

Irwin Gonshak

1927–2008

IRWIN GONSHAK, producer of Teachers & Writers long-running radio program “Everything Goes?” and the series “Teacher as Historian” died Friday, January 11, 2008.

In addition to his work for T&W, Gonshak, in his position with the New York City Board of Education’s radio station, WNYE-FM, wrote hundreds of educational radio dramas, which were heard in public school classrooms around the city, and which received many grants and national media awards.

“Everything Goes?”, which broadcast creative writing by New Yorkers, was the subject of a January 28, 2001, *New York Times* article by Andrea Higbie titled “Television/Radio; A Friendly Ear for Any and All New York Writers.” Higbie described “Everything Goes?” as a “stubbornly quirky radio show special . . . that champions writers who are unpublished, and often unpublishable,” along with best-selling writers like Evan Hunter (aka Ed McBain) and Lawrence Block, as well as the then-unknown Terry McMillan. The show, Higbie concluded, “is a perfect example of radio’s potential to be a democratic medium.”

The program’s contributors deeply appreciated the platform the show afforded their work. After Irwin’s death, one of them, Eric Oran, wrote: “Although I met Irwin only a handful of times, I consider him to be one of my best friends, if by friend you mean someone who appreciates in you what you like in yourself, who brings out the best in you and effects positive change in your life. Irwin was someone who really helped me. I cannot think of anyone who has helped me as much.” Another contributor, Robert Hagen, wrote, “Irwin’s gift was that he made everyone he came in contact with feel better about themselves. And that’s not an easy task because as writers go, we’re generally a miserable, insecure lot. But . . . he always made me feel like I was somebody and what I said mattered. I believe he made everyone feel like that.”

