

Breaking the “Glass Ceiling” in Broadcast Journalism

Clarence W Thomas*

School of Mass Communications, Virginia Commonwealth University, USA

Introduction

In terms of broadcast journalism, the Commonwealth of Virginia is quite noteworthy. Virginia produced the first African American and the first woman to rise to the highest levels of network broadcast journalism in the United States. Although Virginia is the birthplace of many journalists, few broadcasters hold the distinction of standing out as a great broadcast journalist on the national level. Two of these journalists are unique in Virginia and U.S. history. Each of them served as a trailblazer and helped to fracture the glass ceiling. They are Maxie “Max” Robinson and Katherine “Katie” Couric.

Maxie “Max” Robinson

A native of Richmond, Virginia, Max Robinson was the first African American broadcast network news anchor. He co-anchored ABC World News Tonight with Frank Reynolds and Peter Jennings. After college at Virginia Union University, and several other institutions, Robinson began a broadcasting career that ranged from 1959 to mid 1980s. He worked at broadcast stations in Petersburg, Richmond, and Portsmouth.

Eventually his career led him to Washington, D.C. where he was noticed by the ABC network in 1978 and selected as a national network co-anchor. During his career he received numerous awards, including

regional Emmys, for coverage of the civil right movement. Included in his many accomplishments is credit for co-founding the National Association of Black Journalists. Robinson died in 1988.

Katherine “Katie” Couric

A native of Arlington Virginia, Katie Couric was the first woman to serve as the anchor and managing editor of CBS Evening News. Couric began her journalism career as a student journalist at The Cavalier Daily while attending the University of Virginia. After college, she worked in Washington, D. C. for ABC, CNN, and NBC. By the early 1990's Couric began working for the NBC Today show where she eventually worked her way up to co-anchor with Bryant Gumbel and later Matt Lauer. She remained with Today until 2006 when she was selected by CBS to anchor their evening newscast. She is well known for interviewing political figures and celebrities. She is also well known for medical coverage—particularly colon cancer issues. Her late husband Jay Monahan died of the colon cancer. Couric has received many awards, including the Peabody Award and membership in the Broadcasting and Cable Hall of Fame. Today, Couric has moved on to host her own televised talk show.

Again, in terms of broadcast journalism, the Commonwealth of Virginia is quite noteworthy. Congratulation Virginia!!

*Corresponding author: Clarence W. Thomas, Associate Professor, School of Mass Communications, Virginia Commonwealth University, USA, Tel: 804-827-3772, E-mail: cwthomas@vcu.edu

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