



THE LEGACY OF KSAC



Nichols Hall served as the station's original home until a devastating fire in 1968. Eventually, the station found a permanent home in McCain Auditorium, marking the next chapter in its legacy.

A pioneer in educational radio broadcasting

BY RYAN LEIMKUEHLER

The story of KSAC begins on Dec. 1, 1924, when the station made its first broadcast. This historic moment marked KSAC as the first educational broadcasting station in Kansas and one of the early trailblazers in American radio. Named after the Kansas State Agricultural College, the station was launched with the mission of extending the reach of the university's educational programs beyond the campus. Remarkably, the station's inaugural broadcast was heard coast-to-coast, thanks to the limited number of radio stations and minimal interference at the time. This wide reach established KSAC as a significant player in the nascent world of radio broadcasting.

Expanding reach and impact

In its early years, KSAC quickly became a vital medium for delivering educational content to the public. By 1923, even before KSAC officially launched, Kansas State Cooperative Extension had begun using the KFKB radio station in Milford, Kansas, to air weekly educational courses on topics such as cooking, farming and electricity. Known as "The College of the Air," this initiative laid the groundwork for KSAC's educational programming.

Challenges and resilience

Despite its success, KSAC faced significant challenges. At the end

of 1950 and into early 1951, the station was forced off the air after a fire destroyed its transmitter. This incident marked a temporary setback in the station's operations, but KSAC's mission remained intact and the station continued to serve its audience once it was back on air.

In 1971, KSAC played a crucial role in the broader national media landscape. When NPR's "All Things Considered" aired for the first time, KSAC became a key contributor, providing more reports than any other station during NPR's first decade. This involvement underscored KSAC's commitment to delivering





The KSAC and KKSU radio station brought education and entertainment to campus, shaping student life through communication, connection and entertainment.

comprehensive and timely news, not only at the state level but also on a national stage.

Transition and legacy

In 1984, the station underwent a significant transformation when KSAC was rebranded as KKSU. This change reflected a new era in the station's history, but the core mission of "taking the college to the people" remained unchanged.

However, by 2002, the landscape of radio broadcasting had changed, and on Nov. 27, KKSU left the airwaves after 77 years of service.

Despite the closure of KKSU, the mission of extension radio continued through programs like Agriculture Today and other content distributed by K-State Radio Network. These initiatives ensured the university's educational outreach would persist, adapting to modern media while honoring the legacy of KSAC/KKSU.

Ivy Fuller Olds, a KSAC alumna from the class of 1913, recalled how hearing the Anderson Hall bell over the air transported her back to campus while studying education in Boston in the 1930s.

Centennial of sound and service

The history of KSAC/KKSU is a testament to Kansas State University's dedication to public service and education. From its groundbreaking beginnings as one of the first educational radio stations in the U.S. to its role in shaping national media through NPR, KSAC/KKSU played an integral role in the evolution of radio broadcasting. Although the station is no longer on the air, its legacy lives on through the continued efforts of K-State Radio Network, ensuring that the university's voice continues to reach the people.



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