

OBITUARIES ✓✓

Mort Blender, long-time R.I. radio, TV personality

ATLANTA, Ga. — Morton I. Blender, 70, a radio and television fixture in Rhode Island for 31 years died Nov. 12 after a long illness, according to his son, Matthew, a lawyer in Atlanta.

Mr. Blender retired in 1984, moving with his wife, Rose, to Atlanta, where all three of their children were living.

Mort Blender was a household name in Rhode Island from the early 1940s until 1973, when he went to Washington, D.C., as press secretary to former Congressman Edward Beard.

He later served as staff assistant to the House Committee on Aging, and resumed his broadcasting with a weekly program on opera, a life-long passion. He also conducted an adult education course on opera at the Smithsonian Institution.

Mr. Blender, a radio announcer and newscaster at radio station WPRO, became best known as a television news anchor for Channel 12, a position he held 15 years.

He considered the highlight of his news career the month he spent in Israel in 1961 as part of a Capital Cities Broadcasting Company team covering the trial of Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann. The trial coverage won the prestigious Peabody Award. He later called the trial "the most powerful single experience I've ever had."

His toughest assignment, Mr. Blender said in a 1966 interview, was his first major news event for television, Hurricane Diane in 1955.

Mr. Blender was born in Boston but moved with his family to Canada when not yet a year old. The family soon returned to Boston, then moved to Canada once more when Blender was 14.

He earned a degree in electrical engineering at the Canadian College of Science, now part of the University of Toronto. A crack marksman and skeet shooter, he earned his



Morton I. Blender

way through college as a hunter and trapper. He also served a hitch in the Canadian army.

Mr. Blender said his engineering career ended the day he was working at a Toronto radio transmitter and the station announcer became ill just before a live broadcast of the Toronto Symphony. He took the microphone and a new career was launched.

After working briefly at radio station CKTB in St. Catharines, Ontario, where he would announce the news first in French and then English — he also spoke German and Italian — Mr. Blender joined WCOP in Boston.

He moved to Rhode Island in 1941, when he joined WPRO.

Besides his three children, he leaves four grandchildren.

BLENDER

MORT