

Prime Time Founder Remembered, Hailed as ‘Renaissance Man’

By Tania Soussan

Emmy award-winning journalist Arthur Alpert worked for a news wire service in Paris, covered combat in Vietnam and produced network TV coverage of the Apollo 11 moon mission. But it was in New Mexico that he chose to settle, first as news director at Channel 13 and later as

founder of Prime Time magazine.

Alpert, who died in February at age 89, was remembered by friends and colleagues as a mentor to younger journalists, a dedicated newsman, and a performer who enjoyed acting in local productions and writing theater reviews.

Friends describe him as a man with a great sense of humor who loved crosswords and Indian food

buffets, who zoomed around town in a sports car, and fell in love with New Mexico. He volunteered to read the news of the day on the radio for the blind.

“This was a real Renaissance man,” said John Ray, who worked as a producer under Alpert at Albuquerque’s KGGM-TV, Channel 13, in the 1980s. “He had a great love of travel. He was always a ham. It was no surprise that he got into acting.”

Alpert was respected and well-liked in the newsroom, helping to improve the station’s ratings at a time when it was trailing behind KOB-TV and KOAT-TV, he said.

Ray, who now lives in Portland, Ore., said Alpert was a mentor. “He taught me how to be humble, acknowledge when I made mistakes, to be honest and to pursue the truth.”

Bill Diven, a Placitas journalist, worked with Alpert as a



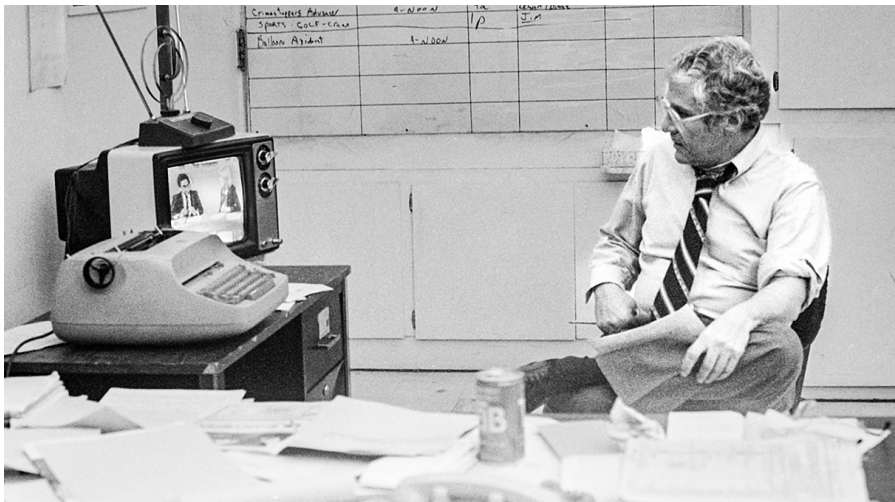
Photograph by Bill Diven

photographer at KGGM.

“He was a personable guy, obviously intelligent and articulate,” Diven said. “We were the fourth station in a three-station market. We were getting beaten at 10 by Benny Hill reruns. He absolutely made a difference and made the station competitive.”

In an interview with the Albuquerque Journal after taking the KGGM job in 1979, Alpert explained why he left an ABC News field producer job in New York to come to New Mexico: “Local news is closer to people’s concerns. ... You deal with housing, crime, schools, leisure time activity - all

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Photograph by Bill Diven

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