

Tom W. Shales Biography



Thomas William “Tom” Shales - Class of 1962 - b. November 3, 1944 From the EHS Yearbook, the Maroon: Club 90.9, 2-3-4, Mirror Editor 4, Basketball Manager 2-3, Class Treasurer 3, Cross Country Manager 3-4, Class Host 2.

Tom is an American critic of television programming and operations. He is best known as 25 year TV critic for The Washington Post; in 1989, Shales received the Pulitzer Prize for his television criticism and his reviews and articles on the public’s perception of news events. One of his articles examined how the major networks handled the Reagan-Gorbachev summit. He also writes a column for the television news trade publication NewsPro, published by Crain Communications.

Shales was born in Elgin, Illinois, the son of Hulda Louise (née Reko) and Clyde LeRoy Shales. Shales's first professional job was with radio station WRMN, in Elgin at the age of 18. He served on the station's disc jockey, local news reporter, writer and announcer, on both the AM and FM bands. He later worked with Voice of America as a producer of broadcasts to the Far East.

Shales attended Elgin Community College and then graduated from American University in Washington, D.C. with a B.A., where he was Editor-In-Chief of the student newspaper, The Eagle, for the 1966-1967 academic year, as well as the paper's movie critic

Shales worked as Entertainment Editor at the *Washington (DC) Examiner* from 1968 to 1971. He joined the *Washington (DC) Post* as a writer in the Style section in 1972, was named chief television critic in July 1977, and was appointed TV Editor in June 1979. The Washington Post Writers Group has syndicated his column since 1979. Shales has written for the Washington Post for several decades, but is planning to leave the paper effective December 31, 2010. He also has been a Part-Time instructor on Film, American University; Adjunct Professor, American University, 1978; Television Editor, Washington (DC) Post, 1979; Syndicated Columnist, Washington Post Writers Group, 1979; Critic, *The Progressive Review*.

During 1998–1999, Shales was a frequent film critic for Morning Edition on National Public Radio. He was twice a guest co-host on the television show Roger Ebert & the Movies after the death of Gene Siskel.

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Shales also spent two decades reviewing movies for NPR's Morning Edition and is the coauthor of two bestsellers: "Live from New York," on "Saturday Night Live," and "Those Guys Have All the Fun," on ESPN.

Shales received the Pulitzer Prize for Criticism in 1988, for his work at Washington Post. He also received the Distinguished Alumnus Award from American University, and the American Society of Newspaper Editors Writing Award.