

# The Voice of New Orleans

## André Mouledoux's journey from DJ to J.D.

BY CARLY NAIRN

André Mouledoux has always been a natural raconteur. For the last several decades he's been telling stories as a general casualty, transportation and maritime litigator at Mouledoux, Bland, Legrand & Brackett. But before his voice was heard in the courtroom, you could hear it all over the Louisiana airwaves.

Mouledoux took announcing courses as a communications major at Loyola University New Orleans, which, at the time, owned Channel 4, WWL-TV, and WWL Radio—"it was the only station in the United States that had the 870 band on the radio, and because it was 50,000 watts, you could pick up WWL all over the country at night," he says. "I went to college hoping maybe to be a television sportscaster, but my career turned to radio when I was in college."

He went on to spend almost eight years as a radio broadcaster and talk radio host



Mouledoux in the early days at WWL.

in the 1970s; he also read the news at the top of the hour and selected tracks for music shows. For two and half of those years, he split his time between the booth and law school.

"When I first started working there, it was suggested that I should use a different name than my real name, because André Mouledoux was different," he says. "And so, I was Bill St. John for a couple of years at WWL." Then a colleague let the cat out of the bag. "I was doing the afternoon news and the radio host just blurted out, 'With a name like André Mouledoux, why do you use the name Bill St. John on air?' So after that, I went to the program director and said, 'OK, can I use my real name now?'"

The national reach of the station posed challenges for local broadcasters. "You realized if you had New Orleans twang or drawl, that's really not what you wanted to sound like. You really wanted to develop a more professional, maybe Midwestern accent, if you will, to make it more universally acceptable," Mouledoux says. "And it's kind of a shame because [the] New Orleans accent is endearing to a lot of people."

Unlearning an accent wasn't the only drawback of the profession. "I worked in radio as a very young man, early 20s, and I saw folks who were in their 40s and 50s who were laid off or let go. And when you're in the radio business, if you're a host or a talent, there are only a limited number of jobs available."

He thought a law degree would make a good pivot. "I decided to go to law school perhaps to enforce and strengthen my



**André Mouledoux**  
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credentials in broadcasting with the idea of maybe becoming a television news reporter," he says, "because there were network news reporters on TV who held law degrees."

His radio work left him with skills that he still uses today, such as writing and investigating chops. "You learn how to prepare for an interview and then conduct it hopefully in a meaningful and interesting way," Mouledoux says.

In some ways, his reputation preceded him. "When I began working as a young trial attorney, I would meet with clients who would tell me, 'How do I know the name André Mouledoux?'" he recalls. "And I didn't have the heart to tell them they knew me because I was a radio announcer or a disc jockey. So I let them think that I had an established reputation in the legal community, but eventually I would admit to people that I went from DJ to J.D."

He is quick to add that the best thing to come from his time in radio was meeting his wife, who worked at the TV station. "We're coming up on our 50-year wedding anniversary next year, so I am grateful that I had that broadcasting career," Mouledoux says. "I left radio when I was at a successful point in that career to start as a fledgling in the law business. ... I was fortunate to be able to do things that I love and be able to survive." **SL**