Rich O'Dell

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A few weeks ago, I told the staff at WLTX and TEGNA that I've made the decision to retire. Being the GM of a local television station is a dream job and I absolutely love what I do. I could go on doing this forever, but Sue and I have made some great plans that don't involve ratings, budgets, or transmitters. I turn 74 next month and it's time for me to step aside and let the next General Manager come in to lead WLTX.

As I look back over my years from college in Carbondale, IL, to working in Paducah, KY, Columbus, OH, Cleveland, OH, and now in Columbia, the people I had the honor to work with are what I remember the most. At each stop along the way, we worked so closely together and shared (crazy) experiences, that we became family. Friendships made years ago are just as strong today.

I've experienced so many technological changes over the years. As a kid, I remember the transition from black & white to color TV. In the business, I started with 16mm film and 2" videotape and moved to ¾" tape, then Beta, MII, DVCPro, to digital files. Audio went from mono to stereo to 5.1. We went from typewriters to word processors to computers. We started using satellites. The internet changed the world, then the HDTV conversion, and now - here comes AI.

At WLTX, we went through so much together from doubling the size of our building in 2001, community drives, the flood in 2015 and, of course, COVID; to personal things like marriages, babies, and yes, retirements. Through it all, together, we made a difference in our community; and because of the dedication of our people, WLTX was recognized as the South Carolina Station of the Year 3 of the past 4 years.

I plan to stay on through July until a new person is named. After all, I have 24 years of WLTX history that I'd like to pass on to the next GM. That new leader will inherit a wonderful station with a dedicated staff and an opportunity to take our station to even greater heights.

It's not every day you get to live your dream.