

Hugh Downs



- ◆ Hugh Downs is the most well-known American broadcaster and television host of the last century. Downs made his first television news broadcast in September 1945 from the still experimental studio of WBKB-TV, a station then owned by the Balaban and Katz theater subsidiary of Paramount Pictures. He became a TV regular, announcing for *Hawkins Falls* in 1950, the first successful television soap opera, which was sponsored by Lever Brothers Surf detergent. Downs became a bona fide television "personality" as Jack Paar's announcer on *The Tonight Show* from July 1957 until Paar's departure in March, 1962, and then shared hosting until Johnny Carson took over in October 1962.
- ◆ In August 1958 he concurrently began an eleven-year run hosting the original version of the game show *Concentration*. He hosted NBC's *Today Show* for nine years from September 1962 to October 1971. He co-hosted the syndicated television program *Not for Women Only* with Barbara Walters in 1975 and 1976. He is best known as the co-anchor of the ABC news TV show *20/20*, a primetime news magazine program. His closing tagline was, "We're in touch, so you be in touch." A published composer himself, Downs hosted the PBS showcase for classical music, *Live from Lincoln Center* from 1990 to 1996.
- ◆ In 1985, he was certified by the Guinness Book of World Records as holding the record for the greatest number of hours on network commercial television (15,188 hours) until 2004.
- ◆ Downs was a special consultant to the United Nations for refugee problems from 1961-64 and served as Chairman of the Board of the United States Committee for *UNICEF*. Always interested in science and space, Downs wrote a column for *Science Digest* during the 1960s. He was Science Consultant to Westinghouse Laboratories and the Ford Foundation and an elected member of the National Academy of Science. *The Hugh Downs School of Human Communication* at Arizona State University is named in his honor.

Our Host