

# ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR

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## Gene Gleeson

For nearly 25 years, Gene Gleeson has brought news to the Southland as a reporter and anchor on ABC7 broadcasts out of Los Angeles. Since joining the station in 1980, he has reported every type of story, but is perhaps best known for his coverage of major aviation and technology news. During his career he has tracked the first flights of the Space Shuttle and the Stealth Bomber, reported the Challenger disaster, and followed breaking news on all of the Voyager planetary flybys.



A legendary news figure in Southern California, Gene has won the professional acclaim of his peers. He received an Associated Press Television Radio Association Award for Best Spot News story for his reporting on the tearing down of the Berlin Wall, and he won a Golden Mike for anchoring the Eyewitness News coverage of the Cerritos air disaster. He also won an Emmy for his coverage of the PSA air disaster during a reporter stint at a San Diego radio station before joining ABC7.

Gene's Southland ties can be traced back to Riverside. Born and raised in the city, he graduated from Ramona High School in 1962 before entering Riverside City College. After RCC, he transferred to San Diego State University where he earned a bachelor's in History, and later went on to earn his master's in Journalism from Columbia University under an NBC fellowship.

His broadcast roots go back almost as far. As a 20-year-old disc jockey at KFXM in San Bernardino, Gene was on stage with the Beatles at their 1964 Hollywood Bowl concert. He continued his radio career in Santa Ana and San Diego, and was stationed at the American Forces Network in Frankfurt, Germany during a tour of duty with the U.S. Army. After his discharge, Gene worked as a reporter and anchor at two San Diego television stations before coming to Los Angeles.

While he has built a life around reporting the news, Gene has also made news of his own in the philanthropic area. He has helped raise funds for several Southern California PBS stations, as well as the Five Acres Home for Abused Children in Pasadena. Closer to our community, Gene has been an active fundraiser for a Riverside County coalition that supports a home for battered women and was very involved in raising scholarship funds for Riverside Community College students.