

Richard (Dick) Fletcher

Dick Fletcher was a Chief Meteorologist for WTSP in St. Petersburg, Florida, for 28 years. He was a holder of the American Meteorological Society Seal of Approval, having received it in 1978.



During his lengthy broadcasting career, Mr. Fletcher flew aboard reconnaissance aircraft missions into three hurricanes and made 15 different penetrations into the eyes of those storms. In 1987, he was honored by the American Meteorological Society with an award for Outstanding Service by a Broadcast Meteorologist. He was presented the Distinguished Service Award by the National Hurricane Conference in 2003 for his leadership efforts in hurricane preparedness. He also received the Media Award from the Florida Governor's Hurricane Conference in 1993.

During the 2004 hurricane season, Hurricane Charley appeared to be on its way to Tampa Bay. WTSP's studios on Gandy Boulevard, merely two miles west of the Gandy Bridge, were part of the evacuation zone, and the entire staff was forced to leave. The station evacuated to the Clearwater studios of Pinellas 18 (now PCC-TV), a government access (GATV) cable TV channel owned by Pinellas County. This left Mr. Fletcher without his weather equipment, and he was the last to know about the sudden eastward shift of the storm as a result. He was forced to broadcast out of Pinellas 18's ill-equipped studios using a Windows PC with a basic radar image as his makeshift weather station.

On February 18, 2008, he suffered a second massive stroke while at home. He subsequently died at St. Anthony's Hospital in St. Petersburg early on the morning of February 26, 2008.

He lived in St. Petersburg with his wife, Cindy, and had three adult children.