



Walter Jacobson, a veteran at Chicago's WBBM-TV, joins WFLD-TV today as late news anchor.

## WFLD raids rival for anchor

By JON LAFAYETTE

Staff reporter

The new general manager of Fox Television Stations-owned WFLD-TV in Chicago has plucked a veteran former anchor from local CBS-owned WBBM-TV to boost her new news programing.

Stacey Marks-Bronner, WFLD's general manager, last week hired WBBM's Walter Jacobson to anchor WFLD's late news.

Hiring Mr. Jacobson is part of WFLD's effort to create a news presence in the market. The station has been staffing up, but mostly for a new morning news show scheduled to debut in June.

Most of FBC's programing is aimed at younger viewers, which might make the selection of Mr. Jacobson seem peculiar, but Ms. Marks-

Bronner said that while the anchor is a legend in Chicago, he's not a fossil.

"I think he's a 22-year-old caught in a 55-year-old's body," Ms. Marks-Bronner said. "He still has that fire in his belly and a rebel spirit about him. He's the people's champion."

Mr. Jacobson had been with WBBM for more than 20 years, but for the last few years had been relegated to doing commentary rather than anchoring.

On WFLD, Mr. Jacobson will have a commentary segment nightly on the 9 p.m. newscast in addition to his anchor duties.

After languishing for the past few years as WBBM installed a more fast-paced, tabloid-style newscast, Mr. Jacobson said, "Fox came along and offered a new lease on life."

He said he plans to do the kind of news for which he earned his reputation.

"My kind of news is muckraking," he said. "Nobody

in local TV is reporting what's going on inside of government.

"'60 Minutes,' '20/20' and 'PrimeTime Live' are popular. Why are local stations giving into this instinct to do things fast and superficial?"

Mr. Jacobson agreed to a four-year deal at \$700,000 a year. His \$1 million-a-year contract with WBBM was set to expire at the end of the year.

His first WFLD broadcast was scheduled for today.

For many of his years at WBBM, Mr. Jacobson and co-anchor Bill Kurtis were the top-rated news team in Chicago.

In 1988, Mr. Jacobson made headlines by losing a \$3 million libel suit to the Brown & Williamson Tobacco Corp.

The tobacco company claimed, and a jury agreed, that a 1981 commentary by Mr. Jacobson contained deliberate falsehoods about the company's marketing plans.

At the time, it was the largest libel award ever upheld on

appeal.

WFLD last week introduced a new graphics package and began promoting its new anchor and its "news revolution."

Ms. Marks-Bronner, who helped design the high-impact tabloid-style "Florida's News Station" look for FBC affiliate WSVN-TV in Miami, said: "I've been associated with a lot of the sizzle in news, but the way I see news is very content driven."

Bringing Mr. Jacobson to the station "says a lot about the commitment that Fox has to credible news," she said.

WFLD is adding 20 staffers for the 9 p.m. newscast and 59 for the new 6 a.m.-9 a.m. program.

WFLD has hired three anchors for the morning program: Marianne Murciano from NBC-owned WTVJ-TV in Miami; Darryl Denard, formerly with "Ebony/Jet Showcase Magazine"; and David Rose from KENS-TV, the CBS affiliate in San Antonio.#