

WGLT History

1962 - A contest is held to come up with call letters for a new radio station. Bob Birge wins with WGLT (We Gladly Learn and Teach), based on Illinois State Normal University's motto.

April 24, 1962 - WGLT's first day on the air. It's initially on the air for 43 hours, 10 minutes a week. First campus-only broadcast comes from Tower Studios inside Cook Hall. WGLT is later moved to Centennial West's second floor.

1963 - WGLT expands to 72 hours of broadcast time a week.

April 23, 1964 - WGLT celebrates 2nd anniversary. Now part of the Inter-Collegiate Broadcasting System Network (IBS). Also joins the United Press International for quicker access to worldwide news, and begins a tape exchange program with the embassies of Chile, Radio Moscow, and NHK Radio Tokyo.

Oct. 15, 1964 - David Hill named WGLT's first news director.

1965 - WGLT expands to 96 hours and 45 minutes of broadcast time a week.

1965 - WGLT moves operations from Centennial West back to Cook Hall.

Feb. 6, 1966 - WGLT's first broadcast over a 10-watt transmitter. Broadcasts over FM for the first time with a 15-mile radius, reaching off-campus listeners.

1967 - Dick Templeton holds a 32-hour marathon broadcast, doing all major announcing through the marathon.

1968 - A nameless mouse makes its home at the WGLT studios and prompts a "Name The Mouse" campaign. The winner was W.C. Field Mouse.

1969 - WGLT broadcasts all Illinois State University home baseball games. The ISU baseball team goes on to win the only national collegiate sports title in the school's history.

1970 - "Media Bowl" series begins, pitting students from WGLT against those from the Vidette in a game of basketball.

1970 - WGLT begins to air more rock and Top 40 format music to be more relevant to students.

1971 - WGLT's first full-time professional staff position funded. WGLT is now regularly covering ISU athletics, including a 15-minute "supper hour sports report." It's the exclusive station for freshmen basketball games.

1972 - WGLT-AM becomes WILN. WGLT-FM becomes a professionally staffed radio station, with educational and local programming as its focus. The student-run WILN becomes WZND in 1981.

1976 - WGLT upgrades to a 2,500-watt transmitter (allowing the broadcast to reach out 35 miles). Its frequency changes from 91.7 to 89.1. WGLT moves from Cook Hall to the Educational Media Center in Old Union.

1978 - GLT begins affiliation with National Public Radio; receives first grant from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

1985 - WGLT is forced off the air for 3 days when rain pours through a hole in the roof and collapsed the studios' ceiling.

1990 - Original General Manager Ben Paxton retires.

1992 - Under the direction of new GM Bruce Bergethon, WGLT upgrades to a 25,000-watt transmitter. Format changes from classical music to "news, blues, and all that jazz."

1997 - WGLT becomes part of the Department (now School) of Communication at ISU.

2000 - On-air signal begins streaming at WGLT.org.

2005 - Morning Edition host Steve Inskeep is GLT's first guest speaker for Radio Races series.

2013 - More of WGLT's music is moved online. On-air format shifts to news and information. Premiere of GLT's Sound Ideas, a daily hourlong local news magazine.

2015 - For the first time, WGLT earns *two* national Edward R. Murrow awards for journalistic excellence in one year by the Radio Television Digital News Association (RTDNA). Also in 2015, WGLT is one of seven media outlets in the nation honored with the Kaleidoscope Award for reporting on cultural diversity.

2018 - WGLT Hall of Fame is established. Inaugural inductees include Gilbert "Delta" Frank Black, Kathryn Carter, Don Munson, Ben Paxton, Ralph Smith, Robert and Marilyn Sutherland, and inaugural Alumni Award recipient Brendan Banaszak.

2019 - First WGLT Scholarship (up to \$1,500) is awarded to a past or present student worker or intern from ISU's School of Communication.

June 1, 2019 - WGLT assumes management of Peoria's public radio station, WCBU-FM.