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NEWS RELEASE

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Oregon Historical Society Invites Community to Share Their Memories of History-Making Trail Blazers Broadcaster Bill Schonely Ahead of Retirement

Portland, OR — April 7, 2022 — The Oregon Historical Society is inviting individuals to express their appreciation for Bill Schonely, who will retire as the Blazer’s Founding Broadcaster/Ambassador following the team’s final game of the season this Sunday, April 10, against the Utah Jazz.

“I believe that there is no more recognizable and beloved voice in Oregon history than that of Bill Schonely,” said Kerry Tymchuk, OHS Boyle Family Executive Director. “We were honored to recognize Bill with the [Oregon History Makers](#) award in 2017, and we invite anyone who would like to share their memories of Bill or to thank him for his remarkable career and enduring place in Oregon history to do so through our [online form](#), which we will then share with Bill.”

Portland Trail Blazers founder and fellow Oregon History Maker Harry Glickman hired Schonely, also known as “Mr. Rip City,” for the team’s inaugural season in 1970. “The Schonz’s” thirty years behind the microphone included nearly 3,000 games and was the second-longest tenure in the NBA at the time. The legendary broadcaster was inducted into the Oregon Sports Hall of Fame in 2002 and was recognized by the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame with the 2012 Curt Gowdy Media Award, presented annually to members of the print and electronic media whose longtime efforts have made a significant contribution to the game of basketball. That same year, The Oregon Association of Broadcasters honored Schonely with the 2012 Tom McCall Award. He has worked as a community ambassador for the Trail Blazers since 2003.

The Oregon Historical Society’s research library also holds in its collection Bill Schonely’s oral history, which was conducted by Jack McArthur and Ian Strauss at the Moda Center in Portland, Oregon, on July 24, 2019. In this interview, Schonely discusses his early interest in radio broadcasting, particularly his experience with Armed Forces Radio while he served in the U.S. Marine Corps. He describes receiving the job offer to join the Portland Trail Blazers, putting together a radio station to broadcast games, the naming of

the team, and concludes the interview by sharing advice for aspiring broadcasters. The oral history and a video recording of the interview are both accessible online through OHS Digital Collections [here](#).

About the Oregon Historical Society

For more than a century, the Oregon Historical Society has served as the state's collective memory, preserving a vast collection of artifacts, photographs, maps, manuscript materials, books, films, and oral histories. Our research library, museum, digital platforms & website (www.ohs.org), educational programming, and historical journal make Oregon's history open and accessible to all. We exist because history is powerful, and because a history as deep and rich as Oregon's cannot be contained within a single story or point of view.