

Lecture Pst. SG yrs. Vol. 19 # 14 date unknown – late spring 1990 cover

Remarks
To the
Faculty
Southwest Secondary School
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Date unknown – in the late spring of 1990

By
C. Everett Koop, MD, ScD

NBC contracted with me in 1989 to do a five part documentary series on health care reform. I then contracted with McNeil/Lehrer – not the News Hour but the production company – to supervise the five documentaries. We engaged a director and five assistant directors, one for each one-hour program. If we can arrange all of the releases, the five documentaries may well be shown on this archive.

When NBC first aired these five shows, they did so opposite sixty minutes on Sunday evening, which anyone in television knows is probably the toughest competition one could face. NBC was critical of my ability to attract listeners, which should have surprised no one. I arranged through the generosity of Jenny Craig's company to buy out my contract with NBC, which gave me freedom to substitute for the 13 minutes of advertising, no longer necessary, a spirited conversation with Robin McNeil of the McNeil/ Lehrer News Hour. So the five documentaries plus the Koop/McNeil dialogue were ever so much more valuable for their intended purpose – explaining the need for health care reform – than were the original NBC productions.

The five shows were then given to PBS by me and the only benefit that Jenny Craig received was the privilege of some tombstone advertising in the usual fashion seen on PBS to accompany the five one-hour documentaries.

This short talk was one I presented to the Faculty of the Southwest Secondary School, which was one of the primary sites for the second of the documentaries where I addressed the problems of adolescence in reference to health care reform.

The series of five documentaries won an EMMY in the documentary field and this program on adolescence, as well as the one on Aging, each was awarded a FREDDIE in the International Film Festival run under the aegis of the American Medical Association. This annual event was the successor to the Film Festival in California.