

JACK KENT COOKE

FOUNDATION

Jack Kent Cooke Career Highlights

1912

Jack Kent Cooke is born on October 25 in Hamilton, Ontario, the first of four children born to Ralph Ercil Cooke and Nancy Marion Jacobs Cooke.

1929

The stock market crash wipes out the savings and the job of Cooke's father, a salesman in a picture-frame manufacturing firm.

1926-1930

Cooke attends Malvern Collegiate Institute, a public high school in Toronto, and obtains a junior matriculation certificate (a secondary school diploma that does not qualify for Canadian university admission). The University of Michigan offers Cooke a hockey scholarship that he is obliged to turn down because, under the Canadian system, he requires a fifth year of high school in order to qualify for college.

While still at Malvern Collegiate, Cooke, who plays piano, saxophone and clarinet, organizes and leads an orchestra that plays on cruise ships and in Toronto dance halls.

1933

Cooke joins L. J. West & Company brokerage house and works as a runner on the floor of the Toronto Stock Exchange.

1934

After getting married, Cooke takes a job selling encyclopedias across Canada to help support his family during the Depression. However, he grows dissatisfied with encyclopedia sales and the lack of a promising future in that field, and takes a position as a salesman with Colgate-Palmolive.

1937

On January 1, Cooke makes a momentous decision, leaving his relatively secure and successful job at Colgate-Palmolive to work for much lower pay as a station manager at radio station CJCS in Stratford, Ontario. The station owner, and Cooke's boss, is Roy Thomson (later Right Honorable Lord Thomson of Fleet). In just six months Cooke turns the station from the red into profitability. Thomson gives Cooke three more stations to manage.

1941

Thomson makes Cooke a partner in his growing media empire of radio stations and newspapers.

Jack Kent Cooke Career Highlights *(Contd.)*

1943

At the age of 31, Cooke has accrued assets worth a million dollars.

1944

Cooke purchases his own radio station, CKCL, in Toronto, and changes the call sign to CKEY. He introduces "block programming," lively disc jockeys and "no dead-air time." *Variety* magazine awards CKCL its Plaque Award for Local Station Initiative, selecting the station over 1,100 other radio stations in the United States and Canada.

1945

Cooke forms Radio Guild Features Ltd., creators and suppliers of programs for radio stations.

1946

Cooke and Thomson purchase the Canadian edition of a U.S. weekly news and literary magazine, *Liberty*, and rename it *New Liberty*. Cooke receives the Jewish Beth Sholom Brotherhood Award for his fair hiring practices.

1951

In his first sports business venture, Cooke purchases a baseball team, the Toronto Maple Leafs of the AAA International League.

1952

The Maple Leafs set an International League record for home attendance, and Sporting News awards Cooke a trophy for the best "Minor League Executive of 1952." Cooke also purchases Consolidated Press, one of Canada's largest magazine publishers.

1956

Cooke diversifies his businesses by acquiring two Ontario plastics factories (Micro Plastics Ltd. and Robinson Industrial Crafts Ltd.) and a Toronto aluminum foundry, Precision Die Castings Ltd.

1959

Cooke becomes vice president of a newly organized professional baseball league, the Continental League, with hopes for ownership of a franchise in Toronto.

1960

Convinced that great opportunities await him in the United States, Cooke decides to emigrate there from Canada. He sells most of his Canadian holdings and moves to California. In September he is named a U.S. citizen by a special act of Congress, Private Law 86-486, and is the only citizen ever so honored.

1961

Cooke buys a minority interest in the National Football League's Washington Redskins.

Jack Kent Cooke Career Highlights *(Contd.)*

1964

Cooke sells the Toronto Maple Leafs baseball team. He forms Jack Kent Cooke Incorporated to create a cable television company that will bring high-quality television to areas with poor reception. Within a year, his company, American Cablevision, is one of the world's largest cable TV companies. In 1970 the company will merge into TelePrompTer Corp., which Cooke will lead from near-bankruptcy into the nation's largest cable TV company during the 1970s.

1965

Cooke buys the National Basketball Association's Los Angeles Lakers for \$5.2 million (a big price tag in its day). Cooke later will sign such NBA greats as Wilt Chamberlain, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, and Magic Johnson.

1966

Cooke acquires the National Hockey League-expansion franchise Los Angeles Kings. With several partners he also starts a professional soccer league, the United States Soccer Association. In 1967, it hosts the first professional soccer championship in American history.

1967

Cooke completes construction of the Los Angeles Forum, a 17,000-seat sports and entertainment facility. It is the first major sports center in America built with private instead of local government funds.

1971

Cooke originates closed-circuit telecasts of boxing matches to theater audiences when he bankrolls and co-promotes with Jerry Perenchio the first fight between Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazier, billed as the "Fight of the Century" and held at Madison Square Garden in New York City. He pays each boxer the unprecedented sum of \$2.5 million.

1974

Cooke becomes majority owner of the Redskins.

1979

Cooke sells the Lakers, the Kings and the Forum for \$67.5 million, then the largest business transaction in sports history. As part of that transaction, Cooke acquires the Chrysler Building in Manhattan. Cooke moves to Washington, D.C.

1981

Cooke hires San Diego Chargers Offensive Coordinator Joe Gibbs to be head coach of the Redskins. Cooke also sells TelePrompTer to Westinghouse for \$646 million, the largest purchase price in the history of broadcasting up to that time.

Jack Kent Cooke Career Highlights *(Contd.)*

1983

On January 30 the Redskins win Super Bowl XVII, beating Miami 27-17. Cooke buys 1.7 million square feet of office space in downtown Phoenix.

1984

Cooke buys Elmendorf Farm, a 503-acre horse-breeding farm near Lexington, Kentucky.

1985

Cooke's company, Pro Football Incorporated, becomes sole owner of the Washington Redskins. Cooke also buys the Los Angeles *Daily News* from the Chicago Tribune Company.

1987

Cooke announces plans to build a new football stadium for the Redskins.

1988

On January 31, the Redskins win Super Bowl XXII, beating Denver 42-10.

1992

On January 26, the Redskins win Super Bowl XXVI, beating Buffalo 37-24. Later that year, the Redskins move into Redskin Park, a state-of-the-art training facility Cooke has built in Ashburn, VA.

1996

Concluding eight years of negotiations with officials in the District of Columbia, the town of Alexandria, VA, and Anne Arundel and Prince George's Counties in Maryland, Cooke secures a place to build his new stadium. He signs a contract for a 78,600-seat, \$160-million complex on a farm in Landover, MD. Jack Kent Cooke Stadium (known today as Fed-Ex Field) hosts its first Redskins game on September 14, 1997.

On December 22 osteoarthritis causes Cooke to miss the Redskins' final game at RFK Stadium, the only home game he has missed since moving to Washington.

1997

On April 6, Cooke suffers a cardiac arrest and collapses at his northwest Washington, D.C., home. He is taken to the hospital, where he is pronounced dead.

2000

On August 1, the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, established by the will of Mr. Cooke, is founded.