

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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WCCO RADIO NEWS WINS FIFTH GEORGE FOSTER PEABODY AWARD
FOR BROADCAST EXCELLENCE

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A series of special reports entitled "Debbie Pielow: Waiting For A Heart That Never Came," written and produced by Steve Murphy of WCCO Radio News, has earned the station a George Foster Peabody Award in the 1983 competition. It is the most distinguished honor in radio and television broadcasting. This award which is the fifth such award to be earned by WCCO Radio in its 60 year history, and is a record number for any U.S. commercial radio station, will be presented to Murphy at a ceremony in New York City on April 25. Upon receiving news of the award late last week, Murphy stated, "Winning the Peabody for the heart transplant series is very gratifying for more than one reason. It's a recognition for the series itself, but it's also a recognition of Debbie Pielow, whose battle to live underlined the need for more people to become organ donors. Debbie was a courageous and articulate person, and I knew when the series was produced her words would affect people. She deserves this award too."

The eight week series revolved around Debbie Pielow, a Crystal, Minnesota woman, wife and mother of a two year old daughter, who desperately needed a heart transplant. For 50 days during the summer of 1983 she was first on the University of Minnesota heart transplant list. WCCO Radio reporter/editor Steve Murphy recorded her wait in weekly reports. Debbie discussed her condition, her financial problems meeting the cost of the transplant, her life, her fears and her confidence that a donor heart would be found. Included also were the comments of Debbie's doctors and those who are intimately aware of transplant surgery ethics. But the donor heart was not forthcoming. Debbie Pielow died on July 12, 1983. She was 25. Murphy's final report was broadcast upon her death.

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The series has previously won first place awards in the Northwest Broadcast News Association 1983 competition and Minnesota UPI 1983 competition. It is in the running for several other major awards yet to be announced. Ironically, WCCO Radio's most previous Peabody award was also for a report on a heart patient in 1973. "Heart of the Matter" was an hour-long documentary about WCCO Radio News commentator Dr. E.W. Ziebarth's heart attack and subsequent recovery. The station's first Peabody honor was in 1948 for a program about juvenile delinquency. The next was in 1960 in recognition of the station's efforts to promote international understanding. The third was for life-saving public service to the Twin Cities community during a devastating series of tornadoes in May of 1965.

The George Foster Peabody Radio and Television awards, which had their inception in 1939, are jointly administered by the Henry W. Grady School of Journalism at the University of Georgia and a National Advisory Board composed of outstanding American citizens. The awards have sought to emphasize quality and distinguished service with a goal of fostering excellence in broadcasting. Winners receive a bronze medallion and an appropriately inscribed certificate.

Only one other Twin Cities radio station has earned this honor. That was KSTP Radio in 1940, the first year of the competition. WCCO Television, WCCO Radio's sister station, also earned their third Peabody award in the 1983 competition. No other commercial radio/television combination has earned more than the WCCO station's total of eight Peabodys.

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Peabody Awards