

# VOX POPULI



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DOUCETTE and Steve "Snapper" Jones are the play-by-play man and color analyst for the Blazers' televised games.

## 'Sky hook' one of many Doucettisms

Portland Trail Blazer television announcer Eddie Doucette has become famous for his nicknames and sayings, many of which have become known throughout the National Basketball Association.

"Sky Hook" ..... The famous hook shot perfected by former superstar Kareem Abdul-Jabbar.

"Up the Boulevard" .... When a player dashes straight down the middle of the court toward the basket.

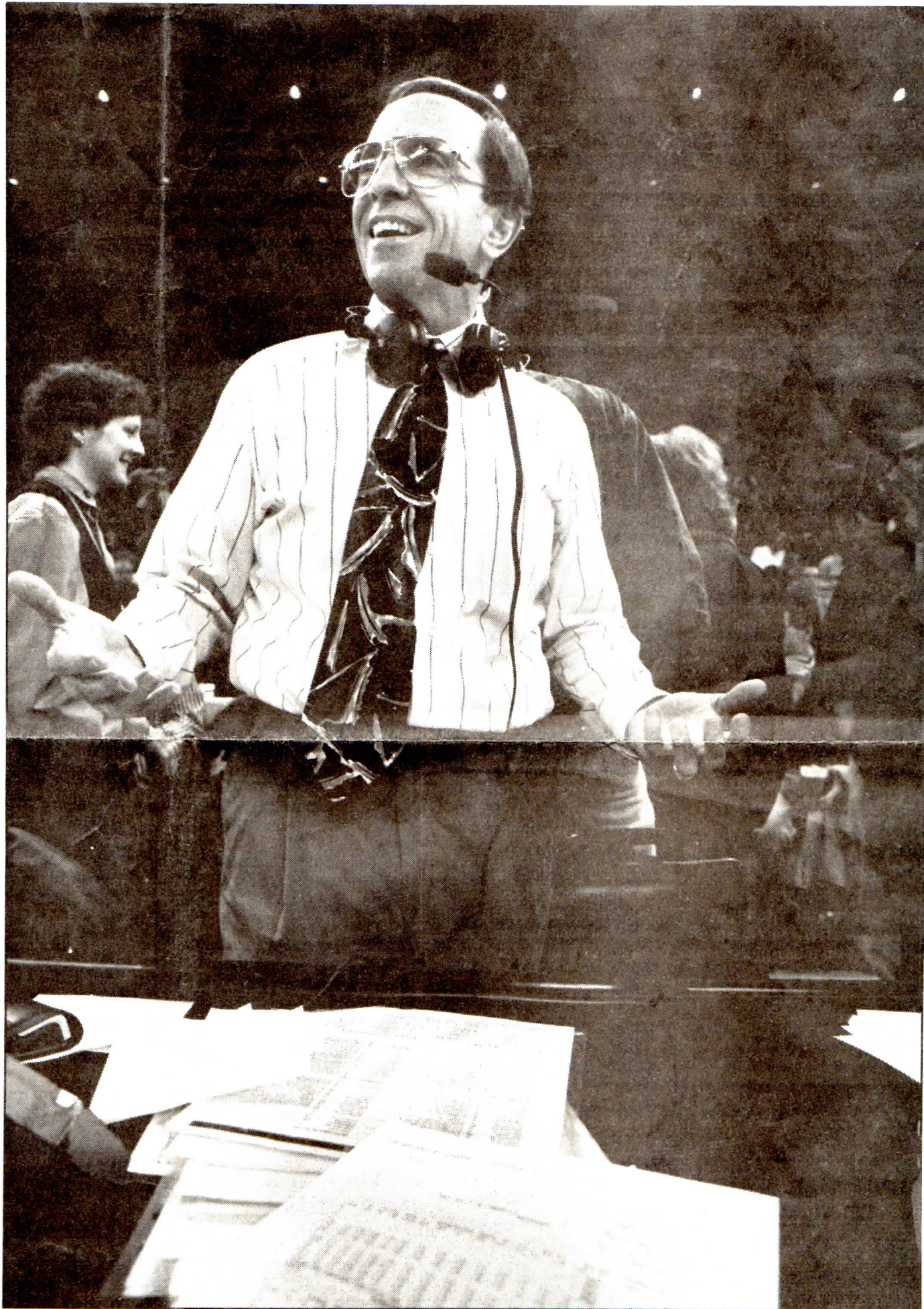
"Land of the Giants" ..... The area under the basket dominated by taller players such as forwards and centers.

"Electric Legs" ..... Nickname of Trail Blazer James Robinson.

"The Angel"... Nickname of headband-wearing Portland forward Cliff Robinson



Entertainment is name  
of game for voice of



**DOUCETTE IS** in his third season as the voice of the Portland Trail Blazers, first on radio and this year on television. He credits friends in Lake Oswego for getting him hired in Portland. He made his home here for two years.

describing plays and generating energy and excitement, even when the team is playing poorly.

"It's a hell of a job," says Doucette, his smoky, vibrant voice belying his small frame. "But you gotta know, it's a lot like the blues. It's telling people about life; making it sound interesting. You dress it up, put a little whipped cream on it, but it's the same as it was a hundred years ago."

### Paving a new career

Doucette, 52, was raised in and around Boston, where his influences included Jim Britt and Tom Hussey, then the voices of the Red Sox.

"I lived and died with those guys," Doucette says. "I vowed that, if I ever got to do this, I'd make it as exciting for fans as they made it for me."

He attended Michigan State University in the mid-1960s, studying communications, broadcasting and debate. And, in 1968, he landed a job. Not in his beloved baseball, but in the young, unpopular and poorly understood National Basketball Association.

His first job was with the Milwaukee Bucks. "I was young and scared," he says, grinning. "The only instructions I had from the general manager were: 'Look, this is pro basketball. This is totally alien to these people. I don't know how you're gonna do this, Eddie, but you've got one year to do it.'"

And he did, creating a popularity for hoops that can be felt around Wisconsin today.

"I developed a young fan following. That fan following became the season ticket holders of today," he says.

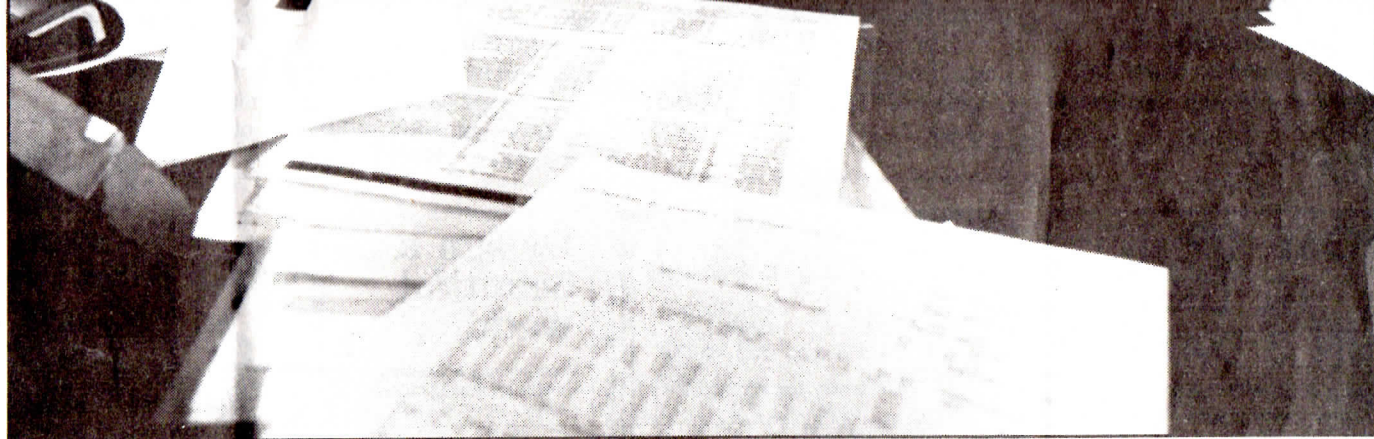
Jon McGlocklin played for the Bucks back then, proudly bearing the moniker "Jonny Mac," given to him by Doucette. When McGlocklin retired, he became a color commentator — the secondary announcer who adds interesting information beyond the play-by-play.

And his first partner was Doucette.

"He's extremely talented," McGlocklin says. "He's a combination of creative and entertaining, without being overbearing or egotistical."

If Milwaukee represents Doucette's first great foray into his dream-come-true, it also is a time of painful memories. Eddie and Karen Doucette had their first son, Brett, in 1974. In December 1976, Brett was diagnosed with leukemia.

Rather than just deal with his own pain, Eddie and Jonny Mac came up with the idea of Midwest Athletes Against Childhood Cancer, also known as the MacFund. McGlocklin remains president of the fund today.



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The MacFund raises close to \$1 million a year for childhood cancer research at Wisconsin hospitals.

"This has been a labor of love for my wife and myself, and a phenomenal job by Jonny," Doucette says. "Helping found the MacFund is the single most important thing I've done in my life."

The Doucettes left Wisconsin because Brett needed a warmer climate. They moved to San Diego. Today, Brett is a healthy junior at the University of San Diego.

The Doucettes' second son, Cory, plays basketball as a sophomore at Linfield College in McMinnville.

Milwaukee is where Doucette developed his voice, a combination of cocky and calming, heavy on the bass and light on the baloney. It's a voice that sounds the way good Chianti tastes.

That voice isn't heard in Milwaukee anymore. That's too bad, McGlocklin says.

"I loved working with Eddie. I'd love to still be working with him. I think the (Blazers) and your city are the winners for having him. And I think I'm saying that objectively, as an announcer."

### Covering the territory

Doucette stayed in Milwaukee 19 years, but from there, he caromed around the league, serving as an announcer for the NBA's Denver Nuggets, Indiana Pacers and Los Angeles Clippers. He handled play-by-play duties for NBA Radio, where he called the 1992 Western Conference Finals in

## Doucette's a gem, say other sportscasters

"I think Eddie Doucette is one of the top announcers ever. I've worked with him and listened to him. I think he's outstanding."

**Jon McGlocklin,**  
voice of the Milwaukee Bucks

"Eddie was one of the first guys I (announced) with. He did a great job. Of all the guys I've been around, he's the best."

**Bobby "Slick" Leonard,** voice of the Indiana Pacers

"He's like a great volleyball player who throws you these easy lobs. It was just so much fun."

**Nick Bunick,** Lake

Oswegan who did color commentary with Doucette for one game

"Portland is blessed to have talent like Eddie Doucette. He's a very gifted personality. He's diligent and sincere in his efforts to make the fans enjoy the game."

**Steve Jones,** former Trail Blazer and sports analyst for the Blazers, and NBC Sports

"I think he's one of the best in the business. He's knowledgeable and fun and informative."

**Mychal Thompson,** former Trail Blazer and sports-talk-radio host.

## Doucette/ from page C1

which Portland defeated the Utah Jazz.

He also bounced in and out of major league baseball, working as the television announcer for the Los Angeles Dodgers and serving limited duty with five other big-league clubs. He broadcast football games for the Los Angeles Rams and covered various games for the Mutual Broadcasting Network.

"We go way back," says Bobby "Slick" Leonard, the voice of the Indiana Pacers. "Eddie came up with a lot of sayings that were copied by other people; stuff like 'up the boulevard' and 'sky hook.' Dick Vitale (announcer for ESPN and ABC) copied a bunch of Eddie's stuff."

While working for the USA Network in 1981-82, Doucette teamed up with former Trail Blazer Steve Jones. They became friends.

"Eddie has a phenomenal talent," the University of Oregon standout recalls. "He's interesting in that he always has a lot of irons in the fire."

"He's the Next Generation of 'Star Trek,'" Jones explains, laughing at his own far-fetched metaphor. "You know on that show, how they all have different faces, different missions, different reasons for being there? That's Eddie. He's got a lot of personalities running around in there."

Three years ago, Jones began lobbying to get Doucette a job in Portland. Lending a hand was Lake Oswegan Nick Bunick, who had befriended Doucette two decades ago in Milwaukee.

"I'd been trying to get Eddie here for years," Bunick said. "He's great, especially on radio. You actually think you're watching the game, although you're only watching it in your mind's eye."

Bunick once served as color commentator for Doucette, when the Bucks came to Portland and the regular announcer was unavailable. Doucette knew his old friend was in the crowd and asked him to help out.

## Jottings/ from page C1

them and marvel at their endurance.

We also met Indians in the rain forest of Ecuador who were living in the land of their ancestors, exactly

When the Blazers hired Doucette to be their radio man for the 1992-93 season, he moved to Lake Oswego. Recently, he moved again, out to a bigger place in Charbonneau.

### Perspective

Doucette's working life has revolved around announcing, but he also has a pragmatic view of the industry and its relative importance in the world.

"I've had periods of frustration," he says, throwing in a what-the-hell shrug for effect. "I've always had these dreams, and I was knocking on the door to get to the Big Thing (national announcing). And it never happened. That's been frustrating."

He also is unimpressed with many of the nationally known play-by-play men. "Marv Albert (NBC) has style. But the rest of these guys have very little style. Most of them are Mr. Vanilla."

By "vanilla," Doucette means the announcers simply tell the audience what's happening. They inform but don't entertain.

"This business needs creativity. We don't need 'doormen.' We need announcers who know how to make people happy after they get 'em into the hotel. You know?"

If there's another frustration he feels, it's with players who strut and flaunt their multi-million-dollar contracts.

"Professional basketball players? Man, they're a different breed of cat. They've always been a little into themselves, but it's more so today," he says. "I don't know: I haven't seen one of these guys create a cure for cancer. To my mind, *that's* a superstar."

Doucette also has little patience for fans who put too much importance on what is, after all, just a game.

"Let's get balanced!" he booms. "People act like it's a gloomy day when the team loses. I've seen my son almost die. Hey: There are more important things."

## FUSION AND RELATED DISEASES — 1:30 to 5:30 p.m.

Thursdays. Specialized recreation program and respite for caregivers. Prior registration required by calling Berta Derman at 635-3758.

**GROCERY SHOPPING** — For people older than 50 with health or transportation limitations. It is a joint project of Clackamas County Senior Citizens Council and the center. Phone orders (635-3758) are taken 10 a.m. to noon Tuesdays.

**INFORMATION AND PROBLEM-SOLVING** — Social Services staff has information about in-home services, transportation options, alternative living arrangements and other services available for older adults. Strictly confidential. Appointments available in home if necessary.

## m Festival

**Som Day Sale** — Hood River County Fairgrounds, Saturday and Sunday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

• **Flea Market** — Friday and Saturday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sunday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

• **Odell Garden Club Plant Sale** — Hood River County Fairgrounds building, Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sunday 10 a.m. until it's sold out.

• **Pie, ice cream and coffee** — Fairgrounds community building, Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Odell Lions Club will sell refreshments.

• **Blossom Day pie sale** — Fairgrounds building, Sunday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Refreshments served by the Odell Lioness Club.

• **River Bend Farm's Taste of the Country** — 2363 Tucker Road, Friday, Saturday and Sunday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Old-fashioned country store offers a free sampling of

leafed plant, stripped it and showed us how it could become a dart. He then proceeded to explain how another plant was used one way to prevent conception and another way