

MARK RUSSELL

Born in the 'Thirties in Buffalo, New York' Mark Russell served in the Marines in the 'Fifties and had a couple of weeks' college before starting out as a piano player in the Carroll Arms Hotel Bar on Capitol Hill. He made up songs about his customers, many of whom happened to be politicians, and quickly outgrew the saloon. He was resident comedian at Washington's Shoreham Hotel from 1959 to 1979. His ability to find humor in the news is his secret and biographers point to Watergate as his Big Break. During that painful period in history, the very funny people in the headlines would catch Mark Russell if only to laugh at themselves...

His column, syndicated by the *Los Angeles Times*, appears in over one hundred papers. For many years, his radio column on NBC and his co-host chores on television's *Real People* conflicted with his first love, *The Mark Russell Comedy Specials* now in its seventeenth season on PBS. It's the live audience he loves.

When not catching planes, Mark lives quietly in Washington, D.C. with his wife Alison and his piano which, when nobody is watching, he plays sitting down.