



## Alumni Profile

**As a young girl,** Claudine Ewing was fascinated by visits to the small Buffalo radio station where her mother worked as traffic manager. All the knobs on the sound board, the personalities at the microphone, and the news reports kept her in wide-eyed wonder.

The youthful awe never left her as she excelled in communication at her high school, Buffalo Academy for the Visual and Performing Arts, and then as a broadcast journalism major at Buffalo State College.

“I’ve always enjoyed learning what was happening in the world. News was always important to me,” Ewing said recently, during an interview at WGRZ-TV, Buffalo’s NBC affiliate, where she has been a reporter for seven years.

Although she was accepted at Syracuse, Marquette, and Fredonia, she chose Buffalo State because of its “real world” broadcast program and the hometown internship opportunities that beckoned.

“The programs at Buffalo State got you geared for what you wanted to do,” she said. “Tom McCray was one professor who worked in the business and brought real-life experience. He knew people in radio. Mel Netzhammer was knowledgeable and clear in broadcast law. He broke it down and made you understand it. Because the field is so complex at times, you need to know about ethics. I still refer to the textbook and his teaching.”

Ewing, who graduated in 1992, credits the Buffalo Forum television show produced on campus for providing invaluable production experience. “It really helped you to see what it took to get something on the air, from preparing the teleprompter to reading the scripts.”

The week before graduation, Ewing received a call from WBEN, the Buffalo CBS radio affiliate, where she was hired as a ground traffic controller, sending up information about accidents and other road tie-ups to the reporter in the helicopter. After a few weeks, she graduated to on-air reporting of the news overnight and on weekends. Soon, she was anchoring full-time overnight on weekdays and reporting on news events during the day. Ewing stayed for six years. “I loved it,” she said. “I loved the ‘theater of the mind’ aspect of radio.”

Some opportunities reporting for WIVB, the CBS-TV affiliate, which was in the same building at the time, gave Ewing the exposure to land a job at WGRZ-TV in September 1998. Since then, she has been part of a department that has taken a big step up in the ratings to become a contender for Buffalo’s TV news choice. She has helped the station achieve its best viewership in years with a campaign of more aggressive and comprehensive local news coverage.

The modest, soft-spoken reporter has earned several Associated Press awards for special news series and breaking news, including a 2002 Special Mention honor from the AP for a story on dangerous school bus rides. “We received a call from a person who said that a school bus driver was constantly running stop signs,” she recalled. “We staked it out and took the evidence to the school bus company. The driver was fired. I’m proud of being able to tell a story like that and help make a difference.”

Although she has had offers to go to a Top 10 market, Ewing is content with the quality of news reporting in her hometown. Earning the college’s Young Alumnus Achievement Award last year acknowledged the success she has attained to date—a direct nod from the learning source that she credits with launching her career. ●



CHANNEL 2 ANCHOR

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PHOTOGRAPH BY KC KRATT