



Bill Sturgeon

Pittsfield, MA

Bill Sturgeon worked across the country and around the world during his 50-year criminal justice career. From his starting point in the Lanesborough Police Department, and later the Pittsfield Police Department, he took his investigative and security expertise to Texas, Arizona and South Carolina, and testified before Congress. He consulted in the UK, Netherlands and Belgium, and found it a privilege to work with the Nelson Mandela administration in South Africa.

When health concerns sidelined him from full-time employment more than a decade ago, Bill grew restless. “I was bored,” he said of retirement. He found his late-in-life calling on the radio. He began with a talk show on commercial radio, switched to non-commercial with United Cerebral Palsy’s “Berkshire Talking Chronicle,” and finally to community radio with WTBR-FM’s “Morning Drive.” Pittsfield listens every weekday.

As he moved around the airwaves, he has strived to keep a community focus and positivity as an attitude. Whether his guest is a politician, educator, actor or athlete, he wants to hear their opinions, even if he disagrees. Given a platform, he advocates especially for those whose voices are hard to hear above the fray: veterans, the disabled and the elderly. Having served with the Army’s 101st Airborne Division in Vietnam, he looks for any opportunity to support vets. As for the elderly and disabled, he’s taken on their issues; handicapped parking spaces on North Street in Pittsfield are evidence.

Information, education and a few laughs along the way is how Bill describes his show. He gets to the station at 6:30 in the morning, not to return home most nights until nine because he’s attending events for the causes he espouses. As Nelson Mandela said to him of South Africa, people from different factions can either fight each other, or they can “come together and build a country.” Or in the case of a cop-turned-radio host, build a community.

Photography: Susan Geller

Words: Kathy Zdeb