

For Immediate Release

Dean of Nebraska Public Broadcasting Jack McBride Dies

LINCOLN, Neb. (July 28, 2008) -- Jack McBride, a key figure in Nebraska's statewide public radio, television and telecommunications system, died early Monday morning from complications related to recent surgery.

McBride activated one of the nation's initial public television stations, KUON-TV, at the University of Nebraska in 1954. He served as general manager of the nine-station Nebraska ETV Network (known today as NET Television) and secretary to the Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Commission from their inception in 1963 until his retirement in July 1996. He was also responsible for bringing statewide public radio to Nebraska with the creation of NET Radio.

Under his leadership, NET -- the parent organization of NET Television and NET Radio -- has grown to become one of the most successful programs of its kind in the country.

McBride's visionary guidance included the moving away from land-based interconnections in favor of a satellite distribution system for both broadcast and nonbroadcast programming. In 1990, Nebraska became the first state network to lease a full-time satellite transponder allocated to educational programming. Today NET has 303 digital downlink sites across Nebraska and 200 more around the country.

As a national and international consultant, McBride helped form a number of state networks, the Central Educational Network, the Satellite Educational Resources Consortium, the Public Television Outreach Alliance, AG*SAT (a satellite service for agricultural education), Native American Public Telecommunications and the Hispanic Educational Telecommunications System, as well as representing U.S. public television overseas on many occasions.

"All Nebraskans have benefited from Jack McBride's pioneering efforts in educational telecommunications," said University of Nebraska President James B. Milliken. "Over more than four decades of service to the University of Nebraska and the state, Jack built one of the nation's preeminent public broadcasting systems."

"Without Jack McBride there is real question as to whether NET would even exist today. He knew how to seize opportunities and make the most of them

and was truly a legend in public broadcasting. NET and all of Nebraska are extremely fortunate to have benefitted from his foresight and leadership," said Stan Carpenter, chair of the Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Commission.

"Jack McBride was a truly remarkable man, who has left Nebraska a tremendous legacy," said Rod Bates, who succeeded McBride as NET general manager. "Jack has brought great credit to himself, NET and the United States. He will be sorely missed."

Longtime NET colleague and friend Ron Hull recalls McBride. "There wasn't anyone better at looking into the future," he said. "Jack was an absolute dynamo ... a package of energy. He devoted his life to enhancing the lives of all Nebraskans through the public media he founded -- public radio and public television. And his impact was felt far beyond our state's borders."

Often honored for his accomplishments, McBride was named the 1992 Outstanding Public Television Manager from PBS (Public Broadcasting Service)/APTS (America's Public Television Stations), the 1993 Lincoln Foundation/Duncan Aviation Sower Award, the 1993 Central Educational Network Carpe Diem Award, the 1996 APTS 21st Century Award for visionary broadcasters, the first Nebraska Humanities Council Sower Award in 1996, and he was inducted into the Nebraska Broadcasters Association Hall of Fame in 1997.

In 1998, the Nebraska Society of Washington, D.C., recognized McBride with the Distinguished Nebraskan Award for his extraordinary contributions to public telecommunications throughout the United States, and he received the University of Nebraska 1999 Journalism Alumni Awards of Excellence "Service to the Profession" award.

In 2006 he was inducted into the Ak-Sar-Ben Foundation Court of Honor, as well as receiving the University of Nebraska's Nebraska Builders Award.

After his retirement, McBride continued at NET as a part-time senior consultant for the organization.

McBride is survived by his wife Jean, his daughter Julie Olson, his son David and four grandchildren. He was born in Omaha on Feb. 18, 1926. A celebration of his life is scheduled on Friday, Aug. 1, at 1 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church, 17th and F Streets, in Lincoln.

-0-

CONTACT: Rod Bates, 402-472-9333, ext. 310, or e-mail at rbates@netNebraska.org
RELEASE WRITTEN BY: Larry L. Kubert, 402-472-9333, ext. 389, or e-mail at
lkubert@netNebraska.org and
Deb Miller, 402-472-9333, ext. 353, or dmiller@netNebraska.org