

# For DAVID ONO LEADING With LOVE Is PART of the JOB

QUINN AWARD FOR LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT GOES TO ABC7  
CO-ANCHOR KNOWN FOR 'TELLING UNTOLD STORIES'

BY BIANCA  
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For as long as he could remember, David Ono had a sensitivity for people who struggle. So it is no wonder that he made a career out of amplifying the stories of those who were oppressed or needed a voice. Yet despite the rainbow of emotions he leads with, such as love and empathy, the ABC7 co-anchor's favorite thing about journalism is that it is black and white.

"I like that journalism is logical, simple questions, fair, get both sides," he said.

Ono has been part of the local news landscape for 27 years. Tonight, at the 65th annual Southern California Journalism Awards, the Los Angeles Press Club is honoring him with the Joseph M. Quinn Award for Lifetime Achievement.

Ono's path included overcoming a difficult childhood. He was born in Japan to a Japanese mother and Caucasian father. The family moved to the United States when he was 1, but shortly after arriving his mother passed away.

Ono believes that contributed to him being acutely aware of his feelings as he was growing up. His turn toward journalism came in college, when he stumbled upon an internship at a Dallas TV station.

"First time I walked into a newsroom I loved the energy," he said. "From that day I thought, 'This is fascinating and exciting,' and that's when it hit me that was something I wanted to be part of."



His big break came when he was hired by ABC7 Los Angeles in 1996. Now, he is the co-anchor of ABC7 Eyewitness News at 4 p.m. and 6 p.m., the top-rated newscasts in Los Angeles.

"KABC is proud of David's many accomplishments," said Cheryl Fair, president and general manager of KABC. "In addition to his anchor duties, David has become one of the preeminent reporters in Los Angeles, always using his work to shine a light on important issues. There is no doubt that his reporting makes a positive difference in our world."

Ono has been at the forefront of myriad big stories, whether in Los Angeles or around the world. He has covered Hurricane Katrina, Haiti's earthquake and Japan's tsunami. He traveled across Europe and Asia chronicling the brave acts of Nisei soldiers from World War II.



Ono and Jeff MacIntyre won three Emmy Awards among other awards for their documentary, *Witness - The Legacy of Heart Mountain*; a former resident speaks in a reconstructed barrack at the camp.

Far left: One of three interviews with President Barack Obama.

Left: Interviews Jane Goodall.

Opposite page: Ono and former co-anchor Michelle Tuvee with crew on the set.

He has reported on two Royal Weddings, tracked drug runners through Central America, and was in Boston after the marathon bombing. He covered terrorism from Paris in 2015 as the city was crippled with fear.

The work has led to unique opportunities. That includes being invited to the White House three times by President Barack Obama: twice for exclusive one-on-one interviews, and once to

make a speech about inclusion in America.

Ono is humble when reflecting on his nearly three decades working in the country's number-two media market.

"I am really thankful I landed at a great station and got to do things in a high-profile way early on. I really appreciate it," he said.

The work has presented other opportunities. He spearheaded a show at the Segerstrom Center

**JOSEPH M. QUINN AWARD**  
DAVID ONO



Above: Ono with Laura and daughter, Kaia, in Little Tokyo for the Nisei Week Festival Street Ondo.

Above, right: Ono and Jeff MacIntyre made award-winning *The Power of a Picture: The Napalm Girl* with Nick Ut and the girl in the photo, Kim Phuc.

Right, far right: Ono is very involved with the Japanese American community; in front of Little Tokyo confectionary shop, Fugetsu-Do, established in 1903, and emceeding the annual Nisei Week Festival Coronation with actress Tamlyn Tomita.



for the Arts in Costa Mesa that told stories of Japanese-American history.

While he knows that the show informed audience members, Ono recognizes that he is also learning, including history of a background he didn't know much about growing up, especially without his mom. In fact, he took his mother's maiden name, Ono, in the early '90s, as he worked on reconnecting with his roots.

Today Ono serves as a strong advocate for the Japanese-American community. He is on the Board of Directors of Go For Broke and the Japanese American National Museum, organizations that focus on preserving this chapter in history. He is also a member of the U.S.-Japan Council, which works to deepen the relationship between the two countries.

Then there are the community events, which help Ono understand what is happening in the city and the world. He estimates that during his time as a journalist in Los Angeles, he has emceed more than a thousand local events.

That connection helps set him apart, said Pam Chen, the vice president and news director of KABC.

"David's passion for telling untold stories and highlighting unsung heroes has elevated our industry and changed our community for the better. He's a dedicated anchor, reporter and gifted storyteller," she said.

Ono has been widely recognized by the industry. Two documentaries he produced made their

way to the Smithsonian Institution. He has won 31 Emmys, nine Edward R. Murrow awards, two RTDNA National Unity Awards, and six AAJA National Journalism Awards. Additionally, he was honored with the Distinguished Journalist Award by the Society of Professional Journalists, and has been named the L.A. Press Club Journalist of the Year.

He is appreciative as he looks back, but Ono also admits to being troubled by what he sees as a difficult road ahead for the media in a world that is rapidly changing. These challenges remind him of the importance of his work.

"It's about who you trust and how do you deliver information in a way people will believe," he said. "The whole institution is challenged. What needs to be done is trust in the institutions that delivers journalism."

As Ono moves forward, he also continues to give back. He hopes the industry can evolve to a point where journalists are paid fairly, and that young people in the field can lean into a new wave that allows innovation and more creativity.

He also hopes to never stop leading each and every story with love. But given who he is, that probably is not something to worry about.

"I do feel like an emotional person," Ono said. "I don't show it but I feel it. I think that's part of a secret weapon." 🍵



**CONGRATULATIONS  
DAVID ONO  
FOR RECEIVING  
THE JOSEPH M. QUINN  
AWARD FOR LIFETIME  
ACHIEVEMENT**

**IS PROUD TO SUPPORT THE  
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