The Jacobus tenBroek Award

presented by Ramona Walhof to Art Schreiber

From The Braille Monitor, August-September 2013 issue

Tonight it is my pleasure to present the Jacobus tenBroek Award to a man whose accomplishments are unsurpassed. Yet most of you will be surprised to learn of some of them.

Our beloved founder, Jacobus tenBroek, stood for excellence in his employment for decades as professor at the University of California at Berkeley, in his writing of five books and hundreds of articles, and in his leadership of the NFB. He was our founder, our president, and our principal leader for more than a quarter of a century. We have named this award for him both to honor our founder and to honor those who receive it. Tonight will be the thirtieth time we have presented the tenBroek Award. Our honoree has been a leader since he joined the Federation thirty years ago. Previous honorees have lived in eighteen states, but tonight we have chosen a man from a new state. He has been president of the affiliate in his state and head of the commission for the blind there, as well. He has chaired the commission’s administrative board, and he has directed the programs on a daily basis. But, like Dr. tenBroek, this gentleman has had another outstanding career, both before and after blindness, one you will enjoy knowing more about.

Art Schreiber, will you please come to the platform? Art Schreiber grew up on a farm in Ohio, received a bachelor’s degree from Westminster College in Wilmington, Pennsylvania, and continued to do graduate work at Kent State University. Later he participated in a seminar for broadcasters at Harvard University.

He began his career in journalism in the 1950s and was soon traveling with and reporting on famous people. He traveled with the John F. Kennedy for President campaign and reported on Kennedy’s election and his funeral. Art Schreiber reported on the Lyndon B. Johnson White House and on Martin Luther King Jr.’s activities as he led the civil rights movement, especially in the South during the 1960s. Perhaps the most memorable reporting Schreiber did was with the Beatles on their first tour of the United States. He spent many evenings playing Monopoly with John Lennon and George Harrison. He traveled to foreign countries and reported as he went.

In 1972 Art was one of the founders of Commuter Computer in Los Angeles and later became its CEO. It is the nation’s largest ride-sharing organization and was one of the first partnerships in the nation between the public and private sectors.

From 1960 until 1991 Art was vice president and general manager of a group of radio stations in New York, Philadelphia, Minneapolis/St. Paul, Los Angeles, and Albuquerque. He moved to New Mexico in 1982 to manage station KOB AM and FM, and soon afterward he lost his vision. Art Schreiber credits the National Federation of the Blind with turning his life around after he became blind.

He took some time for rehabilitation then returned to managing station KOB. When the New Mexico Commission for the Blind was created in 1986, Art Schreiber was appointed by the governor to serve on its board. He retired as manager of KOB in the early 1990s so that he could run for mayor of Albuquerque. Since he did not actually become mayor, he accepted a position as director of the New Mexico Commission for the Blind and directed it for two years. In this capacity he was innovative and strong. Among many other things he established one of the first digital newspaper-reading systems for the blind. During the twenty-first century, although he was past the ordinary retirement age, Art continued to host a radio talk show until 2011.

Art has served on numerous boards and received many awards. Notable among these are: in 2009 he received the Lovola Burgess Lifetime Leadership Award from the New Mexico Conference on Aging. He was chosen New Mexico Broadcaster of the Year by the New Mexico Broadcasters Association in 1990. He received the DuPont Award presented by the Columbia School of Journalism; the National Gold Medallion for Humanitarianism Award from the American Lung Association. He served on the Board for Albuquerque Economic Development; the Better Business Bureau; the Coalition for Children; Crime Stoppers of Albuquerque; Greater Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce; Natural History Museum Board; New Mexico Chapter of the American Lung Association; New Mexico Health Net; Samaritan Counseling Center, where he was president as well as board member. Art has served on the Southwest Neuro-Rehabilitation Institute board from 1998 to the present. He was United Way of Albuquerque communication chair in 1992.

Art taught at Muskingum College in Ohio and the University of Southern California and lectured at the University of Oklahoma. At age eighty-five he is cutting back. He is still second vice president of the NFB Senior Division and chairman of the New Mexico State Rehabilitation Advisory Committee and continues to serve on the board of the New Mexico Commission for the Blind.

How could we find a more outstanding leader to honor tonight? Art Schreiber (or Uncle Arthur as he is often known), we give you the highest honor we can give a member of the NFB tonight, with respect and with love. Here is the text of the plaque presented:

JACOBUS TENBROEK AWARD

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND

PRESENTED TO

ARTHUR SCHREIBER

FOR YOUR DEDICATION, SACRIFICE,

AND COMMITMENT

ON BEHALF OF THE BLIND

OF THIS NATION.

YOUR CONTRIBUTION IS MEASURED

NOT IN STEPS BUT IN MILES,

NOT BY INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCES

BUT BY YOUR IMPACT

ON THE LIVES OF THE BLIND

OF THE NATION.

WHENEVER WE HAVE ASKED,

YOU HAVE ANSWERED.

WE CALL YOU OUR COLLEAGUE WITH RESPECT.

WE CALL YOU OUR FRIEND WITH LOVE.

JULY 6, 2013

Art Schreiber: Thank you very much. I have had many, many honors, but this is the finest and the most loved that I have ever received. And I offer great thanks to the man who first told me to get in touch with Fred Schroeder, and that is David Ticchi of Massachusetts. I got in touch with Fred, and the rest—thank goodness to him and his family and Sue Benbow—they got me into the National Federation of the Blind. It truly has changed my life. I say to all of you: I am grateful, I am honored. Dr. Maurer, I am so proud to be a member of the National Federation of the Blind. Thank you all.