

STEPHANIE SHOOP



When she was just 18 and a freshman in college, Stephanie Shoop wrote a paper about her life and future. In it, she quoted Henry David Thoreau, saying she wanted to, "Be not simply good, be good for something."

Graduating from Freedom High School in 1988 and Indiana University of Pennsylvania in 1992 with a degree in journalism set Stephanie on a path to do just that. After graduation, she started her career at WTAE-TV in Pittsburgh as an associate producer and producer. She then moved into radio sales at KQV Radio in Pittsburgh.

In the late 1990s, Stephanie and her family moved to North Carolina. There she was hired at WITN-TV, the NBC affiliate in Greenville. Stephanie was a dedicated, respected, and passionate news director for WITN for 16 years and was employed at the station for a total of 19 years. She started

working at WITN as a producer in 1998 and was promoted to executive producer in 2000, then news director in the fall 2001. As news director, she was tasked immediately with guiding the station's coverage of 9/11.

A major event in the history of our country, the terrorist attacks affected eastern Carolina in a personal way with two local Marine Corps bases and an Air Force base. The military was an important part of the coverage Stephanie managed, as was the weather. She organized the station's coverage of many hurricanes and tropical storms during her career, most recently Hurricane Matthew in the fall of 2016. During the immediate threat, Stephanie never left the station and slept in her office. She didn't return home for a week, staying either at the station or a nearby hotel as many residents continued to deal with critical conditions.

In such events, the viewing public relied on accurate and timely information without hype, and Stephanie took that responsibility seriously, as she knew the station's coverage could mean the difference between safety and danger and even life and death for people.

Another major part of Stephanie's career was hiring employees and developing them into responsible, caring, and thoughtful journalists. Some of the employees she first hired made a career at WITN and are still working at the station. Others gained valuable experience that propelled their careers as they moved on to places like Charlotte, Atlanta, Nashville, Pittsburgh, and many other locations across the country.

Stephanie was not only respected by her employees, but also by other departments in the station. That was evident as WITN embarked on building a brand new station. Stephanie had a guiding hand in those efforts, particularly pertaining to the news department.

Public service also was important to Stephanie. The biggest service project for the station is the Children's Miracle Network Telethon. Stephanie understood the importance of the work of CMN and made sure that WITN employees did as well so they could inspire viewers to raise money for the children's hospital. Stephanie didn't just make sure the station and employees were

prepared for the telethon; she worked it every year herself. Since the telethon began in the late 1980s, it has raised more than \$30 million, helping fund construction of a brand new state-of-the-art children's hospital in Greenville that opened in 2013.

WITN newscasts regularly ranked number one during Stephanie's tenure. News department employees also were routinely recognized by the Associated Press and Radio Television Digital News Association of the Carolinas with awards for their work. Stephanie was particularly proud when the Associated Press awarded WITN "Outstanding News Operation" in the state in 2014 for medium markets. The NC Association of Broadcasters also recognized WITN as having the best newscast in the state for all markets in 2017.

Stephanie continued her learning with the Kneeland Project for Responsible Journalism. She became a Kneeland Fellow in 2008 and had a scholarship named after her in 2017, providing opportunities for other news directors across the country to learn and to carry on her legacy.