

# DEADWOOD WALL OF FAME 2005

## Harry Anthony Daniels

Born: August 6, 1918

Died: September 5, 2002

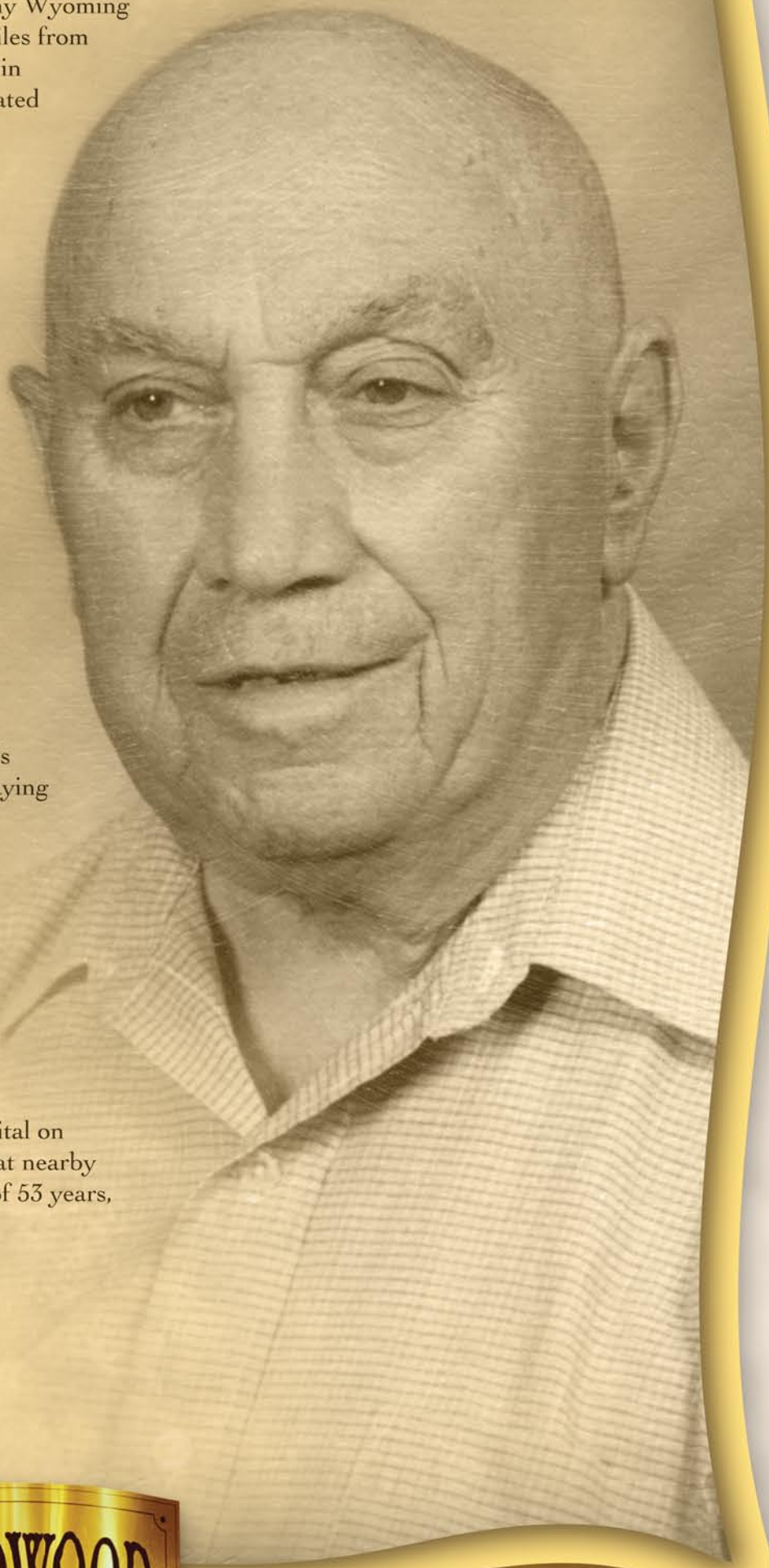
It was the summer of 1959, and a massive forest fire was threatening to overtake the historic Western town of Deadwood. The blaze raged out of control, surrounding the city. Local radio-station owner Harry Daniels suddenly found himself with a difficult choice: leave with his friends and neighbors and ensure his safety, or stay on the airwaves to help direct the evacuation at his own peril.

Harry was born to Italian immigrants in Kleenburn, a tiny Wyoming burg at the foot of the Big Horn Mountains just a few miles from the Montana border. Most of his early years were spent in and around the nearby city of Sheridan, where he graduated from high school in 1940. He entered the Army shortly thereafter, serving in the South Pacific theater during World War II. Following his discharge in 1945, Harry moved with his brother to Deadwood, where the pair started their own radio station in the summer of 1947.

Known as KDSJ, the radio station stayed in the hands of the Daniels brothers for 35 years. KDSJ quickly became a hit with local residents, prompting Harry to start three sister stations: KRSD radio in 1953, KRSD television in 1958 and KDSJ television in 1960. Though the KDSJ AM radio station is all that survives today, Harry's small broadcasting empire became an icon in Deadwood and Lead. Indeed, KDSJ soon established itself as the favorite radio station for miners and engineers driving to work at the Homestake Gold Mine – partly because KDSJ is one of the only stations that radios can receive in the narrow canyons of the northern Black Hills.

When the Fire of 1959 began to encroach on Deadwood's residents, Harry decided to stay on the air at KDSJ, relaying evacuation instructions and updating listeners with the latest news. It was this dedication to the community and the broadcasting industry that earned him a place in the South Dakota Broadcasters Hall of Fame in 1993. Harry was also a member of the South Dakota Broadcasters Association, the Knights of Columbus, the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Deadwood Elks Club, to which he belonged for a half-century.

Harry retired in 1982 and sold KDSJ. He remained in Deadwood until his death at Fort Meade Veterans Hospital on September 5, 2002. He was buried with military honors at nearby Black Hills National Cemetery five days later. His wife of 53 years, Mary Hill, passed away on January 17, 2005.



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A National Historic  
Landmark