



Charley Martin and Rosemary Barnwall (on "The Charley and Barney Show") on KHOW. (Photo courtesy Patty Bachmann)

Charley Martin, a legend from the glory days of Denver radio, died Friday at age 67. Martin had been ill for some time, living under hospice care in Phoenix.

He was half of "Hal and Charley," the dominant morning team on Denver's KHOW, launched in 1976 and lasting for decades.

"We had a great run. It's been difficult," said Hal Moore, Martin's partner for about 28 years.

Moore remembered Martin as "an incredibly smart, bright, talented person." The two started in radio in Des Moines, Iowa, when Martin was in high school, working weekends with Moore at KSO, a top-40 station.

"He and my wife went to junior high together," Moore said. "I talked to him every week for the past couple of months. We've kept in real close contact."

When Martin's liver failed in June, Moore said, "he realized what he was facing."

Martin holds a key place in Denver radio history.

"When humorous deejays were the big thing on AM radio, he and Hal Moore were among the best," said Dusty Saunders, the longtime media critic for the Rocky Mountain News and a current contributor to The Denver Post. "Morning drive time belonged to them," and they regularly scored "enormous ratings," he said.

The duo holds a claim to broader pop-culture history as well: in the 1980 Stanley Kubrick film "The Shining," Hal and Charley's KHOW show can be heard on the car radio on the approach to



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"Hal and Charley, they were the brand, like Huntley and Brinkley. They shaped Denver media in the '70s and '80s," said Chuck Lontine, a longtime radio executive who worked with the pair early in their career.

Martin joined KHOW in 1969 and was paired with various morning co-hosts, including Rosemary Barnwell (on "The Charley and Barney Show") and Marti Martin. The "Charley and Barney Show," with beauty queen Barnwell, scored "phenomenal" ratings, the trade magazine Billboard reported at the time. But Martin would go on to even greater ratings success when paired with Moore.

The station dropped the show in 1995 when it switched to a more issue-oriented all-talk format.

Danny Davis of KOY in Phoenix, who did the afternoon shift at KHOW for years and who previously worked at Denver's powerful KIMN, had been a partner with Martin on the air in Phoenix in 1998-99.

"He was really a good guy, a good friend, we all had a great time," Davis said of Martin. "That was probably the downside of what happened to him ... the fun got in the way."

After retiring from broadcasting, Martin taught radio and television at Scottsdale Community College.

Martin is survived by three sons, Kyle of Grinnell, Iowa, Brian of Ames, Iowa, and Josh of Denver; and three granddaughters. He was preceded in death by his wife, Karla Wampler Martin, known on the air as "Karla with a K."

A celebration of Martin's life is pending.

Joanne Ostrow: 303-954-1830, [jostrow@denverpost.com](mailto:jostrow@denverpost.com)  
[twitter.com/ostrowdp](https://twitter.com/ostrowdp)

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