

# JIM HILL DELIVERS SIDELINE-TO-SIDELINE COVERAGE

JIM HILL, RECIPIENT OF THE QUINN AWARD FOR LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT, HAS MADE AN INDELIBLE MARK ON THE LOS ANGELES SPORTS MEDIA SCENE

BY ADAM ROSE



**S**ports pundits love to debate Mt. Rushmore. Not the one in South Dakota, but a hypothetical tribute to the leading sports icons of a city or franchise. Imagine if you can only choose four names and they'll be set in stone.

It's hard to picture a Lakers Mt. Rushmore without Magic Johnson. It's impossible to construct a Dodgers Mt. Rushmore without Sandy Koufax.

If L.A. sports media had a Mt. Rushmore, could you build it without Jim Hill?

The answer is a clear "No," and it's part of why Hill tonight is receiving the Los Angeles Press Club's 2019 Joseph M. Quinn Award for Lifetime Achievement.

Hill tirelessly works stadium sidelines and studio desks as the lead sports anchor and sports director at CBS2/KCAL9. Audiences look for him during the weekday newscasts at 6 and 11 p.m., plus weekend editions of "Sports Central."

Like many broadcasters, Hill started off in a small market. He was only on air part time with Wisconsin's WBAY in 1972. Unlike any other broadcaster, his day job was playing defensive back for the Green Bay Packers.

"My teammates used to tease me," Hill once recalled in an interview about his early days on television. "But I was preparing for my future."

Hill's multi-year NFL career included a tour with the San Diego Chargers. He first joined the CBS2/KCAL9 team in 1976 and also served a stint with KABC. Today, he is respected throughout the sports media industry for his relentless



work ethic. That's evident during any press conference: Hill always gets to ask the first question. And he never seems to miss an opportunity.

"His energy is astounding," notes Sam Farmer, the NFL writer for the *Los Angeles Times* who joins Hill every Thursday during the football season on CBS2. "He's ageless, and it's as if he's been cloned; he is everywhere around Los Angeles, and in walks Jim Hill. I'm in London for the Rams, and of course, Jim Hill is there asking the first question."

"Through the years, Jim Hill was always the man in town as far as being here, there and everywhere," says Tom Hoffarth, an L.A. sports media newspaper columnist for the last 30 years now with the *Times*.

Hoffarth began ranking the best L.A. sports media personalities in a 1991 column for the

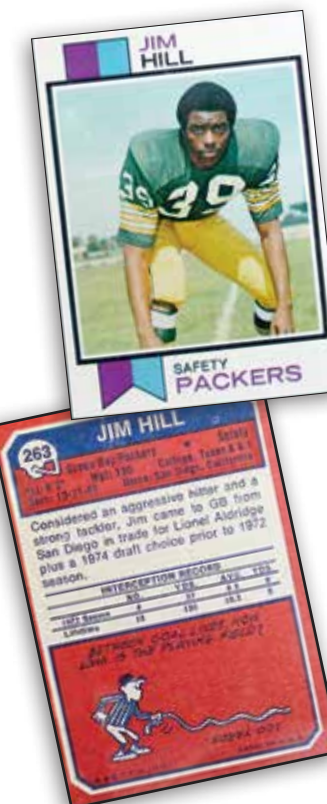
*South Bay Daily Breeze*. The list became an annual tradition for two decades, with Hill reliably hovering at the top. Hoffarth called Hill the most visible sportscaster in L.A., but also pointed to important aspects of his work that didn't appear on camera.

"I spent a lot of hours with him in press boxes talking not just about the business, but on how to treat people, things that should be reported and other things that are best kept private."

Hill has been recognized by media critics far and wide, including when *USA Today* named him best sports anchor in Los Angeles.

"Jim is not only the best dressed sports announcer in television in America (if not the world!), he's also the hardest working," affirms Mychal Thompson, a broadcaster with *Spectrum SportsNet* and *ESPN Los Angeles*.

Thompson understands the value of being a



Everyone wants to join in celebrating Jim Hill's star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 2006.

**JOSEPH M. QUINN AWARD JIM HILL**

professional athlete before moving into journalism, considering he picked up two NBA championships playing with the Lakers during the Showtime era. That experience has an impact in a broadcasting career.

"The thing players respect about [Hill] is that he played at the highest level," says Thompson.



"We always looked at him as one of the guys, because he always makes athletes feel so comfortable around him. Guys are willing to talk to him and bare their souls to him, because they know that Jim understands what they're going through."

Hill's ability to understand and relate to his subjects explains why he regularly lands interviews with the biggest names in sports.

"He's hugely respected by owners, commissioners, coaches and athletes," confirms Farmer. "And yet he's got the humility of a guy just starting out in the business. He might be a Los Angeles legend, but he certainly doesn't act like one."

Hill's status as a legend was further cemented—literally—in 2006, when he received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. Fittingly, he has also appeared in a number of movies and TV shows, often playing himself. He was inducted into the Southern California Sports Broadcasters Hall of Fame in 2010, and has been previously recognized by the Los Angeles Press Club, the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences, Associated Press and United Press International.

His public service includes roles on the board of directors of the Los Angeles Urban League and the advisory board for the Boy Scouts of America,



as well as an honorary role supporting youth outreach and sports fitness programs as spokesperson for the City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks.

Hill has worked to support future generations through informal channels, too, often with a kind word offered to up-and-comers in sports media. He's known for encouraging students breaking into the business.

One of those was Arash Markazi, now a *Los Angeles Times* sports columnist, who has also

been an adjunct college professor.

"He always has time to give advice to my students, who are just as appreciative as I was when Jim took time out to talk to me as a student," he recalls. "He's someone I looked up to growing up in L.A. and someone I'm proud and honored to call a friend and colleague now."

Of course, Markazi also pointed to the example that Hill's been setting for decades.

"Nobody in Los Angeles works harder than Jim Hill." 🙌

Left: 1969 San Diego Chargers, Lance Alworth, Jim Hill and Chris Fletcher, prepare to sing on the Holiday Halftime Record.

Above: Rams press availability does not start for more than an hour but Jim Hill is ready.

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 2019 RECIPIENT OF THE  
 JOSEPH M. QUINN AWARD  
 FOR LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

**CBS2 | KCAL 9**  
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**CONGRATULATIONS TO JIM HILL**  
 For being recognized with the Joseph M. Quinn Award  
 for Lifetime Achievement

JIM HILL, CBS2/KCAL9 SPORTS DIRECTOR

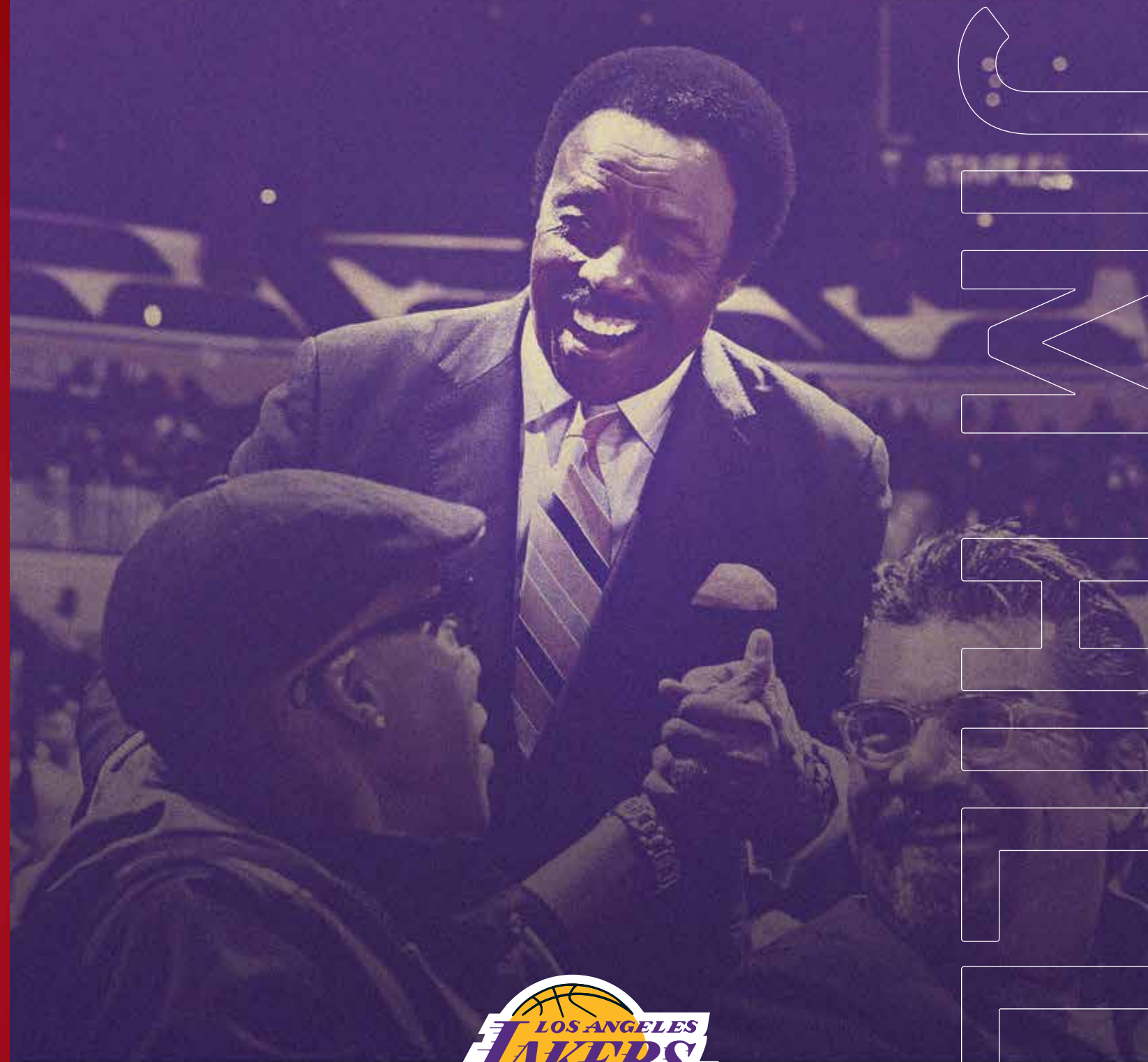
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