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## A Phasing Out of Fordvision

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# TELEVISION

*Dwight Newton*

## A phasing out of Fordvision

For the greater part of 20 years, the awesomely rich Ford Foundation siphoned so much money (\$250 million) into public television that I often referred to public television as Fordvision. And now they are cutting the umbilical cord.



**TOM FITZSIMMONS**  
Taxes and Exxon

Ford's long range plan was to invest a healthy hunk of seed money and then cut out. It is cutting-out time.

Existing aid contracts expire August 31. A \$40 million Ford residue will be distributed over the next five years through a formula yet to be determined. The money probably will go to national programming production.

What does all this mean to KQED, Channel 9? "Newsroom" is a Ford-funded program. Between now and Aug. 31, KQED must privately raise and allot \$200,000 to keep "Newsroom" in its present lean condition, or \$750,000 to restore "News-

room" to the pristine grandeur it enjoyed when Ford first began funding the show.

Ford has been paying \$50,000 a year toward KQED's membership promotion. KQED now has nearly 75,000 paying members, on a per capita basis more than any station in the country, and growing. The station must find another source for membership promotion money.

When general manager William E. Osterhaus took over last September, the station had a \$550,000 deficit. He has lowered it to \$100,000 through increased memberships and hard-nosed economizing. "Newsroom," for example, has reverted to black and white film, dropped four authorized reporters, clapped a freeze on new hiring and cut down on travel, overtime and other expenses.

Ford Foundation once was a bulwark for national public television programming. New funding sources are emerging. Tonight's rousingly funny "June Moon" comedy featuring young Tom Fitzsimmons is jointly bankrolled by Exxon, the oil company, and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), a tax-supported funding agency.

President Nixon this year signed a measure raising CPB funding to \$47.5 million which will be spread around for (a) program development, (b) interconnection network facilities, (c) national programs and (d) some 220 community stations. The minimum station grant is \$50,000, the maximum \$160,000. KQED will qualify for the maximum.

KQED is negotiating to produce two new national series. It is developing business memberships. The tennis telecasts brought in new individual memberships. On a forthcoming Saturday Pledge Night, the station will run all five hours of Emile Zola's racy "Nana" mini-series. It's not a porno movie, but it's certainly not prim. It's what the trade calls "box office."

When the umbilical cord is cut, you gotta hack it on your own.