



PRESS
RELEASE

Statement from KET on the passing of longtime 'Comment on Kentucky' host Al Smith

FOR RELEASE: March 19, 2021

EDITOR'S NOTE: Video clips for media use available upon request. Media may also use clips from the following: <https://www.ket.org/remembering-al-smith>

"Through his more than 30 years as host of *Comment on Kentucky*, Al established KET as the place to be on Friday nights. Known for his many colorful stories, Al's passion for addressing the issues facing Kentuckians fueled a remarkable career in journalism."

Shae Hopkins, KET executive director and CEO

"His love of our Commonwealth was undeniable, and the forum he created to debate its issues and celebrate its triumphs remains the gold standard by which the rest of us strive. I, and others, will cling to memories of his feisty spirit, fervent intellectual curiosity, and deep passion to connect our experiences and elevate rural communities."

Renee Shaw, KET Public Affairs Managing Producer/Host, who in 1997 began working as a producer for 'Comment on Kentucky'

KET will re-air an episode of *One to One with Bill Goodman*, featuring Al Smith, on the following dates:

- KET Tuesday, March 23 • 9:30/8:30 pm
- KET Friday, March 26 • 8:30/7:30 pm
- KET2 Tuesday, March 23 • 7/6 pm
- KET2 Friday, March 26 • 10:30/9:30 pm

KET BACKGROUND

In 1974, Al Smith, who owned and managed a chain of rural weekly newspapers based in Russellville, made his debut as host of the KET program *Comment on Kentucky*. The program



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featured journalists from across the state discussing the Commonwealth's weekly news, and the series soon became a must-watch event with Smith as host.

From the start, Smith used *Comment on Kentucky* to emphasize rural journalism as a vital voice that informed citizens throughout the state's 120 geographically and culturally disparate counties. Under Smith, the program became renowned for its spirited discussion across the political spectrum — driven by his knowledge of the Commonwealth's civic life and his talent for storytelling.

"The *Comment* show was a wonderful third life for me," Smith said in 2007 upon his retirement as host. "I was able to be a journalist on a larger stage. KET turned on the lights and the cameras, and we were talking to the whole state of Kentucky."

Smith received numerous honors for his journalism and his public service. Among them are the Al Smith Award, established by the Institute for Rural Journalism and Community Issues and the Bluegrass Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists in 2011. He also earned several honorary doctorates, including a Doctor of Letters from the University of Kentucky in 2011. In addition, Smith served as the head of the Appalachian Regional Commission under presidents Jimmy Carter and Ronald Regan from 1979 to 1982.

KET is Kentucky's largest classroom, where learning comes to life for more than one million people each week via television, online and mobile. Learn more about Kentucky's preeminent public media organization at KET.org, on Twitter [@KET](https://twitter.com/KET) and at facebook.com/KET.

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