



2023 Nomination Form

Application deadline: Friday, February 24 by 5 p.m.

DELIVER TO: City Hall, 101 N. Main St., Winston-Salem,
Marketing & Communications Department, Suite 336

OR MAIL TO: City of Winston-Salem,
Marketing & Communications
Department
P.O. Box 2511
Winston-Salem, NC 27102

Nominee's Stage Name: Dick Bennick Given Name: Ernest Richard Bennick

Address at Time of Death: Winter Haven FL. State: Florida

Dates of Residency: 11/3/1928 to: 2/15/95 (ex: 2000-2010)

Category: Music Visual Arts Dance Motion Pictures
 Theater Television Writing Radio

Criteria:

- The nominee(s) exhibited sustained excellence in his or her field for at least five years.
- The nominee(s) made distinguished contributions to the community and civic-oriented participation.
- The nominee(s) is deceased (must provide copy of death certificate or obituary).
- The nominee(s) was a resident of Winston-Salem for at least five years.
- The nominee(s) made a significant contribution to the arts or entertainment industry in one or more of the following areas: music, dance, theater, writing, visual arts, motion pictures, television, or radio.

A "significant" contribution would be iconic in terms of renown and the impact on the artistic disciplines or popular culture.

Application to Include:

- Attach nominee's performance/accomplishment biography which must include at least 5 years of accomplishments in the arts, culture, or entertainment field.
- Attach a list of nominee's civic/community involvement.
- Attach a copy of nominee's death certificate or obituary.

Sponsor Name: Ken Hauser @ WTOB Radio W-S

Address: 615 N. TRADE ST.

City: W-S State: NC Zip Code: 27101

Email: Ken@WTOB980.com

Phone: Home: 336-782-9120 Cell: SAME

Signature: Ken Hauser Date: 1-31-23

Dick Bennick

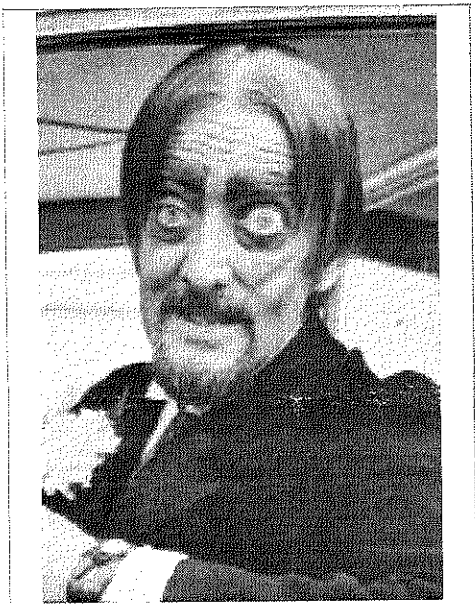


Dick's radio career goes back to North Carolina where he was a top-rated disc jockey for many years at Winston-Salem's WTOB 1380. WTOB & Dick Bennick introduced rock and roll to the Piedmont. He hosted many Rock and Roll Shows and dance parties throughout Winston-Salem. Downtown-A-Go-Go was one of the first and that spilled over to the Carolina Theaters "Kiddie Show" a Saturday morning staple for kids growing up in the 60's. For fifty cents you could hear a good band, dance, see a double feature movie and wait a week to do it again. Other than his radio work, he ran a nightclub in Greensboro, produced area rock 'n' roll groups for his own record label, Salem Records, and held teen dances on Friday and Saturday nights. He was also a TV dance party host before developing his Dr. Paul Bearer alter ego in the mid 1960's (see Dr. Paul Bearer in Who's Who). Dr Paul Bearer, Dick Bennick is a tribute group that celebrates the life of Mr Dick Bennick, who was responsible in the late 50s, early 60s with bringing Rock & Roll to young people in Winston-Salem, NC later in his career inventing the character Dr Paul Bearer for a local TV station in North Carolina, later moving back to his home state of Florida, endearing his character to thousands of fans in the Tampa area.

In 1971, he packed up and moved to Florida. Once there, he first pulled mornings at Lakeland's WQPD, and then moved into sales and the GM's chair at Hubbard Broadcasting's WGTO at nearby Cypress Gardens. It was while working there that he resurrected his Dr. Paul Bearer character to host weekend Creature Feature movies on St. Pete's WTOG-TV Ch. 44, which Hubbard also owned.

Unfortunately, his career was cut short unexpectedly in 1995 when he passed away from complications following open-heart surgery.

Dr. Paul Bearer



Dr. Paul Bearer actually came into being in early 1965 when Dick Bennick was working as Promotion Director/Talent for WGHP-TV Channel 8 in the Winston-Salem/Greensboro/High Point market in North Carolina. He designed his character, Dr. Paul Bearer, by looking through every issue of FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND magazine that he had at the time and making sort of a composite of what he liked about various characters.

For Dr. Paul's personality, Bennick read a number of biographies of famous comedians and again formed a composite of Groucho Marx, Charlie Chaplin, Abbott & Costello, the Three Stooges and circus clown Emmett Kelly, Sr., along with some touches of Mad Magazine, National Lampoon, and Bennick's own love for puns. Since he had been the number one deejay in Winston-Salem for about eight years and had a very recognizable voice, he knew he would have to come up with a different one for his character, so he developed a guttural, reverse falsetto voice – and it worked like a charm. The show was a hit and grew into a staple on the North Carolina station for many years. From the Downtown a go go, to the Kiddie Show and on to Shock Theater, Dick Bennick/Dr. Paul Bearer is Winston Salem's best known media celebrity.



14 Years, 3,000 Sock Hops and 75,000 Teenagers Later, Dick Bennick Leaves Town



Staff Photo by Howard Walker
Dick Bennick offstage

By Roy Thompson
and Bearer

An old Rock Jack named Dick Bennick left Winston-Salem yesterday pretty much the way he came to town 14 years ago . . . broke and hauling a logistical of records in a beat-up car.
But it was his 40th birthday, and that's not old in some lines of work, but as he said, "For a Rock Jack. (That's a dinosaur."
Among the things Bennick will be remembered for: He brought rock 'n' roll to Winston-Salem over WTOP . . . He created a character named Dr. Paul Bearer to introduce a Saturday night horror show on Channel 8 . . . He staged more than 3,000

record hops and estimates that he met 50,000 to 75,000 teenagers at them . . . He put on late horror shows at the Carolina Theater for years . . . and satirized dance party shows on the stage . . . and might show all over.
That was the on-stage Bennick.
There was another Bennick under the marls, costumes and rab-rah-Top Pop suite.
This one was president of the FTA, a backstage worker for the civic ballet, a tireless worker for the Nature-Science Museum . . . shows like that.
Bennick came here in the summer of 1957. WTOP wanted a disk jockey to test what was then called "con-

temporary radio." It later came to be known as "rock 'n' roll."
He made the music known here, and his name became known along with it.
At one time, he was Top Jack in town. It could be that no one has yet topped the income he reached with his radio work and all his moonlighting.
But some of his first teenagers may have teenagers of their own, and there comes a time when a man just can't cut it as a Rock Jack.
"It's a young man's game," Bennick said without bitterness.
He saw it coming, and he tried to get ready.
He opened a club for

teenagers over Woodworth, and they went for it. The place, he says, was "better equipped than school here."
One night a boy was out there. It was the first thing of its kind to happen to Bennick, and he'd put on more than 3,000 dances here before that night.
Parents kept their children out of his place after that, and Bennick, father of a teenager himself at the time, said philosophically, "I don't blame them."
He kept hoping that the kids would come back once their parents thought the time over, but they didn't, and he said, "Finally I got bowed out door one night and walked away."
He staged a dance party on

Channel 8 for a time . . . then got into the horror business.
He created a character known as Count Shockola to introduce the station's Saturday night horror show, but Shockola never quite checked, and Bennick came up with Dr. Paul Bearer, a shabby, run-down, creepy fellow.
Bearer killed off Shockola one night and has now been coming on shortly before midnight on Saturdays for nearly six years.
In the meantime, Bennick became part owner and manager of the Good Leaf Snapper Club here. The hours were bad for a man who was essentially a morning jock

but business improved steadily.
Then the club burned, and that would have put Bearer. Worse than broke.
But people tended to think that he'd sailed away a millionaire, and when he started to look for a job . . .
"Everybody thought I was wealthy. It was hard to convince them that I created work."
Recently, he's been working for radio station WCOG in Greensboro, "rumormongering to get less than I got when I first came to Winston-Salem."
Dr. Paul Bearer still brought in some much-needed cash.
But he didn't seem to get anywhere.

He filmed the last sequence with Dr. Bearer Foster, and he'd said as much of his record collection and his stock of magic illusions as he could sell.
He took a breather, but as he said, "I had to have some money to get out of town on."
He left yesterday for Lakeland, Fla., where he'll be the morning jock on WFLX.
He left town broke in an old Volkswagen and with the remains of his record collection, but he said he'd like to come back someday.
"I love Winston-Salem," Bennick said. "I really love the town. I just couldn't seem to get the break I needed to be able to stay here."

November 4, 1971 in Winston-Salem, NC

Carroll Hall
July 3, 2022

According to this article, Dick Bennick taped his last Dr. Paul Bearer segment at WGHP 8 in High Point, NC on Tuesday November 2, 1971. He left for Florida the following day. He was missed by all his fans here.

Chuck Dale Smith and 19 others

4 1 84

Like Comment Share

Top comments

Jerry Bennett
I was sure glad he found a home in the Bay Area. He gave myself and family so much enjoyment for years.

Like Reply Share 30w

Jerry Bennett replied · 1 Reply

Mike Sullivan
I was raised on him broadcasting from High Point and being the weatherman too.

Like Reply Share 30w

Barry Disbrow
North Carolina's loss was Florida's gain.

Like Reply Share 30w

Write a public comment...