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Roone: A Memoir



Synopsis

Roone Arledge's extraordinary career of more than a half century mirrors the history of the television industry he helped create. Roone is the vivid, intimate account of his own rise to fame and power as the head of both ABC Sports and ABC News as well as an up-close-and- personal story of his era, peopled with friends and foes alike.

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Customer Reviews

In his long career as an executive at ABC-TV, Roone Arledge revolutionized sports and news broadcasting by emphasizing entertainment-and his posthumous memoir (he died in December at age 71), entertains as well. Arledge, who created The Wide World of Sports and Nightline, among other shows, was known as a creative but difficult genius, and no one who reads this book will have trouble understanding why he gained that reputation. He delights in telling how people opposed his innovations-such as introducing slow-motion replays and putting three men in a broadcasting booth for Monday Night Football-only later to be proven wrong. He also relishes telling war stories of his life at the network-from Jim McKay broadcasting live at the 1972 Munich Olympics to a debate between South Africa's foreign minister and Archbishop Desmond Tutu during the peak of the battle over apartheid. He also provides a behind-the scenes look at his four decades of wheeling and dealing with top executives and on-air personalities: Howard Cosell, Barbara Walters, Peter Jennings and Diane Sawyer all trace much of their stardom to Arledge's tutelage and backing. Nor is Arledge afraid to shovel some dirt. Former ABC news anchor Max Robinson is depicted as a

drunk who made accusations of racism to cover up his own shortcomings. Arledge laments corporatization of the networks and the resulting decline in the quality of their news broadcasts. Anyone interested in sports, news or television in general will have difficulty putting this valuable book down. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

From the man Sports Illustrated places third in its list of most influential sports figures. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

As the price for this product was so low, I was not expecting the quality to be so good. I had to buy these for a course at college and I didn't want to spend much money on books. It was a genuinely good surprise opening up the box to find this book!

Terrific "inside" look by one of the greats of television

Roone Arledge wastes no time sharing the fun of producing sports, first at NBC and then to ABC. He proudly tells how he helped land groundbreaking contracts for NCAA football and then several Olympic games. It's a fun ride that gets faster as he takes on ABC News, known to the competition as "Almost Broadcasting Co." The book is all about personalities: the executives, the on-air talent, the producers and directors -- Arledge seems to relish in the trials and triumphs of his dealings. Also, Arledge always mentions which restaurants in which negotiations occurred -- the food and the atmosphere rank as importantly as the people. His final scene in the book, a reunion of ABC teammates, is painted with details of a popular New York eatery. As Arledge tells it, the process of people management and kicking the competition while doing it is the real fun. And when you get to hang out with Peter Jennings, Barbara Walters, Diane Sawyer and even Sam Donaldson, it's always going to be interesting. The book's second half takes a darker tone as bean-counting executives from Capital Cities buy ABC in the 1980s. The high-rolling days at ABC and other nets came to a close as leveraged buyouts gave investors the chance to own chunks of the Fifth Estate, and the heritage of ABC's Leonard Goldenson and CBS's Bill Paley quickly faded. It wasn't about broadcasting anymore, it was just about money. Having worked in local television during this time, I found much of Arledge's account to be familiar with my own career experiences. Arledge doesn't spend much time describing the mood after Disney bought ABC in the mid 1990s, but it's clear that

Disney was an immediate improvement over the CapCities reign. Of course, Arledge fought cancer and other ailments late in life, and he died in late 2002 before the book hit shelves. For me, the book lacked much substance about his personal life, his faith or outside interests or accomplishments. True, his work impacted important stories involving U.S. and USSR relations, race relations in South Africa and other milestones. But, if his life was consumed by the TV biz, to the exclusion of family, other causes and loves, this story reads a bit like a tragedy. Broadcasting is a very exciting but always changing product; Arledge's lifelong accomplishments are fading daily into the new visions of management at ABC.

Every once in awhile you find someone who loves their work. They don't mind putting in 18 hours a day on the job, because it's their life and it's what brings them happiness. Such was the case with Roone Arledge. Roone not only brought happiness to his own life but he brought a lot of happiness to viewers too. His recent death probably wasn't all that surprising because he had come to the end of a very long and productive career. The end of the career in many ways was the end of his life. His work in building ABC Sports and News will live on for decades. Millions of people tune in every night to watch Peter Jennings' newscasts or to watch Monday Night Football or Nightline. All of it can be traced back to Arledge's innovation and this book details how it all happened. What I liked best about his book is that he was able to delve into the personal curiosities of many television personalities but he does it without rancor. For example, Howard Cosell and Frank Reynolds were probably not the easiest people in the world to have working for you. This book delves into those challenges but still does it in a positive way and you come away with respect for everyone in the book. It's a great read and also a great resource regarding the history of television.

This is a great book! Very easy to read and an interesting story. Roone is so creative and you really get to know him in his memoir. I enjoyed all of the behind the scene stories about Monday Night Football, Wide World of Sports, boxing and World News Tonight. He had to deal with a lot of difficult people -- mostly in the news division -- but he knew what he was doing and always succeeded. This is a success story. The greatest story is how he got started when he was a waiter in a restaurant. It's too bad that the kids working in the restaurants, fast food places and retail stores don't read this and apply themselves to their jobs because you just never know who might be your customer! Roone was always a pro and that's why when fate intervened, he succeeded. I highly recommend this enjoyable and well-written book!

Every once in a while there is a book that you hate to see come to an end. *Roone: A Memoir* is one of those books. The reader races through his busy days right along with him. The reader gets the inside jokes and snickers at the absurdity of many situations that were common place. He does not allow you into his private life. He mentions the break up of his first marriage and casually introduces his second wife. So casually, that I missed it and had to go back and find the reference. The stories about current TV personalities and those who have passed are captivating. His experiences during the Munich Olympics brought back memories of that horrific nightmare. This is a book that will definitely be a gift to the sports minded people on my list this Christmas.

This was a fascinating look at the life and times of one of the most innovative minds in television history. This man originated a lot of the things that modern viewers take for granted. There was also some great background on a lot of the network stars, past and present, that made the book even more interesting. It is very enlightening to look inside some of the ridiculous egos that dominate the profession. If Arledge had been alive to promote the book it would have been a bestseller, no question. This book was a terrific, highly entertaining read because the reader gets the inside scoop on so many stars and how so many concepts, like instant replay, were invented. Definitely worth the time-highly recommended!

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