

Jeff Around Town – February 3rd, 2026

Jeff: This is Jeff Around Town. If you listen to KVNO, then it's likely you'll know me as the voice of Morning Classics. You may also know that I was a long-time cartoonist for the *Omaha World-Herald*.

What you might not know, however, is that I got my start in cartooning not only at the student newspaper at UNO, *the Gateway*, but also on a TV program recorded in the very same building where KVNO is headquartered right now. But first, I need to back up and tell you about Ed Fisher, my first mentor.

Ed was my cartooning predecessor at the *Omaha World-Herald*, and if you were around in Omaha in the 1970s and early 1980s, you might very well recall his wonderful cartoons.

Sadly, Ed recently passed away in his home state of Minnesota at the age of 88. I first met Ed when I was a senior at Omaha South High School where I was drawing cartoons for my high school newspaper, *The Tutor*. I read Ed's cartoons in the *World-Herald* all the time, dreaming of one day becoming a cartoonist. Meeting Ed was one of those life-changing moments. He took me under his wing, inviting me into his office and studio at the *World-Herald*'s old Art Deco building downtown. The office was piled with sketches and drawings and scribbles and ink blots everywhere. It was a mess, and it was glorious. Oh, to visit a professional cartoonist's office. And not just any cartoonist, but my hero, Ed Fisher.

He shared with me which pens and brushes and inks he used. He critiqued my work, gave me helpful advice on my drawings. He was generous with his time, patient, so very kind, and one of the funniest humans I have ever known. Like, laugh out loud funny.

His cartoons were like that, too. Extraordinarily funny. Yes, the drawings were unique. There was something magical about his lines, the looseness in which he drew. His caricatures of politicians on both the local and national stages were spot on. And yet, they were never cruel. He was a great observer of the human condition and could find humor in nearly any situation. There was always such humanity beneath his ideas. Even when criticizing a politician, you knew that somehow everything was going to be okay. The sun would still come out. Maybe because he was a Midwesterner at heart.

He grew up in Minnesota, after all, studied at the inkblots of Charles Schultz, who was also originally from Minneapolis. When I was just out of high school and a freshman at UNO studying art and journalism, Ed asked me to join him, along with a few other fledgling cartoonists, to form what would become the Fisher Nut Company, inspired by Fisher Nuts, of course. The Fisher Nut Company was to appear on a program called *Omaha Weekly*, hosted by Jackie Sailors and broadcast from UNO's public media station, KYNETV, whose studios were and are literally just downstairs from where KVNO is now.

To come up with the cartoons, we'd gather with Ed at his house near the crossroads, sitting at his dining room table, making cartoons together. Gathered with Ed at his dining table and making cartoons was the best feast I could imagine. The cartoons we came up with weren't completely still images either. They did include some very basic animation, you know, the kind where you would record the image for a few seconds, stop the tape, add a word balloon or change the expression on the face, and then continue taping. Or perhaps the camera would pan left to right and then pull back in cinematic fashion, revealing the punchline at the end, always with fitting music underneath.

Keep in mind, this was the early 1980s, long before any type of sophisticated animation software existed. We were analog, old school, and inventive, all because of the creativity of Ed Fisher. Ed would eventually move back to Minnesota, and after an eight-year gap, I would become the fifth cartoonist in the *World Herald*'s history, moving into his old office. I'm not sure that office door had been unlocked in all those years, but when I was given the key by my editor, Frank Parch, I felt I had truly gained the golden key.

And oh, oh, to step into that office, empty, save for those ink blots from Ed Fisher still staining the carpet. Now, when I host The Morning Show on KVNO, I often think of my time downstairs at KYNE-TV on that weekly news program, and of course, I think of Ed Fisher. His friendly demeanor, his kindness, his humor, and of course, his sense of humanity.

Thank you, Ed, for inspiring me, not just to be a better cartoonist, but to be a better human. And that's Jeff Around Town.