Preface and Acknowledgments

When my father, John Ludlow “Jack” Gould, died in May 1993, many of his friends and former colleagues urged me to write a book about his life and career. The question was what form such a volume should take. Never a systematic record-keeper, Dad retained only fragmentary papers about his years at *The New York Times*. He kept documents about the response to his attacks on the networks for their non-coverage of the United Nations during the Suez controversy in 1956. He also saved some letters relating to his efforts to save *The Play of the Week* in 1959 and 1960. Otherwise, information was sporadic, with some years relatively complete and others with almost nothing. To protect sources and because he did not consider his work to have much historical interest, he routinely discarded letters and memoranda.

As a result, a formal biography seemed impractical. While I found further materials relating to his work in the papers of Turner Catledge at Mississippi State University and in the archives of *The New York Times*, even these discoveries did not flesh out the story in sufficient detail to justify a biographical treatment. I thought the Federal Bureau of Investigation might have a file on him, and it did. However, the file only documented cross-references to him from the files of other individuals. I concluded that while my father had an interesting and complex private life, it would be better to concentrate on what made him important, his television criticism.

My task was facilitated when *The New York Times* generously made available to me all of his byline clippings from its “morgue” when the paper discontinued that institution by 1997. But the riches I reaped from the *Times*’ generosity also presented me with the dilemma of selecting seventy or so columns from the thousands that he produced during his thirty-five years there.

In choosing which columns to include in this book, I tried to pick out topics and issues that had become historically important or in which Jack Gould as television critic showed special interest. The “Golden Age” of television drama seemed a natural first choice, and “blacklisting” in television and the career of Edward R. Murrow were also topics with which Dad was identified. I then pulled together some of the columns on various controversies and causes in which he was involved and

organized a chapter about the programs, entertainers, and personalities that he covered and reviewed. The final three that round out his major interests are the quiz show scandals, children's programming, and the general state of television during the 1950s. I also present a few articles that represent my father's approach to his work.

I concentrated on the years 1947–1961 as the period of his greatest influence. After 1963 the changing role of critics at his newspaper and his mounting disillusionment with television made his writing more labored and less inspired than it had been during the previous decade. His own recollections focused on the 1950s, and certainly in our conversations over the years it was clear that he took most pride in what he had achieved in that decade. My hope is that this book will rekindle interest in Jack Gould as a critic and lead to analytic treatment of his role in the early years of television. I believe his prescience and clear insights shined into particularly the commercial forces that were shaping television early on and continue to determine who gains access to the public mind, as he phrased it, and for what purposes.

My father's columns and papers are now held at the Center for American History at the University of Texas at Austin. In the present volume, his articles appear as originally published, with no substantive changes. Since his editors sometimes were inconsistent in spelling a word such as "programming," I have reconciled these discrepancies. In a very few places where one word was clearly meant and the *Times* printed another, that change has been made for clarity.

I owe thanks to many individuals and institutions for assistance with this project. My first and greatest debt is to Susan Dryfoos of *The New York Times* History Project, who made it possible for me to receive copies of the archival material on my father and his byline stories. She saved me much valuable time in assembling this volume. I also benefited from the encouragement and kind assistance of the late Richard F. Shepard, a former colleague of my father, who smoothed the way for me, read early portions of the book, and was always patient and encouraging in responding to my questions. I am sorry that Dick could not live to see this book become a reality, and I hope his wife, Trudy, will enjoy the final product. Herbert Mitgang also provided support and helpful advice with his reading of the biographical introduction. Mitchel Levitas of *The New York Times* gave valuable advice and timely help.

Among friends and former associates of my father, I received wise counsel, reminiscences, and research materials from the late Franklin

Heller, the late Robert Saudek, Lisa Hamel, the late Fred Friendly, Sol Jacobson, Henry Senber, Holly Shulman, the late Allan Sloane, Dr. Frank Stanton, Mary Sullivan, and Leonard Miall. Mattie Sink at Mississippi State University was indispensable in facilitating my long-distance work with the Turner Catledge Papers. Archivists at the Loomis-Chaffee School and the Kent School kindly furnished me documents about my father's years as a student.

I am grateful to *The New York Times* for permission to reprint these columns, to Mississippi State University for allowing me to print one of my father's memos, and to John Pope for the use of the two letters from my father in his possession.

For help with acquiring photocopies and specific documents relating to my father's career, I owe thanks to Angela Burnett, Thomas Clarkin, R. Scott Harris, Byron Hulsey, Clarence G. Lasby, Nancy Beck Young, and especially Mark E. Young. My brothers, Richard Gould and Robert Gould, found family papers after my parents died that add to the book, and they shared as well their memories of life in the 1950s. Alison Brooks and Renee Zuckerbrot supported the effort at key points in bringing the project to publication. James L. Baughman and Don Carleton provided thoughtful criticism on the final draft of the manuscript. During the eight years that it took to bring this project to completion, Karen Gould encouraged me and patiently listened to me relive my early years.

Lewis L. Gould
Austin, Texas

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Watching Television Come of Age

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