

Christine Devine Builds Audiences, and Also *Families*

THE FOX 11 NEWS ANCHOR, AND RECIPIENT OF THE LA PRESS CLUB'S PRESIDENT'S AWARD, USES HER POSITION TO ADVOCATE FOR FOSTER CHILDREN AND ADOPTION

BY JON REGARDIE

A glance at a few numbers on Christine Devine's official bio makes clear her influence on the city she covers: Devine has been the weekday anchor at *FOX 11 News* for 30 years. She helms three separate newscasts. She has received 16 Emmys and was named by *Los Angeles* magazine as one of "50 Women Changing LA." Her accolades include receiving the Lifetime Achievement Golden Mike from the Radio and Television News Association.

But for all the information and comfort that she delivers to viewers every day at 5, 6 and 10 p.m., what stands out

most is another number and a different source of comfort. Through her recurring segment "Wednesday's Child," Devine has helped facilitate the adoption of more than 500 children in foster care.

Many anchors do stellar work, both at the desk and in the community, but Devine has gone a step further. Year after year, decade after decade, she has literally helped form families.

"What she has done with 'Wednesday's Child,' to me, may be the most impressive thing any local news person has done in 30 years," said Elex Michaelson, one of her co-anchors.

"She is literally changing the lives of the most vulnerable people in Southern California: foster youth. And the hundreds of families that have been impacted by that will have a domino effect for the rest of our society in so many different ways."

In honor of her work, the Los Angeles Press Club tonight is presenting Devine with the President's Award for Impact on Media.

Devine grew up in a small town in Arizona, the child of parents who both spent time in the Peace Corps. Her mother worked as a school teacher. Her father became a principal. They put a premium on being an informed citizen.

"They had a great awareness of world issues, and always stressed knowing what's happening in your community, in your city, your country, your planet," Devine says by phone on a weekday afternoon, an hour before getting behind the anchor's desk. "They had the news on every night."

By the time she was in high school, Devine says, she knew she wanted to work in news. She graduated from Arizona State University and got a job at a



Devine's recurring news segment, "Wednesday's Child," is honored by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors.



2015 marked Devine's 25th year at Fox 11.



From left: With station News Director Jose Rios; an early headshot in Devine's career; reporting on Rodney King.

CBS affiliate in San Angelo, Texas. She moved to an *NBC* outlet in Toussaint, Ariz., and then in 1990 was tapped by *KTTV* (the call letters for *FOX 11*). She moved to Los Angeles and became the weekday anchor in 1992.

There was a lot to digest early on, Devine admits, what with fires, earthquakes and civil unrest in massive Los Angeles, not to mention greater national and world stories. She credits longtime station News Director Jose Rios for helping her grow and learn.

Devine manages to be simultaneously strong, confident, warm and welcoming as she informs Angelenos what is transpiring in their city and

around the globe. She carries an institutional knowledge partly developed by immersing herself in the communities she covers—she describes emceeding events in neighborhoods from Whittier to Irvine as part of what keeps her connected.

She believes a key to being successful behind the desk is having the energy of younger reporters and anchors. That complements the experience she brings to each broadcast.

"For example, during the most recent civil unrest, to have that perspective and history from 1992 is valuable, and I think it plays into the coverage and gives you a different perspective

than someone who moved here a year ago from out of state," Devine says. "In this era we interviewed Rodney King's daughter. Back in the '90s I had exclusive interviews with Rodney King."

That consistency and perspective is also what has made "Wednesday's Child" a stalwart of local news. During the segments, now in their 27th year, Devine features a child or teen in foster care hoping to find a permanent home, detailing their likes and passions, showcasing their personality and speaking with social workers who describe what kind of family would be the best fit. It's no mere interview—Devine works with sponsors to create



Above, a Wednesday's Child meets the late Kobe Bryant.
Below left: Devine and Reporter-Anchor Bob DeCastro warm up at Walk for Warriors.



Devine with adoptive family enjoys a ride at Knott's Berry Farm.



Above: a childhood photo; with 10th co-anchor Elex Michaelson.

a VIP experience for the featured kid. Over the years several basketball-loving youths got to attend a Lakers' practice and meet the late Kobe Bryant.

Devine recounts how "Wednesday's Child" began as an assignment from Rios, with a bit of serendipity he was unaware of when working with his young journalist.

Devine knew about adoption and growing families firsthand. When she was 10, her parents adopted an 8-year-old boy. They would go on to foster children from Vietnam.

"The concept of foster and adopting and strangers in the home was nothing new to me," she says.

Discussing "Wednesday's Child" with Devine provides a window to her gracious approach. Multiple times I compliment her for using her platform to support families and help children. She deflects every bit of praise, sharing credit with others, from social workers to people who never appear on screen. This happens again when she discusses

receiving the President's Award.

"It really is humbling, but it's a reminder that there is a full team behind all of that," she says. "There are the editors that edit the beautiful 'Wednesday's Child' pieces with such love. The photographers who get the beautiful visual of a child smiling. The whole team makes it all happen."

Michaelson, who in 2019 became Devine's co-anchor—her 10th—says this is precisely who she is.

"What I've probably learned the most from Christine, watching her on a daily basis, is what it means to truly be a newsroom leader," Michaelson says. "Other anchors I have seen over the years are very focused on lifting themselves up. Whereas Christine is more focused on lifting the crew up."

None of what Devine does happens by accident. She details a schedule that starts with preparing for a 9:30 a.m. newsroom Zoom meeting. Whereas some anchors mostly sit behind the desk, she, like her FOX 11 co-anchors,

is regularly in the field doing stories. There are multiple Zooms before the 5 p.m. newscast, and then another one in advance of the 10 p.m. broadcast.

It's busy, but Devine professes to be "grateful" for the opportunity to rush into the studio when news breaks. Her time behind the anchor's desk has made someone viewers trust and co-workers learn from. Naturally, she again brushes off the accolades, almost adopting the idea that the best ability is availability.

"I think that one thing we can do as veterans is lead by example, and a way to do that is to be a good friend to the newsroom," she says. "Part of it is creating a pleasant atmosphere where people want to be around you and where people want to show up each and every day to give their best."

"We all know that we won't be here forever sitting at the anchor desk," Devine adds, "so I think to show up each and every day yourself is the example that people need to see." 🙌

We couldn't be more proud to call you a Sun Devil, Christine

Arizona State University and the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication congratulate Christine Devine '87 on her well-deserved **Presidential Award for Impact on Media from the Los Angeles Press Club.**

A Cronkite Alumni Hall of Fame inductee, ASU Trustee, member of ASU's Los Angeles Leadership Council and past member of the National Alumni Council, Christine has been making an impact for more than 30 years as the face, heart and soul of the stories she tells, the lives she empowers and the communities she serves every day.



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