

Thomas F. Bie Advertising Federation of Greater Hampton Roads 1973 Silver Medal Award Honoree



Tommy Bie began his career as a copy boy / photographer for *The Portsmouth Star* while still in high school in 1937. As America geared up for war and Hampton Roads became a beehive of defense activity, photography overshadowed other duties.

At 18 he found himself, with Charles Borjes of the *Norfolk Virginian-Pilot* and H.D. Vollmer of the *Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch*, as one of only three newspaper photographers in Southside Hampton Roads.

Upon returning from World War II duty as a navigator / bombardier / aerial gunner and public relations officer in the Army Air Corps, Bie elected to move to the newspaper's advertising department where the pay scale was more suitable to his newly married status. He rose to advertising promotion manager and later was asked to become advertising director of the new community-owned *Portsmouth Times*.

Norfolk Newspapers, having bought *The Portsmouth Star*, did not take lightly to the new upstart daily and muscled it out of business in one year. Faced with staying in the newspaper business elsewhere or trying a new venture here, he and Elwood R. Major formed Major & Bie, Inc., one of the area's first advertising agencies. The shop became Seamark, Inc. with Bie as CEO in 1972.

He served on the boards of numerous civic and professional organizations and was president or chairman of Tidewater Better Business Bureau, *Tidewater Virginian* (now *Virginia Business*) magazine and the Norfolk Division of the Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce.

In 1973, he was bestowed the Advertising Federation of Greater Hampton Roads' 10th Silver Medal Award. In addition, the ad clubs in Virginia jointly named him Outstanding Advertising Person of the Year.

Predeceased by his wife and fellow Silver Medal Award honoree, Mackie, Tommy Bie died on September 19, 2010.