In April, I was told I needed major heart surgery or I was finished. We naturally said yes to a procedure which involved implanting a heart pump known as an LVAD. Recovery is still ongoing, but is limiting me on regular work duties. I didn't return to work or start driving until last week. Because of the recovery issue, and the fact that I am nearing 70 years old, I will retire from the Oklahoma Educational Television Authority on September 1st after 30 years with the organization. OETA is the PBS network that covers the entire state and consistently has one of the highest viewing stats among PBS viewers across the USA. My title at retirement will be Vice President of Content Production, a role that has for several years given me oversight of the weekly newscast (The Oklahoma News Report), the OETA production department, and OETA's award-winning documentary department, which I founded in 1999. Since its creation, the documentary team has earned significant recognition, including numerous NATAS Heartland Chapter Emmy Awards, two International Western Heritage Awards (the Wrangler), several NETA awards, and a national Clarion Award. In 2016, I was inducted into the Oklahoma Journalism Hall of Fame, and last Saturday, on July 20th, at the 2019 Heartland Emmy Awards ceremony, I was inducted into the NATAS Gold Circle, a recognition that reflects 50 or more years of broadcast excellence. What an unbelievable honor for which I will be eternally grateful! They even had video of me reporting and anchoring with bad hair and clothing selected by someone with poor taste!

I started my broadcasting career at KTEN-TV in Ada, Oklahoma, in 1969 in the production department, eventually moving into reporting and anchoring. I subsequently worked as a reporter/producer/ sometimes anchor at KOCO-TV in OKC and KDFW-TV in Dallas, and producer at WAVE-TV in Louisville. Those years were followed by News Director posts at WBBH-TV in Ft. Myers, FL and at WATE-TV in Knoxville, TN. I have made friends at TV stations who are scattered coast to coast, and I still remain in contact with many of them. The Gold Circle induction has prompted many of them to contact me – it's been a great few days! I had a lot of people who visited or helped out during my lengthy hospital stay – I am certain that I have survived because of them, my family, and mostly because of my wife Sue, who took a leave of absence from her job to care for me.

What's next? I'll continue to get better as days go by, but don't be surprised if I turn up working behind the scenes somewhere in OKC on a part-time basis. I love TV too much to just stop!

Thanks Rick – call if you have questions.