

## *Leo Motyka*



**L**eo Motyka played his share of sports, did some coaching, and even umpired high school baseball games.

But he is best remembered by longtime Norwalkers as "Lee Moore," the voice of local sports on radio station WNLK during the 1960s and '70s.

Motyka spent 17 years as the station's sports director, doing play by play for a number of sporting events as well as sports reports on the air and his own Friday night sports show. When he wasn't reporting sports, Motyka was on the air as a daytime disc jockey.

He would eventually move over to WMMM in Westport for six years, and after that spent 11 years as the voice of Ridgefield High School football games on WREF. He also did play by play of the Bridgeport

Jets Atlantic Football League semipro games on WNAB in Bridgeport, and did high school football on WLAD in Danbury.

Add it all up and Motyka, a.k.a. Lee Moore, enjoyed a 43-year career in sports broadcasting and as a DJ.

He remains best known, however, for his work in his native hometown and at WNLK. He did the high school football game of the week. He did the state championship games in soccer (1965) and baseball (1966) that Brien McMahon won. And he was behind the mike for many of Norwalk High School's basketball games during future NBA all-star and Hall of Famer Calvin Murphy's state championship senior year in 1966, including the state finals.

Motyka and his microphone didn't stop following Murphy after his NHS career, however. He traveled to Pennsylvania after the season to broadcast two prestigious all-star games Murphy played in. He would also broadcast several Niagara University games during Murphy's three All-American seasons at the Buffalo, N.Y., school.

And Motyka will always be remembered as the voice of the Home Oilers, Norwalk's successful semipro hockey team. He called most of their home games at the old Crystal Rink — where years earlier he coached in the city's recreation hockey league — and all of their away contests, including several in Canada.

But Motyka had never planned to be a sportscaster. After Rock and Roll took the nation by storm, he wanted to be a DJ, and following his graduation from Norwalk High School in 1956, he entered the Cambridge School of Radio and Television Broadcasting in New York City.

Motyka took that experience with him in the U.S. Army and while serving in Korea he worked an overnight disc jockey shift on AFKN — the Armed Forces Korean Network. His show, "Life Begins at Midnight," was widely listened to by servicemen.

Then in 1958, the Far East basketball championships were held in Korea and a 19-year-old Motyka volunteered to call the game on radio. His only experience with basketball was playing with the St. Mary's CYO team in Norwalk while growing up.

It didn't matter. With that game, Motyka got the bug and a sports broadcasting career was born.

Following his stint in Korea, Motyka was assigned to Ft. Bliss and did a weekly one-hour news show at KROD-TV, a CBS affiliate in nearby El Paso, Texas. One day, the station manager called him in his office and said he wanted to anglicize his name so it would flow better. After some thought, the station manager came up with "Lee Moore."

The name stuck and Motyka used it at his first radio job in Holyoke, Mass., and eventually at WNLK in 1961. There, Motyka did a morning show from 6 to 9 a.m., and 10 a.m. to noon. Then after the 12 o'clock news, he did a sports report from 12:10 to 12:15.

His sports duties gradually expanded to include a Friday night sports roundup show called the "Ritar Ford Sports Corner." After he was named the station's sport director, he began incorporating high school football, Home Oilers hockey, and other local sporting events into his broadcast schedule.

After the station was sold, Motyka landed at WMMM in Westport where he did a show called the 'Doo-Wop Sock Hop.' The station manager there, a former DJ at WCBS, promptly dubbed Motyka the 'Duke of Doo-Wop' and the name has stayed with him ever since.

In fact, he's still known by that every other Saturday night when he gets back behind the microphone and plays oldies at the Norwalk American Legion hall. Motyka is very involved with the Legion in other capacities. He served as commander of local Post 12 in 2002 and '03, and he's also involved with the successful Norwalk American Legion baseball program.

Motyka, a lifelong Norwalker, and his wife Herta, a native of Darmstadt, Germany, have four adult children, four grandchildren, and three great grandchildren.