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Profile of Bambi Taskarelli

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Bambi Taskarelli, NBCU

"I'll empty ash trays," I said to Dave Anderson in Guest Relations during my interview for a summer job as an NBC Guidette. My Dad was conducting the orchestra across the street at Radio City Music Hall. His trumpet player's girlfriend was the assistant to the head of NBC Guest Relations - Peter Tintle. The words "You're hired!" were music to my ears.

June, 1965 - after one year of college in Ohio as a drama/speech major - there I was in my slightly shabby but very glamorous navy blue uniform, hem length and heel height just perfect, ready to give my first tour of the studios. "Hullabaloo" had premiered in 8H earlier that year, Johnny Carson was three years into his thirty-year reign, and a 1965 survey showed Chet and David were more popular than the Beatles! The studio tour went for \$1.25; I was making \$40.00 a week (cigarettes were 25 cents in the commissary machine). You got to see a lot for your ticket: after an explanation of how the "Emmy" got its name, you were shown studios with "live action". Tonight Show guests roamed the hallways and occasionally Johnny, Ed or Skitch would appear to the delight of the group. The sound effects booth was my favorite, but seeing yourself on TV was a close second.

Dad came over on a break between shows and inquired of the rather stern tour supervisor, "How's my baby doing?" Once she realized that I was the "baby", she greeted him warmly. He was so proud! It was an exhilarating first day. I had blisters on both heels, but a big smile on my face - I was an NBC Guidette! That summer went very quickly. I worked the late shift a lot and would take drunken sailors on tour at 9PM. But, on that shift I got to hang out in the Tonight Show make-up room and met many stars. I also met many good friends. It was a grand summer!

As the calendar pages flipped, I worked my way up in Guest Relations as cashier and eventually supervisor, while studying at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts and getting my degree at NYU. I was "plucked out of the chorus line" in 1969 by Gloria Clyne to work as a "Gal Friday" in the Newsroom with Mac Johnson at the helm; we had typewriters, rotary phones and a pneumatic tube to send messages up to the telex room.

My year and a half on the Newsdesk was unforgettable, followed by nine years in Nightly News production (including a Fan Club in Iowa!), a decade as a Desk/Satellite Operations Manager and News Specials Projects Director and currently in Telecommunications as a Voice/Data Engineer, NBCU - forty years have flown by.

I often think back to that first day in June of 1965 when the world was a simpler place!