



Marv & Claudia: where are they now?

WDAY-TV's first male-female anchor team, circa the 1970s, was composed of Marv Bossart and Claudia Danovic. If you have a few clicks on your own personal odometer, you no doubt remember them. I worked in the advertising department at the station when this pioneering duo came into Red River Valley homes each night. But where are they now?

Well, on the third Tuesday of last month, both Claudia and Marv attended our WDAY Alumni Lunch at the Fargo Holiday Inn, and the assembled group, including me, had lots of fun reminiscing about an era long since past. In my opinion, no department in the station seemed to have more fun than the news department. Maybe it was because large doses of humor were needed—*critical*, actually—in coping with the relentless deadline pressures of the news-reporting business. Day after day, television required “film at 6:00.” Today, of course, the 24/7 news cycle created by cable TV and the Internet has greatly increased the pressure to find the story and “get it on.” Despite the rigors of their careers, I'm pleased to report that, today, both Marv and Claudia still retain their sense of humor; if anything, it's increased.

After lunch, when I took the above photograph, I asked Claudia how long she worked at WDAY; she said about 16 years. She started in 1971 and went on the air with Marv in 1976. Her co-anchor then jumped in and said, “By that time, I had already interviewed Abraham Lincoln.”

Marv retired about 10 years ago from a 48-year career with WDAY, 42 years of which were spent on the air. In the late 1950s, he subbed for WDAY's first TV news anchor, Glen Hanson, who left in 1963 for a similar position in San Francisco. At that time, Marv became the familiar presence Channel 6 audiences grew to depend on for quality journalism, with occasional touches of Marv's dry sense of humor. His imitations of the tight-wad comedian Jack Benny still prompt roars of laughter, and Marv always leaves one feeling Benny's frugal habits were not unlike those of the fellow telling the story.

After Claudia retired from her TV news job, she joined me in the Communications Department at Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota. We worked together for 10 years. Claudia always had a great news sense, and she didn't dawdle. Her TV news training taught her to write the story right now and get it out. This, of course, was a bit unusual in the more relaxed corporate environment, but it enabled our department to do some pioneering work in daily employee and public communications. She and I also handled various challenging moments in “crisis communications,” as the company seemed to get itself into one PR jam or another quite frequently.

As many of you know, Marv is now battling Parkinson's disease. Because we drive together to our monthly alumni luncheon, I see his downs and ups. And lately, I'm happy to report, there have been more ups than downs, thanks to the rigorous fight he is waging, aided by what he calls his “great support team.” He's referring, of course, to his wife of over 50 years, Betty, and his “four wonderful daughters.” He also has high praise for the disease-management and therapy providers at MeritCare/Sanford. Last month, on our way to the luncheon, Marv brought along a device to help him walk, but when we arrived at the Holiday Inn, he said, “Leave it in the car.” And away we went. That was heartening to see.

Marv loves to visit with the people who watched him for so many years on television. Walking with him through the restaurant for our monthly gatherings, I can't tell you how many people stop to say “hi” and usually add, “We miss you, Marv!”



Claudia and her husband Steve live in the Minnesota lakes country during the summers and spend winters in Arizona. Recently, while in the Southwest, she served as a member of a seven-person team that travelled to Ecuador to help care for pre-school children in a very poor community outside Quito, the capital city.

Marv and Claudia—it was great to see them, together again!