It was January 1980 when I first began my television career, answering phones in the lobby on weekend mornings at WWL-TV.

Now, 43 years later, the time is right to wrap up that career. So I am announcing my retirement, effective next month.

When I first walked into this building all those years ago, I felt the magic. I could feel the importance of the work done here. It oozed through the walls. The culture of excellence was in the air. With every breath, you knew what was expected here.

43 year later, I still feel it. I hope you do. Every one of you plays a key role in a vital part of our society. I hope you all keep at it, and keep doing it with dignity and compassion, which is the WWL way..

So on this St. Patrick's Day, I can speak extensively of luck. Unlike so many of my fellow News Directors, I am lucky to be leaving on my terms and my timetable. I was lucky enough to end my career at the same wonderful place where it began. In between, I have worked at 5 other television stations. I can say unequivocally this one is the best. And it will stay that way. Tod Smith will keep leading WWL with the best interests of the community and the employees in mind. I can assure you not every station leader does that.

By the numbers, i would have worked nearly 20 years of my career here at WWL. Eighteen years were spent on the West Coast. The rest at WVUE. By my count, I have been through 130 ratings books (not counting Julys), countless hurricanes, two major earthquakes, scores of minor ones, dozens of brushfires, innumerable elections, 2 political conventions, 2 terror attacks, so many criminal trials (but only one involving OJ Simpson), building collapses, Superbowls, NCAA tournaments, 25 Carnivals and so much more.

And more importantly, I got the chance to work with pros like you.

I'll be around. I'll remain in New Orleans, running my little (emphasis on "little") real estate empire, and enjoying the things I love so much about this city. The music, the people, the celebrations of meals, and the occasional cocktail. I'll also get the opportunity to do a few things that are way overdue. I have two sons in Los Angeles and one in New York. I miss them terribly and I'll get the chance to travel to see them more often. Most of the time, I'll still be in New Orleans, listening to and playing more music, so as George Harrison so eloquently told the other three Beatles when he left the band, "See you 'round the clubs."