



...ick winners in the Salute to
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...al Society of Pennsylvania.)

IMAGES
of America

PHILADELPHIA RADIO

Alan Boris





The WDAS studios and towers were built on the ground formerly occupied by Woodside Park, an amusement park in West Philadelphia that closed in 1955. The WDAS Building was located on Edgely Drive near Belmont Avenue in Fairmount Park for over 40 years. (Courtesy of the Athenaeum of Philadelphia.)

Philadelphia mayor Richardson Dilworth and WDAS president Max M. Leon hold a shovel during the ground-breaking ceremonies for the WDAS Building on Edgely Drive. Seen from left to right are Mayor Dilworth, unidentified, Bill Vogt, unidentified, Leon, Louis Palens, unidentified, and Bob Klein. (Courtesy of the Bob Klein Archives and WDASHistory.org.)

Joe Grady (left) and Ed Hurst were the hosts of the 950 Club on WPEN from 1946 to 1955 and again from 1980 to 1988. Teenagers from all over Philadelphia came to dance and watch interviews with recording stars in a studio/restaurant called the William Penn Room at 2212 Walnut Street. Even though the music predated rock and roll, Dick Clark has credited Grady and Hurst as being the model for American Bandstand, the epitome of televised rock and roll. (Courtesy of the Theatre Collection, Free Library of Philadelphia.)

WDAS

The Increased Power Station

PHILADELPHIA'S OLDEST INDEPENDENT



As Always...

THE LEADER
in Philadelphia Negro Radio

Program Schedule SPRING, 1959

PHILADELPHIA'S QUALITY NEGRO STATION



JULIAN GRAHAM
"Glow Up This Day"
"Ebony Hall of Fame"



BERNICE THOMPSON
"Morning Time"



SIR LANCELOT
"I'm a B. Housparty"



JORRO
"Rocker Star"



GEORGE WOODS
"Big Swing Star"



WORKING TOGETHER AND FOR:

American Chemical, Axid, American Tobacco Co., Arto Skintone Cream, Budweiser Beer, Bromo Quinine, Blue Coat, Black Draught, Carolina Rice, Carrington Flour, Cremulatum, Carrington Milk, Coco-Cola, Parker John's Medicine, Gillette Razor Co., Humphrey's, Italian Swiss Colony Wine, Krey Packing Co., Monticello Drug (566), Modinole, Puffed Bean, Parks Sausage, Ram, Sulfur & Scott's Emulsion, SSS Tonic, Sinclair Oil, Sun Oil Co., Starback, Tasty Tea, United Auto Workers, Vaseline, Ward Baking Company, Wigley's, BC Remedy, Basul Coffee, Border's Instant Coffee, Cantalini, Lipton Tea, Eno-Fit, United Fruit, Snow's Clean Chewer, Continental Baking, Morrell-Felix, R. J. Reynolds (Carnie & Winston), South's Beverages, Coors Lums, Duleary Frozen Foods, Ortlieb Brewing Co., Pils Wine, Philadelphia Electric, P.E.F.S., San Giorgio, Schmidt Beer, Tasty Baking Co., Wanamaker's, Western Saving Fund Society, Lit Bros., W. T. Grant Co., Snowbridge & Clothier.



JOE PINE
Public Relations Representative
of the Negro Community
Conferences, Interviews,
Public Issues



ART PETERS
News and special events



DEL SHIELDS
"Open to Jazz"



BILLY DUFFIE
Sunday Afternoon

NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES: JOHN E. PEARSON CO.

NEW YORK • CHICAGO • MINNEAPOLIS • ATLANTA • DALLAS • LOS ANGELES • SAN FRANCISCO

Close Cover Before Striking

permanettes

WPEN

new! 950 Club

SHOWPLACE OF PERSONALITIES

PHILADELPHIA'S

MILNER and BROWN

on the 950 Club

Ringmasters of WIT and MUSIC

MON. THROUGH SAT.

1:05 TO 7:00 P.M.

Universal Match Corp. Philadelphia

WDAS contributed to the enormous popularity of rhythm and blues music at a time when black artists could not get airplay on mainstream stations. WDAS was one of the first stations in the country to play records by Sam Cooke, Aretha Franklin, the Beatles, Marvin Gaye, Buddy Holly, and Stevie Wonder. In addition to breaking new rhythm and blues and soul hits, WDAS established a full-service news department that provided coverage of every major civil rights breakthrough. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s confidant, ambassador Andrew Young, said of WDAS: "To our knowledge there is no station in America that has worked harder, longer and with more dedication for Black people than WDAS in Philadelphia." (Courtesy of the Bob Klein Archive and WDASHistory.org.)



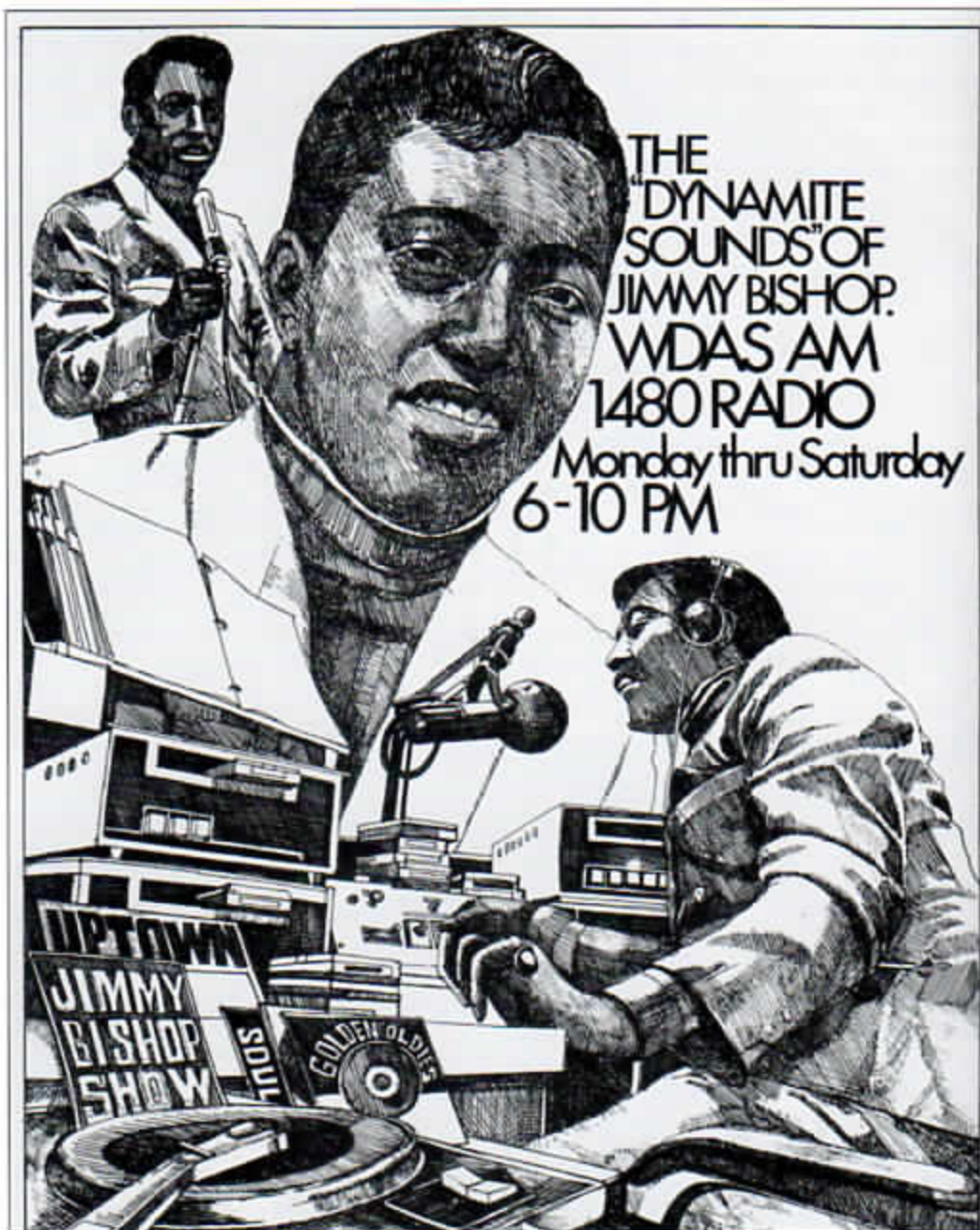
Seen here from left to right are Bob Klein, WDAS general manager; WDAS attorney, future federal judge, and noted author A. Leon Higginbotham; Jeanne Higginbotham; civil rights powerhouse Congressman Adam Clayton Powell Jr.; and disc jockey Georgie Woods around 1958. Quoted in the *Congressional Record*, historian Wynne Alexander writes of the role WDAS played in the history of the civil rights movement: "WDAS was both a participant and a leader in perhaps the world's greatest multi-cultural, multi-racial victory over entrenched oppression. Under tremendous pressure from all sides, emerges this extraordinary example of Blacks and Whites working together for Justice. Working together on behalf of Freedom, to benefit all people, to free a nation, an effort that can serve as a beacon throughout the world. An example of what can be done when the humanity and beauty of differing cultures matter more than anything else." (Courtesy of the Bob Klein Archive and WDASHistory.org.)



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Meeting at the WDAS studios around 1963 are, from left to right, Georgie Woods; Rev. Ralph Abernathy, SCLC; Ed Bradley, WDAS newsmen and later of CBS News; Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.; WDAS general manager Bob Klein; and Philadelphia NAACP president Cecil Moore, Esq. WDAS was an early supporter of Dr. King and provided extensive coverage of his civil rights activities. WDAS paid for 13 busloads of listeners to attend the 1963 March on Washington and included a WDAS staffer on each bus to act as captain. After Dr. King's assassination, the programming efforts at WDAS were credited with keeping Philadelphia calm while other cities reacted with violence. (Courtesy of the Bob Klein Archive and WDASHistory.org.)



Jimmy Bishop was program director of WDAS and single-handedly responsible for the station's sound and position as a major musical force in the industry. Program directors from all over the country would call Bishop on weekends to find out what he was adding to the playlist on Monday—they trusted his ears over their own. Jimmy Bishop eventually moved from radio into the music industry, first at Philadelphia International Records and then at April Blackwood Music. (Courtesy of the Bob Klein Archive and WDASHistory.org.)

THE
DYNAMITE
SOUNDS OF
JIMMY BISHOP.
WDAS AM
80 RADIO
Monday thru Saturday
PM



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...ry. Program directors from all over
...at he was adding to the playlist on
...p eventually moved from radio into
...ords and then at April Blackwood
...tory.org.)

This photography shoot outtake features radio innovator Bob Klein joining the WDAS-AM jocks. Pictured from left to right are Johnny-O, Georgie Woods, Larry Daley, program director Jimmy Bishop, WDAS general manager Bob Klein, Joe "Butterball" Tamburro, and Mr. Freeze. (Courtesy of the Bob Klein Archive and WDASHistory.org.)



WDAS CEO and Philadelphia Grand Opera Company president Max M. Leon presents a proclamation to the Temptations on March 7, 1969. A joy and commitment to music fueled much of Leon's lifelong endeavors and aspirations. This event brought two of his musical worlds together. Seen at the award ceremony are, from left to right, Melvin Franklin, Eddie Kendricks, Dennis Edwards, Max M. Leon, Paul Williams, and Otis Williams. (Courtesy of the Bob Klein Archive and WDASHistory.org.)



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WFL morning show
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stored, and the station
s a religious format.
by © Scott Weiner.)



Four

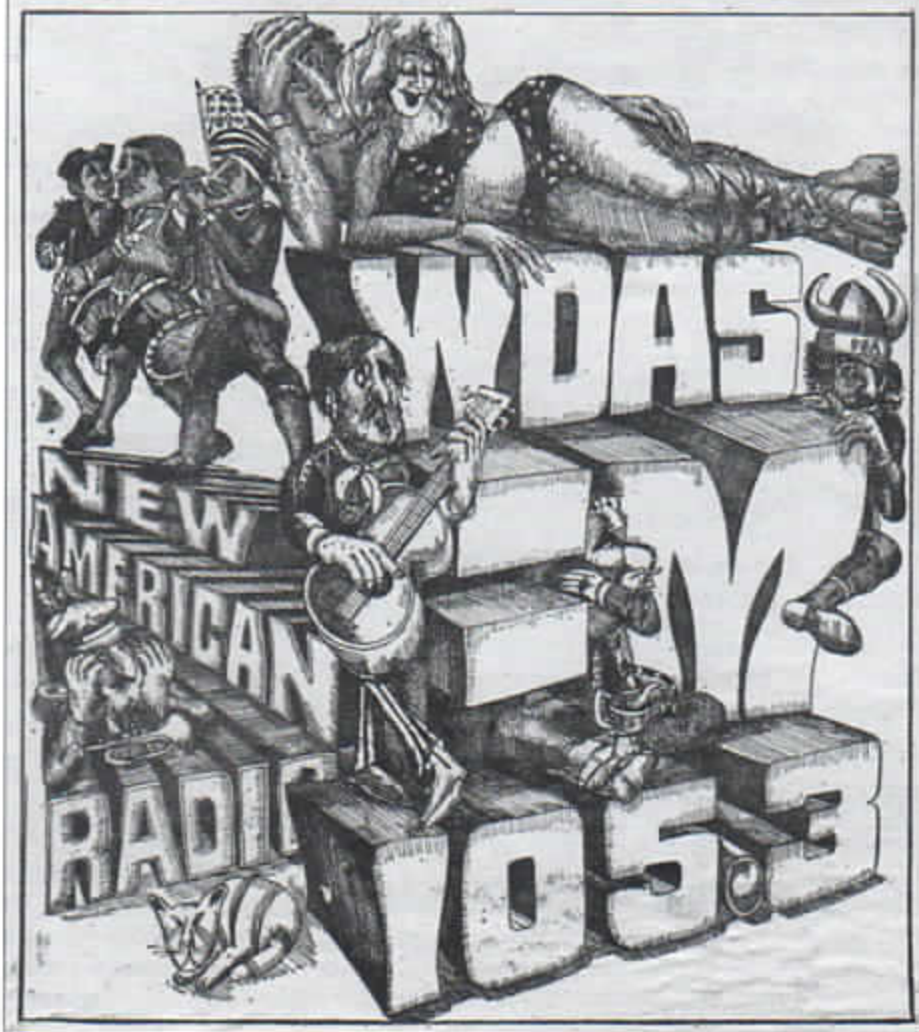
THE RISE OF FM

FM radio was invented by engineer Edwin Armstrong in the 1930s to address the shortcomings of standard AM radio: undesirable static and lack of sound quality. FM offered a vast improvement in the audio quality of broadcasts. By World War II, around a half-million FM radios had been sold. However, after the war, the FCC reassigned the FM frequencies, which rendered all existing receivers obsolete, severely delaying the adoption of FM radio by the listening public.

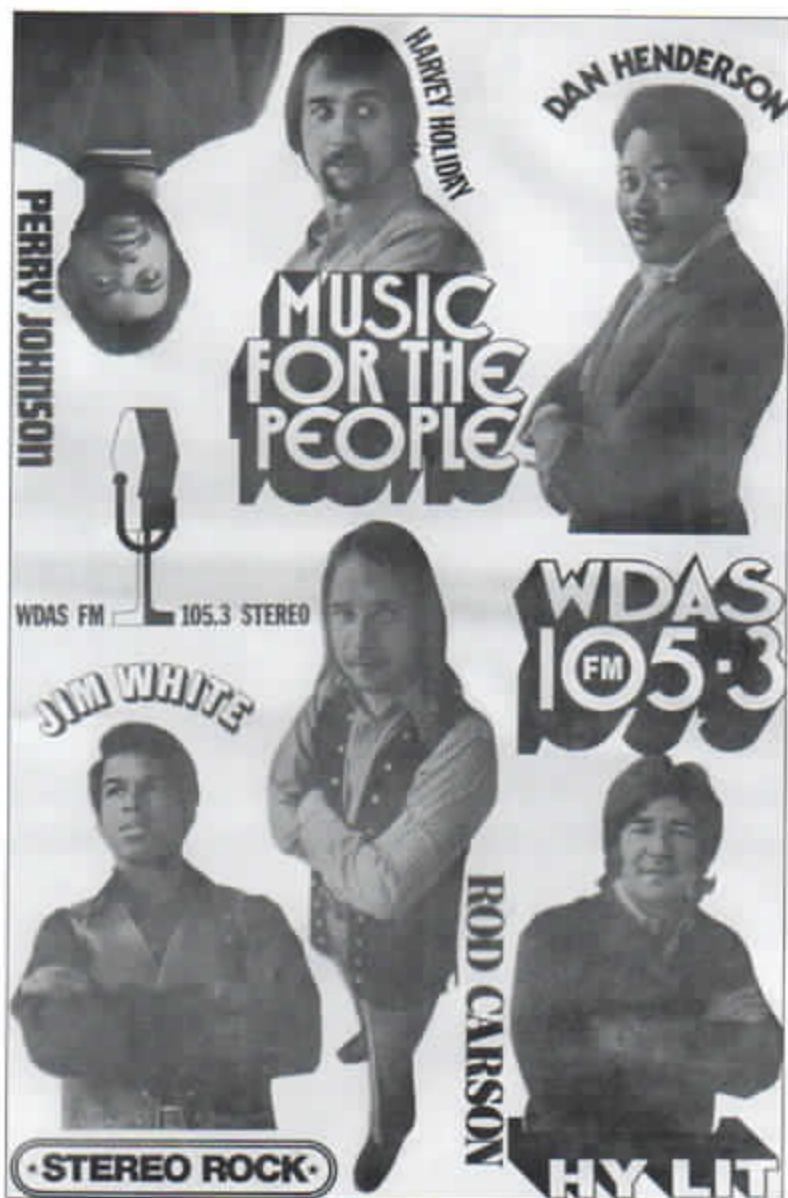
Despite its technical superiority, FM languished for years due to poor sales of compatible radios. In 1956, only 229,000 FM radios were sold in the United States. By 1960, with increasing interest in consumer high-fidelity equipment, FM radio sales steadily rose. It would take another 17 years for FM radio to match AM in number of listeners. Initially, there was not much money to be made in FM radio, and the few stations on the air with original programming were kept alive by pioneers that had hopes for more success down the road.

One of the earliest forms of programming that was successful on FM was instrumental versions of standard and popular music, a format known as easy listening or beautiful music. In Philadelphia, over half of the FM stations played this format at some point, and it became synonymous with the FM band. One FM radio ad sales representative in the 1960s was often asked, "Is it radio or is it FM?" when he would attempt to solicit business.

COMES THE REVOLUTION, HY SKI'S UNDERGROUND IS ALREADY THERE.



Three Philadelphia radio stations began progressive programming in the spring of 1968: WDAS-FM, WIFI, and WMMR. WDAS-FM's progressive format consisted predominantly of deep album cuts along with some classical music and rhythm and blues thrown in. The disc jockeys often played songs in long sets and spoke about the music in a laid-back, conversational manner. Some even recited poetry. WIFI and WMMR gradually phased in the format over a period of months and years, while WDAS-FM completely dropped their classical/jazz format to go progressive full-time, the first in the city to do so. Initially, their effort was called "Hy Ski's Underground" led by Hy Lit, who left WIBG to chart new territory on the emerging FM band after a stint on WDAS-AM. The WDAS staff also included Ed Sciaky, Gene Shay, Steve "My Father's Son" Leon, Wayne Joell, Michael Tearson, T. Morgan, Ron Sockel, Steve Marko (also known as Steve Martorano), Larry Magid, and Rod Carson. (Courtesy of the Bob Klein Archive and WDASHistory.com.)



Around 1971, the underground/white rock-dominated sound at WDAS-FM was phased out in favor of a newly designed format, the brainchild of WDAS general manager Bob Klein. The new music library included album-oriented rhythm and blues, hard-driving rock, protest songs, jazz, and even contemporary poetry. Historian Wynne Alexander explains, "Bob Klein came up with the idea and went to Harvey Holiday who came up with the slogan 'Music for the People' and together they implemented it, revamped the staff and created an outstanding, first of its kind format with a huge and varied playlist. The jocks were able to mix amazing musical sets from a wildly diverse record library: B. B. King to Carole King, Sly Stone to the Rolling Stones, Santana, Bob Dylan to gospel groups singing Dylan, Richie Havens, Osibisa, The Meters, The Crusaders, the Persuasions—just a phenomenal mix of the best music in American history." This poster shows the disc jockey lineup early in the new format, a variant of which can still be heard on WDAS-FM today. (Courtesy of the Bob Klein Archive and WDASHistory.org.)



WDAS-FM was phased out in manager Bob Klein. The new driving rock, protest songs, jazz, blues, and soul. "Bob Klein came up with the slogan 'Music for the People' and an outstanding, first of its kind six amazing musical sets from a variety of acts including the Rolling Stones, Santana, The Meters, The Crusaders, and American history." This poster of which can still be heard on WASHistory.org.)

A new advertising campaign for WDAS-FM in the mid-1970s referred to the station's disc jockeys as the "FM Band." Featured in the advertisement are, from left to right, Jerry Wells, Wayne Joell, Louise Williams, Doug Henderson Jr., Dr. Perry Johnson, Brother Nasir, and Tony Brown. Louise Williams was famous for her gospel show on WDAS-AM, and the soaring popularity of Dr. Perry Johnson made him an FM phenomenon. (Both, courtesy of the Bob Klein Archive and WASHistory.org.)

