



# Mr. 51 Wayne Freedman



**Class of 2002**

*Silver Circle Profile*  
By: Keith Sanders



At the Emmy® 2011 Gala on June 11<sup>th</sup>, KGO ABC 7 reporter **Wayne Freedman's** daughter **Lauren** presented him with his 50<sup>th</sup> Emmy® award for **Video Journalist** with tears in her eyes. "It was the sweetest moment of my career in 40 years," said Wayne. He later went on to win his 51<sup>st</sup> statuette for **News Writing**. His wife **Susan** was in the audience.

I was lucky enough to witness this beautiful episode first hand from my perch back stage, but it made me wonder how Wayne's career began, before all the Emmy® awards.

Wayne Freedman (*Silver Circle Class of 2002*) started in show business at an early age. "I was on the *Lawrence Welk Show* at 10 days old," recalled Wayne.

"Wayne's dad, **Mike Freedman**, worked the crane on live broadcasts of *The Lawrence Welk Show*, said **Craig Franklin**. "He was an intense man, and seemed very focused on his profession — on being the best. Wayne obviously inherited his father's drive, and hairline."

"My dad was a pioneer TV cameraman," said Wayne. "He helped invent the live hand held camera, and was the first man to use it. The formal name was Press Orth, for Image Orthicon. It had no viewfinder and weighed about a hundred pounds, but by the standards of the time, it was small. They called it the "Creepie Peepie" because this was the first time a guy on foot could stick a lens into such unusual places like the sideline of a football game, or the floor of a political convention."

"When I asked my dad what I should do for a living, he told me to work in news because they will never cancel it," recalled Wayne. Freedman took his father's advice and began writing and reporting stories in Junior High School. He wrote his first column in a Los Angeles area newspaper at the age of fourteen, and continued it through high school.

Wayne worked as a newsroom page assigned to the newsroom at KABC-TV in Los Angeles while earning a bachelor's degree in Political Science from UCLA. He received a Master's Degree in Journalism at the University of Missouri in 1978.

Freedman began work as a TV photographer at WLKY-TV in Louisville, and then switched to reporting across town at WAVE-TV, and moved on to KDFW-TV in Dallas. He came to the Bay Area 1981, landing a job as a news reporter at KRON NBC 4 in San Francisco, where he stayed for eight years.

## Emmy® award drought

"Surprisingly, Wayne had no Emmy® awards to his name by '84," continued Craig Franklin. "The Sunday after he got skunked again at the previous night's Emmy® ceremony, Wayne stood by our LIVE van and shook his fist at the sky and vowed to end the famine."

That very day Wayne and Craig covered a breaker with two small children held hostage by their crazed father. "We got the police rescue on camera, and Wayne's story was full of drama and pathos," said Franklin.

Even though this story was never entered, it made Wayne and Craig realize how any story presents opportunities for doing really good work. They went on to win an Emmy® award together for a series of feature stories in 1985. The drought was broken. "I didn't know at the time that I was working with one of the Greats, but it was a great time," recalled Franklin.

Wayne then took his talents national to CBS News in 1989, reporting and producing national feature stories for *CBS This Morning*.

Two years later he was back in the city at KGO ABC 7, where he covered a wide range of stories, from Russia's Second Revolution in 1992, to Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

**Michael Clark** is a news photographer who's worked at KGO for 35 years. He was working with Wayne the morning after 9/11. Their news director **Kevin Keeshan** asked them to 'judge the mood of

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America' on an AMTRAK trip across the country, ending at Ground Zero.

"We had a great trip and met incredible people all across the country," said Clark. "I remember that one day Wayne took our small camera and left it out in the middle of the track as the train was approaching to get an unconventional low-angle shot."

Michael knows that Wayne has his dad's drive and expects everyone to work as hard as he does on a story. "He can be a pain in the butt sometimes because of his level of perfection," says Clark. "On a Muni story we did, he was asking multiple questions to the bus driver and police officers. I jokingly said to one cop, 'Can I borrow your gun?' But I have to say when the story is done, people are happy because he's a damn good writer," said Clark. "I really do count him as a true friend."

### Mutual Man Crush

Wayne has worked for years with KGO TV photographer **Dean Smith**. "There are moments when it's like Wayne is another photographer, not a reporter," said Dean.

"Wayne never stops improving the story," Smith added. "He logs every bit of tape. He'll ask you what your best shot is. He'll polish the story until it shines. Every Emmy® award submission I have entered has been a Wayne Freedman story," said Dean. "I have a man crush on Wayne and he would say the same thing about me."

**Matt Keller** is the morning/midday anchor at KFSN ABC30 and a former colleague of Wayne's. In 2008 Matt reported on the dangers of Hookah smoking. "My story included a young woman in a bar," recalled Matt. "I told Wayne I had to cut my

ending because it was too long. He said two things... Never let them take your ending... and why didn't you ask her... 'What's a girl like you doing in a place like this?' Since then I haven't let anyone take away my ending... but I haven't yet had another opportunity to ask that question."

This month the second edition of Wayne's book *IT TAKES MORE THAN GOOD LOOKS TO SUCCEED AT TELEVISION NEWS REPORTING* becomes available. It's an anecdotal guidebook for reporters, originally released in 2003. It's required reading in major college journalism programs in the United States, Canada, and Europe.

"What's great about Wayne's book is that it's like riding along with him on shoots, standing next to him on live shots, sitting with him as he writes copy," said Craig Franklin. "I'm pretty sure there's nothing else out there that comes as close to putting the reader in the TV reporter's job."

The book costs \$24.95 and can be ordered at <http://awealthofwisdom.com/>.

Freedman has been working at KGO ABC 7 for the last year as a Multi Media Journalist. He's come full circle now that he's a photographer again, just like in the early days.

Wayne's wife Susan says that "being a TV news reporter does define who Wayne is as a person; he's always looking for the story." "He is equally accomplished as a husband and as a father. I love him deeply."

"I never tried to win an Emmy® award, I just tried to do good work," says Mr. 51.

Mission Accomplished.