



Famed Blues announcer John Kelly recalls his broadcasting days at SIUE

July 5 2016 3:32 PM



EDWARDSVILLE - Before his voice was heard by National Hockey League (NHL) fans, St. Louis Blues play-by-play announcer **John Kelly** was calling Cougar baseball and basketball games at **Southern Illinois University Edwardsville**.

Broadcasting is Kelly's family business. Kelly started his career in the American Hockey League and then transitioned to the NHL in 1988. He's been with the Blues since 2004.

He is the son of legendary Blues announcer and hockey Hall of Fame member **Dan Kelly**. John's brother, **Dan Jr.**, is a broadcaster in Chicago.

"I have a great passion for both broadcasting and hockey," Kelly said. "If you're not passionate, it will come through in your broadcasting. You have to be tremendously in love with the game."

Kelly earned a bachelor's in mass communications-television and radio from SIUE in 1983. While studying at the University, he worked at campus radio station WSIE, announcing numerous games for the Cougars and perfecting his skills.

It is his passion for the game, coupled with countless hours of practicing and studying the art of broadcasting, that he says have contributed to his success.

"The proximity of the University to St. Louis was great," Kelly said. "I loved being at SIUE. For a lot of reasons, it was the perfect fit for me. It offered a great opportunity for me to gain hands-on experience by working at WSIE. I was able to do sportscasts and a lot of play-by-play. My dad could actually listen to the games over in St. Louis.

"It benefitted me greatly to learn, make mistakes, work on the air and perfect my craft. The experiences were invaluable."

Anticipation, memorization, staying on top of changes in the league and constant practice are all key skills in the world of broadcasting, according to Kelly.

"You have to have a great knowledge for the game of hockey, the players and the teams," he explained. "I've got to be 100 percent accurate, because the fans that are watching and listening are passionate. You can't fool the fans."

One of Kelly's fondest memories is the Blues game he announced alongside his dad soon before he passed away from cancer at age 52. The game was in Philadelphia in the fall of 1988.

"It's something I'll always remember," Kelly said. "I knew that he knew that he probably didn't have a lot of time left, so he wanted to have that moment with me. I'm glad he made the offer, and I'm very glad I accepted. It was the last road game he ever broadcast."

Kelly looks forward to many more years announcing for the Blues. As for the current roster, he says, “They have a very good young nucleus and an extremely large window of success.”

His wife and children like to tell Kelly that he has ‘the greatest job in the world,’ and he wholeheartedly agrees.