

Broadcaster, actor a member of senior citizens hall of fame

James A. Rudes, 77, a radio and television broadcaster for 40 years who played Ebenezer Scrooge in the Toledo Repertoire Theatre's productions of *A Christmas Carol* for many years, died of leukemia Thursday at St. Luke's Hospital.

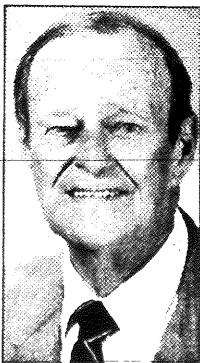
Mr. Rudes began his broadcast career as a radio announcer with WSPD-AM in 1951 and moved to the television side in 1954 on then-WSPD-TV, Channel 13.

"He liked the people, the challenge," his wife, Patricia Rudes, said. "He always enjoyed going into work every day."

Mr. Rudes worked alongside Frank Venner as co-anchor of the 6 and 11 p.m. news. Mr. Venner said the pair had to be ready for mistakes to happen, including the occasional light falling on the set. Because there were no teleprompters, they were forced to memorize their scripts as much as possible.

During his career, Mr. Rudes interviewed several national and international figures, including President Dwight Eisenhower, film star Joan Crawford, and boxer Muhammad Ali.

He was on the scene of many breaking news stories, such as the 1960 airplane crash at Toledo Express Airport that killed 22, 16 of them members of the California State Polytechnic College football team returning home



Rudes

after a game.

In 1967, he was replaced as anchor and began a long stint as an investigative reporter, retiring in May, 1991.

"I thought he was an extremely talented human being," Mr.

Venner said. "In addition to his ability of being a good anchor, he was an extraordinary actor."

Mr. Rudes became interested in acting as a college student at Bowling Green State University. Originally a prelaw major, a friend asked him to be in a play. Mr. Rudes found he liked and was good at acting, his wife said.

"He loved sharing with the audience," his daughter, Amy Walton, said.

Mr. Rudes worked for almost every community and professional theater in northwest Ohio and southern Michigan. He was co-founder of the Maumee Civic Theatre.

"He was the ultimate pro, there's no question about that," Norb Mills, president of the Village Players, said. "He set a standard that I always wanted to try to meet, and I'm not sure that I ever did."

Mr. Rudes played Ebenezer

Scrooge in Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* for 14 consecutive years, finally throwing in the towel after the 1992 production.

He was inducted into the Lake Erie West Hall of Fame for the Performing Arts in 2001 and the Ohio Senior Citizens Hall of Fame in 2003.

Mr. Rudes, born Aug. 28, 1926, in Gibsonburg, Ohio, graduated from Fremont Ross High School in 1944. He served with the Army Air Corps in the South Pacific. He graduated from BGSU in 1952 and married the former Patricia Boller, a fellow theater student.

After retiring, he volunteered with the Area Office on Aging, and many community groups.

"He was a very loyal sort of person, whether it was to the company he worked for, or his family, or the sports teams that he supported," his wife said.

Surviving are his wife, Patricia Rudes; daughters, Tracy Dove and Amy Walton, and four grandchildren.

Visitation will be from 2 to 9 p.m. tomorrow at the Maison-Dardenne-Walker Funeral Home, Maumee. Services will be at 1 p.m. Monday in St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Maumee.

The family suggests tributes to The Leukemia Society, Sunshine Children's Home, The Toledo Repertoire Theatre, Village Players, or the church.