



THE QUINN AWARD

for journalistic excellence
and distinction

Dave Lopez Likes Telling It Like It Is

BY SANDY COHEN

WEARING A SUIT and tie, CBS2 News reporter Dave Lopez chased a live turkey around its pen until he caught the unwieldy bird. It was one of the veteran newsman's more unusual features.

"I'm not big on animals," he says, not mincing words.

Lopez, 58, tells it like it is. His straight-ahead style has made him a stalwart presence in Southern California television news for 34 years.

His selection as this year's honoree of the Joseph M. Quinn Award for Journalistic Excellence and Distinction is for a career spent covering some of Los Angeles' biggest stories, from the O.J. Simpson trial and Rodney King riots to floods, fires and Lakers championships. He already has been recognized with eight Emmy Awards, seven Golden Mike awards and three Associated Press awards.

"Lopez has made covering Southern California a lifelong commitment," says Los Angeles Press Club President Anthea Raymond. "From his days as a student journalist to the present, he's told stories about the

everyday and the exceptional in our region with enthusiasm and curiosity.

"He's on the street, he's on the road, and his vision of Southern California has shaped ours."

Lopez knew in the fifth grade that he wanted to be a journalist. By the time he was a sophomore at

South Gate High School, the native Angeleno had started a class newspaper and was freelancing sports stories for the South Gate Press.

Before long, he was covering high school football for the Huntington Park Signal, earning 25 cents an inch for his copy.

While studying journalism at California State University, Los Angeles, Lopez took classes with the Columbia Career School of Broadcasting.

"We got to work in a radio station for a week," Lopez says. "That really put the bug in me. It made me determined to break into radio or TV."

He successfully traded inches for seconds with his transition to television in 1972. He joined CBS2 in 1977 as a general assignment reporter.

Since then, he's covered cases from the Hillside Strangler to the Freeway Killer. He



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interviewed Bill Clinton and the Pope. He reported from Somalia and Mexico City. He met Muhammad Ali and "chit-chatted" with Ronald Reagan.

"You name it, I've covered it," he says. "The only thing I haven't done is a weather report."

Lopez says he can hardly imagine doing any other job.

"This isn't work, this is fun," he says. "It's the greatest way to make a living."

The secret of his success and endurance?

"I've always gone about this job as though (each assignment) was going to be last story I'd ever do," Lopez says.

The eldest of eight children, Lopez says he learned from his businessman father how to treat people right and make them comfortable. Combined with his natural curiosity, reporting was a perfect profession.

"I've never been anchor-happy," he says. "I found a niche. I know what I'm good at and I like it."

Lopez has been married to his wife, Elaine, since 1970. They have two children, Tami, 31, and Matt, 29, and a granddaughter, Cassie.

In addition to his professional accolades, Lopez is a favorite of Southern California news-watchers. The Orange County Register called Lopez "the 'Star' TV reporter in Orange County" and readers of the media news site Ron Fineman's On the Record voted him the best local TV field reporter.

As a Quinn winner, Lopez joins other distinguished journalists including Ted Koppel, Dan Rather, Patt Morrison and Edward R. Murrow.

The Quinn Award was established in 1979 in the name of Joseph M. Quinn, a former Press Club president and World War II veteran who built City News Service and founded the club's awards program in 1957.

Sandy Cohen is an entertainment writer for The Associated Press.

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