

## Betty Brang Stoddard-Muncie

**At a Glance:**

**Born:** October 12, 1919, in Hennepin, Minnesota

**Died:** September 15, 2010, in Reno, Nevada

**Maiden Name:** Betty Anna Arlene Brang

**Race:** Caucasian

**Married:** Bob Stoddard, Mr. McIntyre, Howard Scoglund, Wendell Boyd Muncie

**Children:** Dick Stoddard, Suzanne Kizer

**Primary City/County of Work:** Reno, NV/  
Washoe County

**Major Fields of Work:** Radio/TV host, sales representative



**Betty Stoddard-Muncie**  
Photo Courtesy the  
*Reno Gazette-Journal*

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### Media pioneer noted for hard work, community involvement

The first major female presence in Reno radio and television made her mark by being a tough businesswoman and an outgoing, compassionate show host through the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Betty Stoddard-Muncie, or just Betty, as she was most commonly known, started life in Minnesota in “about 1920,” She was born to Raymond and Arlene Broughton Brang. She was known to live in San Mateo, Calif., in 1930, and Hennepin, Minnesota in 1940. Betty graduated from Northwestern University and worked in radio in the Midwest before she came to Nevada.



**Betty Brang Stoddard at KATO radio.**

Photo courtesy the  
*Reno Evening Gazette*

Her first job in Reno was in 1946 at KOH radio, where she met and later married the manager, Bob Stoddard. A short time later, she moved to KATO radio, later called KBET, where she had a local talk show called "Coffee Time with Betty."

When television in Reno went live, she worked for years for KOLO-TV, where she got a reputation as a "big city talent in a small town," and a very hard worker. Longtime Reno broadcast and advertising veteran Phil Rose remembers her work ethic, saying that Betty sold her own advertising and "was strictly on commission. She never got a salary. And she made more money than anyone else at the station, including me, I think," he said. Which is saying something, considering he was the general sales manager and later vice-president and general manager of KOLO-TV. She had to go out and collect from the advertisers who were late on payments. Rose said she didn't get paid until the station did.

Another local broadcasting legend, Bob Carroll, also worked with Betty in the early 1960s and remembers her having a lot of civic pride. "She was always quick to help out any civic promotion she could."

She was probably best known for the local afternoon talk/movie program called "Be My Guest," where she mixed interviews and live advertising with the showing of syndicated popular movies. Despite its humble beginnings, it was a hugely popular show, and the station management's support of it was one reason KOLO-TV dropped its CBS affiliation. Jim Herzig, general manager, and vice president of the station said CBS would have forced the cancellation of her show in order to run other CBS syndicated and re-run shows. "We are number one now," he said at the time, "and our main strength lies in local shows." (In 2022, KOLO-TV is an ABC affiliate, and KTVN is with CBS.)

An example of its humble beginnings is the story of the time a lion almost ruined her show. KOLO-TV's studio was one large room, with different sets in each corner. While "Be My Guest" was airing one November day, a sedated 400-lb. lion named Daniel was resting on the set across the room, where it was to be featured on The Johnny Michaels Show. Betty was supposed to do ads for both a car company and later a supermarket, so she had a car and a freshly cooked turkey on her set. When Daniel smelled the turkey, he

couldn't resist, and crossed the room to take a taste. Betty tried to fight him off it, but she ended up with a large, bloody scratch on her legs and bites on her backside for her efforts. But the show must go on, so after being bandaged, she stood behind the car to deliver her ad for the supermarket and for the auto dealership.



**Betty Stoddard with unidentified men at KATO radio.**

Photo courtesy Neal Cobb, through the Nevada Historical Society, Reno

Over the 18 years of that show, she interviewed Barry Goldwater, Liberace, Clark Gable, Andy Griffith, Sammy Davis, Jr., Pearl S. Buck, Arthur Godfrey, Ida Lupino, and several astronauts.

As part of one promotion, she was photographed around town with the famous puppet of Edgar Bergen called Charlie McCarthy. Bergen had performances scheduled for the Mapes Hotel Sky Room, and he put out ads around the West saying, "Come Home, Charlie," showing McCarthy in Betty's arms.

As part of her civic engagement, Betty was a member of the Soroptimists and Theta Sigma Phi, a professional society for women in journalism and communications, which honored her in 1971 with its annual "Headliner Award" for her many successes. She also hosted events like the Miss Reno pageant. She was known as a mentor to other women coming up in the field. Reno ad man Harry Spencer said, "She gave them confidence to go in for jobs other than secretaries."

After her marriage to Stoddard, she had three other husbands, and had last names of McIntyre, Scoglund, and Muncie. In August of 1973, she married her last husband, Captain Wendell Boyd Muncie in the chapel of the Fallon Naval Air Station where he was the commander. After he retired, they traveled the country for a few years before returning to Reno to visit. They were staying at an RV park in Sparks when tragedy occurred. Muncie had threatened suicide in the past, so Betty had been keeping a close eye on him. But according to police, one day as she was leaving the RV, he called her back, and she saw a gun on the table. They struggled for it, and he succeeded in grabbing it and ending his life in front of her.

Betty Stoddard-Muncie, a true original, suffered a stroke in May 2010 and passed away in September of that year. She was survived by her son Dick and her daughter Suzanne. Dick Stoddard also worked for years at KOLO-TV, as a weatherman. The year before her death, October 16, 2009, was declared Betty Stoddard-Muncie Day in recognition of her work in the community.

**Researched by Patti Bernard and written by Kitty Falcone**

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### **Sources of Information**

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