcasting—in the hands of social movements and regular folks. Along the way, she has inspired generations of grassroots media activists. She helped found a string of creative grassroots media initiatives, including the influential public access cable series *Paper Tiger TV*, and the nation's first grassroots community TV network, Deep Dish TV. A keen historian of community media projects and movements, Halleck is also an endless fount of creative ideas; she first proposed adapting the radio news program *Democracy Now!* for television. In the late 1970s, as president of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, she campaigned to allow independent producers greater access to public television. That campaign also yielded the “sunshine” rules that make public broadcasters accountable to their local communities.



MEDIA



HEROES



**EVERETT PARKER**



# Everett Parker

*b. 17 Jan 1913, Chicago, IL*

*Civil rights activist; founder, UCC Office of Communication, Inc.*

In 1963, black civil rights activists just couldn't get a break on local TV in Jackson, Mississippi. WLBT, run by local whites, refused to provide fair coverage of black leaders and growing civil unrest. Martin Luther King asked Rev. Everett Parker if the United Church of Christ could help break through the media whiteout, and Parker's response changed history. After organizing local residents to monitor WLBT broadcasts and document their biased coverage, Parker charged the station owners with misusing the public airwaves. The FCC at first showed no interest. But after a protracted court battle, Parker and the UCC won, establishing for the first time that the public has standing to demand fair treatment from broadcasters. The racist station owners lost their license in 1969. The UCC's Office of Communication remains deeply involved in issues of media empowerment and social justice.

*See [www.ucc.org/mediajustice](http://www.ucc.org/mediajustice)*



MEDIA



HEROES



**MARÍA SUÁREZ TORO**

MEDIA



HEROES

# María Suárez Toro

*b. 5 June, 1948, Puerto Rico*

*Educator; human rights activist; radio producer; author*

---

In the late 1980s, an international group of feminist radio activists and producers determined to launch a new multilingual radio program featuring grassroots women's voices, to be broadcast around the world by the Costa Rican shortwave station Radio for Peace International. Project organizers asked longtime human rights activist and adult literacy educator María Suárez Toro to direct the new project, dubbed *FIRE: the Feminist International Radio Endeavour*. Since 1991, Suárez has circled the world, recording and broadcasting diverse women's voices discussing human rights, global economic policies, environmental issues and other critical topics. FIRE continues to broadcast globally via shortwave and the Internet. Suárez has taught communications at universities in the US and Sweden, and provided grassroots adult literacy training across Latin America. Her published works include *Women's Voices on FIRE*, chronicling the program's first eight years.



Media Heroes is a project of Reclaim the Media in Seattle. Learn more and join the fight for media justice at [www.reclaimthemedial.org/mediaheroes](http://www.reclaimthemedial.org/mediaheroes).



MEDIA



HEROES



**FAIR**



# Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting

*b. 1986, New York, NY*

*Media watch nonprofit organization*

---

Founded by former journalist and civil rights lawyer Jeff Cohen, media watch group FAIR has set the standard for media criticism based on democratic values rather than on partisan positions. Tracking media practices that marginalize women, people of color, and voices of dissent, FAIR critiques media bias, inaccuracies, and omissions—and mobilizes a community of activists to hold media outlets accountable. The group's teaching tools include its widely-distributed action alerts, its magazine *Extra!*, and the syndicated radio program *Counterspin*, hosted by Janine Jackson (pictured), Steve Rendall, and Peter Hart. FAIR has taught a generation of progressive activists to become media critics, to respond to misleading reporting with reasoned critiques, and to work for public interest media policies. Prominent activists who have worked at FAIR include broadcaster Laura Flanders, media critic Norman Solomon, and feminist media activist Jennifer Pozner.

*See [www.fair.org](http://www.fair.org)*

---



MEDIA



HEROES



**FREDERICK DOUGLASS**



# Frederick Douglass

*b. Feb 1818, Talbot County, MD .... d. 20 Feb 1895,  
Washington, DC*

*Abolitionist; journalist; orator; statesman*

---

Escaping from slavery at the age of 20, Frederick Douglass rose to become one of the most effective and righteous moral voices of all time. He was inspired by abolitionist activist and journalist William Lloyd Garrison to begin speaking out against slavery, and began writing for Garrison's newspaper *The Liberator*. Douglass was a natural communicator, and a powerful public speaker; his autobiography became an international bestseller in 1845. Two years later, Douglass launched his own newspaper. *The North Star* presented African-American voices advocating for emancipation as well as for women's rights, and argued that the denial of equal rights was incompatible with the Constitution of the United States. Douglass' publication soon became the country's best-known abolitionist paper, and it helped spread Douglass' political views and reputation for moral leadership across the country.



MEDIA



HEROES



**INDYMEDIA**

MEDIA



HEROES

# Indymedia

*b. 24 Nov 1999, Seattle, WA*

*Global network of radical grassroots media collectives*

---

In 1999, grassroots journalists, anti-globalization organizers and international tech activists launched a bold experiment: a grassroots media effort to cover the World Trade Organization ministerial in Seattle, and the protests that would shut it down. The Independent Media Center website easily surpassed mainstream media coverage of the epochal event, documenting police aggression in the streets alongside in-depth analysis of the harms caused by deregulated global capitalism. The Indymedia model proved easily replicable, combining anarchist-inspired organizing principles, grassroots “be the media” journalism, and an innovative “open publishing” system first developed by free-software activists in Sydney. Indymedia centers soon organized in other cities. The Indymedia network now circles the earth, with over 175 independent sites publishing news and information in some 20 languages. Indymedia anticipated participatory blogs by several years—turning journalism into a conversation, and provoking generative questions about credibility and editorial standards in all news media.

---



*Media Heroes is a project of Reclaim the Media in Seattle. Learn more and join the fight for media justice at [www.reclaimthemedial.org/mediaheroes](http://www.reclaimthemedial.org/mediaheroes).*

MEDIA



HEROES



**FLORYNCE KENNEDY**



# Florynce Kennedy

*b. 11 Feb 1916, Kansas City, MO .... d. 22 Dec 2000, New York, NY*

*Feminist; anti-racist organizer; attorney; media activist*

---

With righteous anger matched by a sharp and often foul-mouthed wit, Flo Kennedy modeled creative, radical resistance for generations of feminists. As a young attorney, Kennedy handled the estates of Billie Holiday and Charlie Parker, exposing record companies' racist exploitation of successful black artists. In 1966, while most progressive activists were focused on the Vietnam War, Kennedy set up The Media Workshop to expose and fight racism and oppression in the American media. She organized pickets of TV stations, newspapers and their advertisers. At the first meeting of the fledgling National Organization for Women, Kennedy ruffled feathers by pushing the group to confront discrimination in the corporate media. She went on to found the Feminist Party, organizing such protests as the March Against Media Arrogance and the "Hollywood Toilet Bowl," denouncing patriarchy and white supremacy in film and TV.





MEDIA



HEROES



**ELIAS BOUDINOT**



# Elias Boudinot

*b. ca. 1802, Oothcaloga, GA .... d. 22 June 1839, Park Hill,  
Cherokee Nation West*

*Journalist; statesman*

---

Elias Boudinot was founding editor of the first Native American newspaper, the *Cherokee Phoenix*, launched in 1828. At the time, the Cherokee faced immense challenges to their survival as a distinct nation and culture; including pressures to abandon their Appalachian homeland. Cultural innovations included Sequoyah's invention of the first Native American written alphabet, paving the way for Boudinot to publish writings in the Cherokee language. Boudinot remains a controversial figure. While claiming to advocate for the Cherokee national interest, the Christian-educated editor strongly promoted assimilation with white society, rather than the preservation of Cherokee traditions. He ultimately played a leading role in enabling US authorities to drive the Cherokee out of the south-east, on the disastrous Trail of Tears. Boudinot is nevertheless remembered as a trailblazing journalist.



MEDIA



HEROES



**RICHIE PÉREZ**



# Richie Pérez

b. 1944, South Bronx, NY .... d. 27 March 2004, Brooklyn, NY

*Community organizer; anti-racist media activist*

---

As a young high school teacher in the South Bronx, Richie Pérez was radicalized by the Black Panther Party, and by revolutionary Puerto Rican youth organization the Young Lords. After the Lords splintered in the late 1970s, Pérez continued teaching and organizing for community empowerment. He developed a keen interest in the early hip-hop scene, and the political aspects of cultural self-expression among urban minority communities. He also developed a strong critique of how mainstream media stereotyping of the same communities translated directly into political oppression and economic marginalization. In 1980, Pérez helped lead a community campaign targeting the racist and sexist film *Fort Apache: The Bronx*. That campaign, in turn, helped grow a broad national movement for fair representation and multiculturalism in entertainment media.



MEDIA



HEROES



**CHILDRENS TELEVISION WORKSHOP**



# Children's Television Workshop

*b. 1968, New York, NY*

*Educational TV pioneers*

---

In the late 1960s, Joan Ganz Cooney and a few like-minded collaborators sought a new, creative way to connect with children using television. The Children's Television Workshop wanted to avoid the segregation of education from entertainment, and to create a programming environment in which young viewers would be safe from commercial manipulation by advertisers. Finally, they wanted to prioritize serving audiences of nonwhite and lower-income children. Grittily urban, multicultural and kid-safe, *Sesame Street* was CTW's first and most celebrated result. Flaws in the formula were immediately evident; early seasons were criticized for reinforcing patriarchal assumptions and for making only a limited commitment to Spanish-speaking viewers. More recently, advertising has crept onto *Sesame Street*, with programs bracketed by corporate pitches from the likes of Pfizer and McDonald's. Nevertheless, CTW set an enduring international standard for children's TV marked by idealistic values of diversity, cooperation and understanding.

---



MEDIA



HEROES



**HEYWOOD BROUN**



# Heywood Broun

*b. 7 Dec 1888, Brooklyn, NY .... d. 18 Dec 1939, New York, NY*  
*Journalist; labor organizer; founder of the Newspaper Guild*

---

From 1912 until his death in 1939, Heywood Broun was an immensely popular newspaper columnist, writing news, commentary, sports and literary criticism for a number of New York newspapers and wire services. Married to feminist writer Ruth Hale, Broun believed that journalists had both the power and the responsibility to combat social injustices. His crusading articles often championed the causes of working people, and railed against bigotry and racial prejudice. Hoping to improve journalists' working conditions, pay and sense of professional dignity, Broun founded the first union for journalists in 1933. The American Newspaper Guild's first actions included publishing a journalistic code of ethics and a strong statement on the integrity of the press. The code calls journalism a "social responsibility," and declares that press freedom is a right belonging to the reading public, not a privilege to be exploited by media owners.





MEDIA



HEROES



**MYOUNG JOON KIM**

MEDIA



HEROES

# Myoung Joon Kim

*b. 7 Dec 1962, Seoul, South Korea*

*Labor media activist; community media organizer*

---

Myoung Joon Kim was a South Korean student activist during the late 1980s, when radical student and labor groups stood at the forefront of a powerful movement to establish genuine democracy. Kim and other activists used grassroots media production to bring together diverse sectors of Korea's social change movement, and to empower working people as media producers. In the mid 1990s he co-founded Labor News Production to create activist documentary films by and for workers. The group also focused on expanding distribution platforms for independent media, including a union-based network for sharing videos, and an international labor film festival. In 2000, LNP successfully fought to legalize community television in Korea. Kim is also president of MediACT, a Seoul-based center for public-access production training, media literacy education and organizing for media democracy. He continues to be a leader in the struggle against privatization of public communications resources under neoliberal "free trade" policies.

---



*Media Heroes is a project of Reclaim the Media in Seattle. Learn more and join the fight for media justice at [www.reclaimthemedial.org/mediaheroes](http://www.reclaimthemedial.org/mediaheroes).*

MEDIA



HEROES



**LEW HILL**



# Lew Hill

*b. 1 May 1919, Kansas City, KA .... d. 1 Aug 1957, Duncans Mills, CA*  
*Pacifist; community radio pioneer; founder of Pacifica Radio*

---

During World War II, pacifist Lew Hill hatched a radical idea with a number of fellow conscientious objectors. Frustrated by the marginalization of critical voices in broadcast media, they resolved to launch their own radio station—a station which could increase peace and justice by creating opportunities for thoughtful public discussion of diverse ideas. After the war, Hill and his friends formed the Pacifica Foundation, and in 1949 launched KPFA as the country's first listener-supported radio station. The eclectic programming mix included children's and educational programs, political debates, literary reviews, and music. Hill's vision of creating conversation guided KPFA through much of its first decade, though the station also experienced growing pains, as the founder's strong ideas clashed with pressures to democratize station management. Hill committed suicide in 1957. Pacifica expanded to become the first public radio network in the US, now encompassing five principal sister stations and over 130 affiliates.



MEDIA



HEROES



**PROMETHEUS RADIO PROJECT**



# Prometheus Radio Project

*b. 6 Oct 1998, Philadelphia, PA*

*Low-power radio evangelists, media policy activists*

---

In 1998, an ambitious group of former radio pirates in Philadelphia realized that marginalized communities needed a legal means to gain access to the airwaves. Organizing the Prometheus Radio Project, the group quickly became leaders in the national movement to legalize and expand low-power FM radio, creating colorful spectacles in the street while effectively lobbying Congress and the FCC. Prometheus filed the 2003 lawsuit which succeeded in stopping the FCC's move to expand media consolidation. The group's primary commitment, however, has been helping grassroots community organizations to build their own radio stations. Prometheus' programs include collaborative community "barnraisings," combining educational workshops on the power of grassroots media with transmitter setup and studio construction. Many community radio stations in the US and abroad have benefited from Prometheus' advice and collaboration.

See [www.prometheusradio.org](http://www.prometheusradio.org)

---



MEDIA



HEROES



**BILL MOYERS**

MEDIA



HEROES

# Bill Moyers

*b. 5 June 1934, Hugo, OK*

*Journalist and commentator; president, Schumann Center for Media and Democracy*

---

Bill Moyers' voice is immediately recognizable—at once plain-spoken and resoundingly eloquent. Honored many times with broadcast journalism's highest accolades, he has engaged millions in thoughtful consideration of issues of economic justice, religion, media bias and power politics. Moyers' journalistic horizons were broadened by several career detours. After writing for his hometown newspaper as a teenager and studying journalism in college, Moyers shifted gears to pursue Baptist ministry. Soon, he was drawn into politics. Working for Presidents Kennedy and Johnson at the White House, he was able to observe the birth pangs of the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967. In 1971, Moyers came to PBS, and began producing and hosting groundbreaking programs such as *The Power of Myth*, *NOW*, and *Bill Moyers' Journal*. Moyers continues to be a singularly ardent advocate for journalistic ethics and the pursuit of authentic democracy.



*Media Heroes is a project of Reclaim the Media in Seattle. Learn more and join the fight for media justice at [www.reclaimthemedial.org/mediaheroes](http://www.reclaimthemedial.org/mediaheroes).*



MEDIA



HEROES



**JEAN KILBOURNE**



# Jean Kilbourne

b. 4 Jan 1943, Junction City, KS

*Media literacy educator; author; filmmaker*

---

Jean Kilbourne pioneered the critical study of images of women in advertising and the use of media literacy for public health and prevention. Her work examines how a media landscape saturated with visions of idealized female beauty produces illusions of personal inadequacy, sexual objectification of women and girls, and violence against women. In 1969 she began lecturing on these topics, and has never stopped, traveling widely and inspiring many educators to follow her example of unflinching critique. She has also lectured on alcohol and tobacco advertising since the late 1970s. She is the creator of several award-winning films, including the *Killing Us Softly: Advertising's Image of Women* film series (1979, 1987, 2000). Her books include *Can't Buy My Love: How Advertising Changes the Way We Think and Feel* (2000) and *So Sexy So Soon: The New Sexualized Childhood and What Parents Can Do to Protect Their Kids* (2008).

