

RICK NEWCOMBE



Rick Newcombe accomplished what most industry analysts considered impossible: He founded the first successful independent newspaper and internet syndication company in two decades -- only the second major independent syndicate started since the 1930s.

Newcombe established Creators Syndicate in 1987, basing it on the principle that the creators of the syndicated content should have more rights than were then being given to them. He still believes that "content is king," and adds that the future is unlimited with digital delivery.

Today, the company represents the popular comic strips, B.C. and the Wizard of Id, in addition to Bill O'Reilly, Mark Shields, Michelle Malkin, the Newsday Crossword Puzzle, Thomas Sowell, Walter E. Williams, Mona Charen, Susan Estrich and John Stossel, among others.

It also syndicates political cartoonists, including two-time Pulitzer Prize-winners Mike Luckovich of the *Atlanta Constitution* and Michael Ramirez of *Investor's Business Daily*. Other cartoonists include Steve Kelley of the *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, Pulitzer Prize-winners Steve Benson of *The Arizona Republic* and Steve Breen of the *San Diego Union-Tribune*, Chip Bok of the *Akron Beacon Journal*, Gary Varvel of *The Indianapolis Star* and John Deering of the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*.

To date the columnists and cartoonists from Creators Syndicate have won nine Pulitzer Prizes, more than any other syndicate.

In addition to B.C. and the Wizard of Id, Creators Syndicate's comics include One Big Happy, Speed Bump, Ballard Street, Agnes, The Other Coast, The Meaning of Lila, Zack Hill, Heathcliff, Momma, Andy Capp, Rubes, Archie and Dog Eat Doug.

Creators Syndicate also dominates in the lifestyle category with horoscopes by Holiday Mathis, and advice from Annie's Mailbox and Dear Margo. Best-selling humor columnists include Bruce Cameron and Lenore Skenazy.

Creators Syndicate is a multimillion-dollar corporation that has been operating in the black since 1989. Dozens of new syndicates are started every year, but other than Creators Syndicate, the only successful independent syndicates founded in the past 50 years have been Universal Press Syndicate in 1970 and the Hall Syndicate more than half a century ago.

With the newspaper industry in a period of reorganization because of competition from other media, most experts thought it impossible to start a successful new syndication company in recent times. But Newcombe believed that with his enthusiasm and knowledge of the business, he could put together the best staff in the industry and attract top talent by offering them freedom in their contracts.

In 2008 Creators Syndicate expanded its offerings with the purchase of Copley News Service, acquiring even more award-winning talent and nearly doubling the number of features it syndicates.

Prior to founding the company, Newcombe served as president of News America Syndicate, which was the third largest syndicate in the world and at the time owned by Rupert Murdoch. Before joining NAS, Newcombe served as vice president and general manager of the Los Angeles Times Syndicate from 1978 to 1984.

A Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Georgetown University, where he was one of the founding editors of *The Georgetown Voice*, Newcombe worked as a reporter and editor at UPI for four years. He also studied for his MBA at the graduate business school of the University of Chicago. Prior to college, Newcombe was one of the first graduates of the prep school La Lumiere, in La Porte, Indiana, a few years before Chief Justice John Roberts.

Over the years, Newcombe has syndicated many celebrities, world leaders and well-known journalists, including Pope John Paul II, Ann Landers, Richard Nixon, Hillary Clinton, Jimmy Carter, Nancy Reagan, Henry Kissinger, Erma Bombeck, Art Buchwald, Joyce Jillson, Jeane Dixon, Sydney Omarr, Carl Rowan, Dan Quayle, Oliver North, Sheinwold on Bridge, and editorial cartoonists Herblock of *The Washington Post*, Paul Conrad of the *Los Angeles Times*, Bill Mauldin of the *Chicago Sun-Times*, Ranan Lurie and Pat Oliphant. He has syndicated the comic strips Dennis the Menace, Mark Trail, Sally Forth, Crock, Star Wars, Star Trek, Judge Parker and Mary Worth.

The New York Times called him “a superhero for cartoonists.”

Newcombe lives in the Brentwood section of Los Angeles with his wife, Carole, an attorney and law school professor. Their two grown children, Sara and Jack, live in New York City and Los Angeles respectively. Jack is currently Executive Vice President & General Manager of Creators Syndicate.

A native of Winnetka, Ill., Newcombe grew up in a newspaper family. His father, Leo Newcombe, served as senior vice president for the newspaper division of Field Enterprises. He also was business manager and later general manager of the *Chicago Daily News* and the *Chicago Sun-Times*.

Newcombe’s primary hobby is keeping fit, and he co-authored the book, *The Businessman’s Minutes-a-Day Guide to Shaping Up* with Dr. Franco Columbu. At the time he helped write the book, Newcombe was working out regularly with Arnold Schwarzenegger at the old World Gym in Santa Monica.

Newcombe said that success in life results from setting challenging goals, assuming only positive results, and being disciplined in one’s work in order to turn dreams into reality. Asked if he has one burning passion at work, Newcombe replied, “Yes, to build Creators Syndicate into the biggest and best in the world.”

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