

State and Local

Ron Stone's reporting style is still down-home, folksy

By TOM TAGLIABUE
Reporter

Ron Stone has always had that down-home news style and he hasn't changed.

Stone, 49, who was in College Station Thursday promoting his new book "The Book of Texas Days," has been a fixture in homes at 5 p.m. and 10 p.m. for as long as most people can remember as news anchor on KPRC-TV.

Stone treated every autograph-seeker like a neighbor he had not seen in a while or a new friend he had just made.

One fan commented on Stone's down-home style, something Stone said just came naturally.

"I really have a folksy approach to the news, because I refuse to let all the bad things that are happening in the world diminish my feelings for my fellow man," Stone said. "I think we're still pretty good folks and by and large do some pretty good things — and sure some things go wrong, but I happen to be in a business where you mostly report the things that are going wrong."

Even when people doubted Stone's sincerity, he never changed the style.

"The first time I said, 'Good night neighbors,' on the air was because Houston was a small town then — and I really did think of them as neighbors," Stone said.

"I had a person come up to me a few years ago saying they thought that was just an asinine thing to say, but I really didn't think so."

"It's just my way of saying that all of us are in this thing together and I'm one of you and you're one of me and let's do our best to get along — and that's kind of the way I approach things."

Stone, who began his journalism career in Ada, Okla. at a radio station owned by his wife's brother, said he is thankful for the voice God gave him and for the ability to speak. In Oklahoma, he met some old-line radio and television broadcasters who taught him to speak correctly, to



Ron Stone signs "The Book of Texas Days."

think and to write stories correctly.

One of those old-liners was Dan Rather, who brought Stone from Tulsa to CBS' Houston affiliate, KHOU-TV, in 1961. Rather was helpful in teaching Stone the proper style and good reporting techniques, Stone said.

Stone, who later joined KPRC, an NBC affiliate, still listens to tapes of his broadcasts while driving home. He works many hours on his style to assure that it is exemplary.

Stone agrees with the late E.B. White when it comes to writing style.

"Good writing is a creativity of the mind," Stone said. "It's not where you put the periods and the punctuation marks, it's a sum total of what you know and what you communicate — and writing is communicating."

One of the exciting things for Stone, besides covering the latest breaking stories, is seeing young journalists develop into top news reporters. One of the best-known

young reporters Stone said he's seen is Jessica Savich, now with NBC News.

Even though the television industry has changed, the responsibilities the young reporter has still are the same.

"I think you have to be honest," Stone said. "You have to understand that most of the people out there don't really understand what the stories are."

Although the call to network television has come from his former colleague Dan Rather, Stone has said "no" to the move.

"It (network television) is just not what I want to do," Stone said. "I'm famous enough. Lord help, I can still go into Wendy's and get a hamburger. Rather can't. That's important."

Stone is amazed by the technological advances in the television industry and he also is excited by the large number of quality young people trying to get into television journalism.

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