



TVNewsCheck Profile

## DuJuan Is The Real McCoy Station Owner

By [Adam Buckman](#)

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If DuJuan McCoy is bullish on local broadcast television, then he's got a good reason: He made millions buying and then selling his first stations, located in two of the nation's smallest markets.

"I'm a broadcaster by trade," McCoy, 47, says proudly, on the phone from the offices of his company, Bayou City Broadcasting, based in a Houston suburb. "This is the only industry that I know."

What's Bayou City? At present, it's a station group without any stations, although that's about to change. In August, McCoy, along with equity partners Alta Communications and Sankaty Advisors, agreed to buy WEVV, the CBS affiliate in Evansville, Ind., from Nexstar Broadcasting Group for \$18.6 million. Completion of the deal is pending FCC approval.

"I have a substantial amount of equity in the deal — more equity in this deal than I did my first deal," McCoy says, though he declined to divulge the amount.

McCoy is a rarity in TV broadcasting. When the WEVV deal closes, McCoy, who previously owned two stations in West Texas, will not only be among the handful of single-station operators, he will be, according to the Washington-based Minority Media and Telecommunications Council, one of only two African-American owners. The other is Joseph Stroud of WJYS Hammond, Ind., a religious station serving Chicago.

The deal to buy WEVV will hopefully be the first of many for Bayou City. "The objective is to buy multiple stations and build a group," McCoy said. "I have no interest in running one TV station."

What's his criteria? "I'm looking for television stations that are [affiliated with] one of the Big Four in medium-size markets that I can improve upon the operation via sales, via programming, and that is not a No. 1 or a No. 2 in a market," he says.

WEVV, located in the 103rd-ranked DMA, represents a step up for Bayou City. Previously, McCoy's company owned Fox affiliates KXVA Abilene and KIDY San Angelo — both in Texas — the 164<sup>th</sup> and 198<sup>th</sup> DMAs, respectively.

McCoy, along with an angel investor and a regional Texas bank, bought the two — plus five low-power stations in the same area — in 2008 for \$3 million. He says he put a "substantial" amount of his own money into the purchase, eventually buying out his angel investor. In 2012, McCoy sold the stations to London Broadcasting in a deal valued at nearly \$20 million.

When he took over KXVA and KIDY, McCoy moved quickly, impressing long-time staffers. "DuJuan came into the stations ready, set, go," says Teddye Read, who has worked at the stations since 1991, and was station manager of the two under McCoy's ownership. "He had a vision, he had his goals, he knew exactly what he wanted."

She says one notable change McCoy brought to the stations was giving them both an identity in news — something neither had previously. First, he made a deal with the Fox affiliate in San Antonio to simulcast the station's nightly 9 p.m. newscast on the two West Texas stations. Then, later, he established a 7-8

minute local news block on KXVA and KIDY that cut into the San Antonio newscast and localized it even more.

McCoy himself credits the six-fold increase in the stations' value under his ownership to improvements in the stations' sales efforts. "It was an underperforming sales operation.... That was the primary focus. The stations were No. 1 in prime in both markets, San Angelo and Abilene, but the revenue was not commensurate with the ratings."

It makes sense that McCoy would focus his energies on sales because he's a lifelong salesman. His first TV job was in entry-level sales at WTTV Indianapolis right out of college.

"Television was nothing that I thought about [as a potential career]," McCoy recalls. "I was a pretty good student at Butler University, and I was a pretty good athlete as well."

As a result, he says, "*The Indianapolis Star* wrote a full-page article about me right before I graduated and the sales manager for WTTV, which was a large independent sports station in Indianapolis, called to interview me for a job."

The station didn't hire him right away. Instead, the sales manager advised McCoy to find a sales job elsewhere where he might pick up the fundamentals. So, he took a job selling copiers. "I didn't sell a lot, but I learned a lot," he says.

Enough that WTTV took a chance on him. After struggling in his first year or so at the station, McCoy got the hang of it. After that, he moved up quickly in TV sales, taking jobs at stations in Greenville, N.C.; Cincinnati; back to Indianapolis; and then Houston.

For McCoy, successful selling has been the driving force behind every advancement in his career. "I believe sales is the crux of communication," he says. "If you can convince an individual to buy from you and you take those same sales skills and apply them to management, it helps you work with employees in the same manner.

Not only that, when you're a salesperson, you're negotiating every day. That helps you overall as a manager."

McCoy held a series of general sales manager positions, but he never received the promotion to general manager that he sought on numerous occasions. Frustrated and ambitious, he decided to make the leap to station ownership. To prepare, he enrolled in the NAB's Broadcast Leadership Training programming — the once-a-month, 10-month course the NAB offers to broadcast professionals that instructs them on the ins and outs of buying and selling TV and radio stations.

"He's an over-achiever," Diane Sutter, the course's founder and dean, says of McCoy, who took her course in 2008. "DuJuan bought his stations while he was still in the class," recalls Sutter, who is president and CEO of California-based Shooting Star Broadcasting. "He always likes me to make sure I mention that."

Giving his new Evansville station an identity in news is the first thing on his to-do list. "It doesn't have news now and my immediate goal is to put on a local newscast," he says. "There is huge potential in that television station. Evansville is market No. [103]. It's close to a \$40 million TV market and \$16 million of that market is spent on news. If you don't have news, you can't compete for that \$16 million. So when I start up [a news operation], I have an opportunity now to play in a pond that I wasn't allowed to play in before because I didn't have the product."

McCoy admits that the dearth of African-American station ownership is a concern for him, and the situation is something he thinks about as he goes about the business of assessing additional properties for Bayou

City.

"It's rare to have an African-American who is a true broadcaster who came up through the business," he says.

McCoy emphasizes that it's his track record in local station sales management that put him in position to buy stations and, as part of that process, earn the confidence of investors. "My experience and my skill level were what helped me to get the deal," he says of the WEVV transaction.

But he also notes that Nexstar Chairman, President and CEO Perry Sook has actively sought African-American entrepreneurs to whom to sell properties. "I believe Perry is trying to make a conscious, concerted effort to improve diversity in media by selling more of his stations to African-American owned-and-operated companies," he says.

A prepared statement attributed to Sook in the Nexstar news release announcing the sale of WEVV bears that out. "The proposed transaction announced today highlights our focus on completing pending transactions and represents the second time in the last two months that Nexstar has structured an agreement that furthers the FCC's goal of increasing minority television ownership diversity."

"Throughout America, you can probably count the number of black general managers maybe on one hand," McCoy says. "Typically, they say you have to become a general manager before you own."

McCoy acknowledges that he's conscious of the example he can set for other would-be minority owners. "I don't have to continue to do TV," he says. "I'm wealthy enough. I did well on my last deal. I believe it's important for me as a minority to represent and lay down groundwork for future minorities so that there's some type of track record of success with minorities running television stations. That's a responsibility that I think I have."

McCoy feels there are still opportunities out there small operators. "I honestly believe that particularly in the near future, there will always be room for entrepreneurial operators," he says. "There are some stations that larger groups don't want to fix up, that they don't want to be bothered with. That's where the entrepreneurs come in."

"But I'm trying to get beyond being just an entrepreneur and get to more meaningful stations," he says. "That's my goal — not necessarily to get the stations nobody else wants, but compete for quality mid-market major affiliate television stations."

He advises those thinking about buying stations to, first and foremost, succeed at their current jobs so that investors will have confidence in them. Second, enroll in the NAB's course and, third, "assess your risk tolerance.

"If you can afford to go out on your own and run a company, then the leap of faith is really rewarding if you really have the risk tolerance to do it."

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