

Giselle Fernandez Is Still Making a **DIFFERENCE**

VETERAN JOURNALIST AND SPECTRUM NEWS ANCHOR
RECEIVES THE PRESIDENT'S AWARD FOR IMPACT ON MEDIA

BY ALEX BEN BLOCK



After an Emmy-winning career as a correspondent for CBS News, anchoring the Sunday NBC Nightly News, and covering stories from the U.S. invasion of Panama to the Persian Gulf War to the bombing of the World Trade Center to interviewing Fidel Castro and Presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton, Giselle Fernandez had been away from journalism for 15 years. Then, in 2018, the phone rang in her Los Angeles office.

"I finally got a call from one person, one fabulous woman, who remembered me and said, 'Would you like to come back to television?'" recalls Fernandez, who was running a production, management and media strategy business at the time. "I thought, let me think who I have on the roster of my company. I have some wonderful talent. And she goes, 'No, no, you!'"

"I was like, you know I'm in my 50s," Fernandez says with a laugh. "She goes, 'Will you please come see me?'"

The call was from Cater Lee, Spectrum's vice president of News and Content. She said that Spectrum was creating a new news network, and wanted Fernandez to host their morning show, be co-executive producer and host a primetime interview show.

When they met, Lee shared a vision for news that would be "hyper local, deeply embedded in the community," remembers Fernandez.



Fernandez knew the news business could be fickle. The opportunity was exciting but came with concerns.

"I had thought, 'Okay, my time was done,'" she admits, "but I used to secretly say, 'You know, I'm going to do it anyway.' And doing it gave me a template to just exercise that muscle and do what I feel born to do, which I love to do: to tell people stories."

Nearly five years later, Fernandez is telling her stories on Spectrum News 1, each day informing Angelenos on "Your Morning," and also hosting the weekly series "L.A. Stories With Giselle Fernandez." Then there is her podcast, "L.A. Stories Unfiltered," which highlights people who shape lives and create an impact throughout the community.

This work has earned Fernandez the Los Angeles Press Club's President's Award for Impact on Media. She is being honored tonight at the 65th annual Southern California

Fernandez joined Hal Fishman at KTLA in 1985; while at NBC she had the opportunity to speak with Fidel Castro.



Above: in January Seth Lemon joined Fernandez as news anchor on "Your Morning" on Spectrum 1; she also hosts the weekly series, "L.A. Stories With Giselle Fernandez."

Far left: Her father, Jose Fernandez, was a flamenco dancer.

Left: Interviewing the Dalai Lama.

Journalism Awards. The prize will be presented by Sharon Stone.

"Giselle is telling stories that no one else in Los Angeles is telling," said Los Angeles Press Club President Lisa Richwine. "She is shedding light on all corners of the city and approaches her stories with curiosity and empathy."

The audience is sizable. Spectrum recently reported that it averages more than 2.4 million viewers daily, plus millions more on Spectrum systems nationwide and the Spectrum Plus service.

Fernandez, who in the past received two Los Angeles Press Club Journalist of the Year honors, is grateful for the opportunity that arose from Lee's call.

"The stories I get to tell, the people that I get to be with, it's the greatest job in the world," says Fernandez. "Even with the crazy dynamics of divisive politics, bigotry and antisemitism on the rise, the challenges to democracy and our First Amendment rights—you know, fake news and

enemy of the people—when you shut out the noise and stick to the facts and stories, and really build trust in your accuracy and empathy and trying to see all sides, what a gift that I'm able to do this in a local market, which I no longer see as secondary to a network."

Fernandez has come a long way from her birth in Mexico and what she describes as a "very unique, bicultural, bilingual, artistic, upbringing." Her mother came from New York and attended the Dalton prep school and Sarah Lawrence. Fernandez says she was enamored with Mexican music, as well as mariachi music and flamenco dancing.

Her mother would visit an aunt who lived in Mexico. While there one time she took a flamenco dance class and soon fell in love with the teacher, a 61-year-old maverick flamenco dancer. They married.

"That was my father, Jose Fernandez," says Fernandez.

Her mother became a flamenco dancer, touring with her husband. They returned to the United States when Fer-

PRESIDENT’S AWARD GISELLE FERNANDEZ



Fernandez has been on her share of magazine covers, especially during the 1990s before she left journalism to pursue other interests.



The Spectrum News 1 team recently wished her a happy birthday; in 2022, Fernandez won first place for TV Anchor/Host at the Southern California Journalism Awards celebration.

andez was 3. Her father taught dancing and her mother earned a PhD in Mexican folklore. Then they divorced.

Her mother continued to dance and sing, then met the man who would become Fernandez’s stepdad. He was from Germany, and after they married, Fernandez’s mother taught him to sing mariachi music. They became a duo who performed on both sides of the border.

Fernandez never forgot what she had seen.

“I’ve always been a social justice advocate for Latinos and for women particularly, and the underserved,” she says. “I come from humble beginnings and I’ve been able to have this incredible adventure in my life. And I think everybody should have that opportunity.”

Fernandez has had an incomparable career, including being an anchor and correspondent for NBC, CBS, the History Channel and History Channel International. She has been an active philanthropist and has won numerous journalism awards, including seven Emmys.

Yet, she said the Press Club Award for her impact on media is special, since she can share it with her 17-year-old daughter.

“It’s really meaningful to me that my daughter gets a chance to see her mommy shine and have a purpose,” she explains. “My daughter was adopted from Guatemala, a country that’s deeply challenged and troubled, but with great Mayan history and so much to celebrate in her culture.”

Fernandez says her daughter will be her date tonight, and the honor will resonate.

“When you get awards, it’s nice, especially when you’re rising in your career,” she says. “But this one matters to me because I feel proud my kid can see that I make an impact in my work. And it’s nice for me at this stage in my life that my work is being acknowledged and that I still am relevant and can still tell a story that makes a difference—as corny as that may sound.” 🎉

SPECTRUM NEWS 1

CONGRATULATES
GISELLE FERNÁNDEZ
ON RECEIVING
THE 2023 PRESIDENT’S AWARD
FOR IMPACT ON MEDIA

AND ALL OF THE LA PRESS CLUB FINALISTS
FROM SPECTRUM NEWS AND SPECTRUM SPORTSNET



AVAILABLE ON ALL OF
YOUR FAVORITE DEVICES