



Dan Ashley is not only a rock star, but he's the longest-tenured main male news anchor in the history of San Francisco's KGO-TV ABC7. This month, learn more about the always-engaging newscaster, who's also making quite a name for himself as the lead singer of a Bay Area rock band as well as being one of the most friendliest people ever in Bay Area television.

Where did you grow up?

Chapel Hill, North Carolina I'm a Tar Heel, born and bred and when I die I'll be a Tar Heel dead. Go Heels!

Do you have siblings? If so, are you the oldest? Youngest?

I have three siblings-a sister and two brothers. I'm the oldest and we are all extremely close.



When did you first realize that you wanted to be in television news?

I always had an interest in current events and really started to pay attention in middle school. That intensified during my high school years on the debate team where we would have to be informed on so many issues. But I didn't really make the decision to pursue television news as a career until college.

Who has inspired you in your career? Who has inspired you as a person?

I have been inspired by so many people as journalists, **Peter Jennings** in a significant way, **David Brinkley** (a fellow North Carolinian), I loved the use of language by **Charles Kuralt** (also a North Carolinian, but who's counting!), the interviewing skills of **Mike Wallace** and **Charlie Rose** (NC, for the record!). As far as people outside my profession, I've always greatly admired **Winston Churchill** for his grit and determination and the golfer, **Greg Norman**, for his ability to win and to lose with equal grace.

Before ABC7, where did you work before?

I worked for nearly nine years at the ABC affiliate in Charleston, South Carolina prior to moving to California. Before Charleston, I worked at the ABC station in Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina.

As an anchor, every day at work is different from the one before it. Can you describe a "day in the life of Dan Ashley"?

My day can vary from one day to the next depending on current events, outside commitments and/or my shooting schedule for special reports. Often, however, I am on the job much earlier than 2 p.m. if I am working on a special projects report or, as is often the case, speaking somewhere. After the early newscasts, I have dinner in my office, then prepare for the 9 p.m. and the 11 p.m. newscasts.

You've worked at KGO-TV ABC7 for almost two decades, and you are now the longest-tenured main male news anchor in the history of the station. What's your secret?

I am quite honored to now be the longest-running main male anchor that KGO-TV has ever had. I always say that these jobs are tough to get, tougher to keep! I don't know any secrets regarding longevity as an anchor, just try to work hard, be reliable, and stay focused on doing the best you can every day.

Do you like ice cream? Okay, that's a loaded question. Of course, you do! What's your favorite flavor?

My first real job besides mowing lawns was at Swensen's Ice Cream Factory where I worked for six years in high school and college, so I come by my love of the stuff honestly. It's toss-up depending on my mood-Cookies and Cream and/or Mint Chocolate Chip. Ice cream is the one food I would have a very hard time giving up, besides chocolate!

Tell us about your home life. How do you spend your weekends?

My weekends are a time to re-charge from what are often very hectic and demanding weeks. That said, very often, I have outside commitments as well such as all sorts of charitable functions.

What charitable organizations are nearest to your heart?

I am very involved in a number of charities that mean a great deal to me. I am on the boards of the Bay Area American

Red Cross, CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate), and Friends of Camp Concord which sends under-served kids to summer camp each year through a golf tournament that I have hosted for the past sixteen years. I am also on the board of the Commonwealth Club of California. This job gives me the enormous privilege of being involved in the community in so many unique and meaningful ways. I am very grateful for the chance to do so.

Perfect meal for dinner?

Ice cream! Probably a great filet, baked potato, and a salad. Then ice cream.

You are quite the jokester. Have a guilty pleasure?

Ice cream. I love to go to a late night movie on the weekends and treat myself to popcorn and some candy.

What do you enjoy most about your work?

I am curious, so I like learning about different things and this job demands that. I also deeply appreciate the unique place in the community that the public nature of my job gives me. It's a chance to truly plug-in on a lot of levels.

Have you had any mentors, and if so, who? Who do you look up to?

The man who owned Swensen's had a big impact on me in terms of an appreciation for work ethic and entrepreneurial spirit. He's turning 90 this year and I spoke with him just a few weeks ago. I also learned an enormous amount about broadcasting from my general manager in Charleston, he retired a few years ago but I'm still in touch with him as well. I also had a Journalism professor and a Spanish professor in college who also both took great interest in me and helped me greatly.



What do you do to relax? What hobbies and/or activities are you involved with?

I try to get a lot of exercise. I'm an avid golfer. I read a fair amount. And I'm a singer-taking two lessons a week with two different teachers.

What do you like most about working at ABC7?

The people. I work with some remarkable people who are truly committed to doing good and meaningful work for our viewers. I go to work with my friends.

Where do you see yourself in the next 5 to 10 years?

I turned down anchor jobs in New York, Chicago, Dallas, and a number of other places to come here, so I hope that I'll be right here!

Who is your favorite television journalist?

I admired **Peter Jennings** enormously. Great mind, great curiosity and work ethic. Envious style.

Do you have a favorite author?

I don't read any fiction, just biographies and histories. David McCullough is fabulous in that regard.

So, what's this about being in a band? Tell us more about PUSH

I've been the lead singer in a rock band for more than three years now. It's a real kick. I play with some fabulous musicians and we perform regularly all around the Bay Area. We've played to as many as four-thousand people. It's fun and a great way to connect with people in a different way. I'm so thrilled by and grateful for the response I get when we play. I recently sang the National Anthem at a Golden State Warriors game-what a privilege.

San Francisco Chronicle, or USA Today?

Chronicle, hands down.

What's your favorite TV show? Go to the movies lately?

Favorite show from years past: *The Rockford Files*. Current favorite shows: *Shark Tank* and *Downton Abbey*.

I love movies. What a wonderful art form. My brother and I have written several and have shopped them around L.A. So far, no one's beating down our door, but I'm sure it's only a matter of time! J

Personality-wise, are you more of a goof than you are serious?!

Both-serious when I need to be, and very focused. But I also believe life is more fun when you can also be light-hearted and even silly.

If you could do it all over again, is there anything you would change about your life?

I would have started singing seriously many years ago. Other than that, not a thing.

Any words of wisdom for the next generation of television journalists?

Read a lot, write a lot, and work very, very hard. Also, don't believe the chatter, journalism isn't going anywhere-it will evolve in terms of how it is delivered to people, but it is still necessary and relevant.

Favorite vacation destination?

Anywhere warm with a nice golf course. Then, there's Paris.

During your career, has there been a news story or stories that you've "owned" that, up to now, has defined who you are as a journalist?

There have been a few major stories that I believe shaped me and my career. Being the last broadcaster on the air the night Hurricane Hugo crashed across South Carolina and then first one back on the next morning when we got the equipment working again probably tops the list. My trip with Bay Area holocaust survivors to Auschwitz, Birkenau, and Treblinka is right there as well. What a life-changing assignment.

What's the most favorite thing about your job? Least favorite thing, if anything?

The chance to have an impact every day. Missing the opportunity to have an impact.



Favorite music? What's in your iPod (if you have one) or collection of CDs?

Something tells me PUSH is in there somewhere.

I like all kinds of music from opera to jazz and listen to all kinds often. I've got a lot of rock-n-roll in my iPod, some **Frank Sinatra**, and, of course, a healthy dose of PUSH!

Wine tasting, or a cold bottle of beer?

Iced tea. Never had much of a taste for alcohol-unless it's a frozen margarita. Strawberry, please.

What's the craziest thing you've ever done?

Answer all of your questions! Take up singing!

From a journalistic standpoint, how would you prefer viewers to see you?

As someone who cares a great deal about that job we are doing here and the important role we have to play in a free society. Someone who is "all in" when it comes to getting the job done and done right.

Favorite spot in the Bay Area? Favorite vacation destination? Where have you yet to travel to?

There's no place like home.

What do you like about social media, such as Facebook, Twitter and Google Plus?

Does it help bring in new viewers?

I think social media is a remarkable new tool to gather and to disseminate information. It also gives those of us on the air a direct way to communicate with viewers and they with us. Used productively, it is a very powerful addition to the media universe.

Not only are you a popular television news anchor, you are the lead singer in a rock band. What's it feel like to be a rock star?

Ha! I wouldn't know! But it is a great deal of fun to perform for people and to play with such a terrific bunch of guys. Check us out : www.rockwithpush.com

Stay tuned: In the March edition of *Soundbites*, we travel to Fresno to learn all about **Kim Stephens**, a member of our Chapter's Board of Governors (Kim takes over as board secretary this month) and the longtime, popular co-anchor of KMPH FOX 26's *Great Day!*

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