



Cornell-Randby roast is a family affair

By Don Summerside, Communications Committee

“We Are Family.”

The disco hit by Sister Sledge and the rallying cry for the 1979 World Champion Pittsburgh Pirates could have been the theme song at the Press Club on Nov. 17 when Julie and Bill Randby were installed as the newest “Face on the Barroom Floor.”

Family was foremost during the roast – the TV family of KETV’s longtime husband-wife duo and the children of Julie and Bill.

Emcee for the event was KETV anchor Rob McCartney, like Cornell and Randby a 25-year NewsWatch 7 veteran. So Rob knew the honorees well enough to warn the audience that the roast “might run a little long – but no longer than one of Julie’s stories or one of Bill’s weather forecasts when the producer gives him extra time.”

Also on the roasting roster were KETV colleagues Rose Ann Shannon, news director; Vonn Jones, assistant news director; and Melissa Fry, anchor – as well as Paul Tranisi, former creative services director at KETV. Present from the Cornell-Randby household were son Will, 16, a student at Creighton Prep, and daughter Maddie, 14, a student at Marian High School (Maddie’s twin, JoJo, was away on a swim retreat).

Some of the roast highlights:

“Julie and Bill are Omaha’s celebrity couple,” Shannon said, “so I think we need to give them a catchy nickname like Brangelina and Bennifer. So henceforth these two will be known as JuBillee.”

Jones: “I can’t believe we’re this far into the roast and Bill hasn’t interrupted the program. Isn’t there a cloud we need to know about?”

And more Jones: “It was great to see (former anchor) Brandi Petersen here tonight – at least until Julie forced her out. Just kidding!”

Fry on the Randby weather “Sleeve-o-Meter”: “Bill alerts us all to the danger by the length of his shirt sleeves. If he rolls them all the way up, we know it will be a disaster. Now if only his wife (a fitness buff) could find a dress that has sleeves!”

Tranisi: “I always felt sorry for Bill and Julie because they received wardrobe coaching from Rose Ann (Shannon). Her garish personal apparel and shoe collection is an embarrassment to Elton John!”

After more fun that included a “Growing up Randby” video narrated by the children (“You know dinner’s ready when the smoke alarm goes off”), the 155th “Face on the Barroom Floor” was unveiled.

Artist Jim Horan portrayed Randby with a can of paint in front of his weather map, ready to “paint it red, baby.” Julie is at her TV desk, sorting out all kinds of news – good and bad – before deciding to display the “best news.” Meanwhile, the Randby children are acting as cheerleaders with their sweaters spelling out “KETV.”

The Cornell-Randby roasters were cheerleaders, too. McCartney spoke for those at KETV when he said: “We are family.”

And Tranisi described the relationship of Julie and Bill with the community, saying: “They love Omaha, and Omaha loves them.”