



"My dad died in February at the age of 87. Out of respect for him, and the work he did with the FBI, I could never say anything. But now, I want people to know what he did for me. That he was the one who helped me to break the story."

Soundbites



Cheryl Jennings is an Emmy® Award-winner who was inducted into the NATAS *Silver Circle* in 2003 and received the Chapters Governors' Award in 2009. Jennings has worked as a news anchor and reporter for KGO-TV ABC7 in San Francisco since 1979. Next year is a big year for her, when she marks her 35th year with the station. Jennings is known for her hard work and dedication to her craft as much as she is for her kindness, generosity and her easygoing personality. She also lovingly embraces a characteristic her parents instilled in her: a strong commitment to charity. Want to find out more about her, including her weakness for chocolate? Here's your chance!

Where did you grow up?

I AM AN ARMY BRAT. MY DAD WAS IN THE MILITARY AND WE TRAVELED ALL OVER THE WORLD. WE MOVED EVERY TWO TO THREE YEARS. I THINK I MUST HAVE GONE TO 15 DIFFERENT SCHOOLS BEFORE WE ARRIVED AT THE PRESIDIO OF SAN FRANCISCO. I WAS BORN AT FT. BENNING, GEORGIA.

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

I AM THE ELDEST DAUGHTER OF SEVEN CHILDREN: 5 GIRLS, TWO BOYS. ONE BROTHER, SADLY, PASSED AWAY FROM HEALTH PROBLEMS.

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

I KNEW I WANTED TO BE IN BROADCASTING AFTER I DID A COLLEGE PAPER FOR A WOMEN'S STUDIES CLASS. I INTERVIEWED FOUR WOMEN IN BROADCASTING BECAUSE IT WAS SUCH A RARE THING IN THE MID 70S: **KARNA SMALL, MARCIA BRANDWYNNE, ROXANNE RUSSELL,**

GERI LANGE.**Who has inspired you in your career?**

THOSE WOMEN INSPIRED ME. MY FIRST OFFICIAL MENTOR WAS **JANE MORRISON** WITH KNBR RADIO, WHO ALLOWED ME TO WORK FOR FREE FOR 50 HOURS A WEEK AS AN INTERN. I DID THAT FOR FIVE MONTHS, BEFORE I FINALLY GOT A PAYING JOB ANSWERING PHONES, WHILE I WAS IN COLLEGE.

Who has inspired you as a person?

MY PARENTS. THEY HAD AN INCREDIBLE WORK ETHIC, A COMMITMENT TO CHARITY AND THEY NEVER GAVE UP ON SITUATIONS, NO MATTER HOW DIFFICULT.

Before ABC7, where did you work before?

I STARTED AT KNBR AS AN INTERN, EVENTUALLY BECAME A NEWS SECRETARY FOR KNBR AND KNAI (ALL NEWS FM RADIO STATION-NOW GONE). THEN I WAS ALLOWED ON THE FRIDAY NIGHT OVERNIGHT SHIFT, AFTER MY SECRETARY JOB WAS DONE IN THE DAYTIME. THEN, I WENT TO KNBR RADIO. KPIX WAS HIRING AND LOOKING FOR A WOMAN FOR THEIR AFFIRMATIVE PROGRAM. I GOT THE JOB AND CONTINUED TO WORK FOR K101 AND KPIX AT THE SAME TIME FOR A YEAR...MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY, FROM 9:30 AM TO 5:30PM AT K101, THEN KPIX FROM 6PM TO 11:30PM. THEN, I CAME TO KGO AS THE NIGHT REPORTER AND WORKED MY WAY UP FROM THERE.

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

THERE IS NO TYPICAL DAY. I DO A LOT OF CHARITY WORK IN ADDITION TO MY ANCHORING, REPORTING AND SHOW HOSTING DUTIES. SO I MAY HOST A BREAKFAST FOR THE RED CROSS AT 7:30AM, COME TO WORK, HOST A LUNCHEON OR EVENING EVENT AFTER WORK.

You're an anchor at one of the best stations in the country and certainly in one of the world's best cities. And, you've worked at the same station for nearly 35 years. What is the secret?

I WORK AT A GREAT STATION AND I LOVE WHAT I DO. I GET A LOT OF JOY WORKING AT A STATION THAT UNDERSTANDS WE PROVIDE A PUBLIC SERVICE.

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

CHOCOLATE WOULD BE AT THE TOP OF MY LIST, WITH FUDGE ON TOP! BROWNIES OR FUDGE WOULD BE HIGHER ON THE LIST....I'M ALWAYS SEARCHING FOR THE PERFECT CHOCOLATE TREAT! (CHOCOHOLIC)

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

I DO A NUMBER OF CHARITY EVENTS ON WEEKENDS. AND THE WEEKENDS ARE SO BUSY, I HAVE TO SCHEDULE IN TIME FOR MY FAMILY AND MY HUSBAND! WE LOVE TO HIKE WHENEVER POSSIBLE. WE ALSO LOVE TO WATCH MOVIES.

I know you support many charitable organizations. Please tell me about all of them.

I'LL JUST LIST SOME OF THEM, THERE ARE MANY! PERFORMING STARS OF MARIN, TAYLOR FAMILY FOUNDATION, CAMP OKIZU, SAN FRANCISCO CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION CENTER. AMBASSADORS OF HOPE AND OPPORTUNITY, TENDERLOIN NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION AND THE TENDERLOIN AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM. STAND FOR FAMILIES FREE OF VIOLENCE, **BONNIE J. ADDARIO** LUNG CANCER FOUNDATION, RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE OF SAN FRANCISCO AND PALO ALTO, OAKLAND BALLET.



Perfect meal for dinner?

SEARED AHI OR SUSHI

Have a guilty pleasure?

A FRIDAY NIGHT MARTINI

What do you enjoy most about your work?

EVERY DAY IS DIFFERENT AND I GET TO MEET NEW PEOPLE AND LEARN NEW THINGS CONSTANTLY.

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

I WOULD LIKE TO LEARN TO PLAY GOLF...NO TIME FOR HOBBIES RIGHT NOW

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

TELLING GOOD STORIES AS LONG AS POSSIBLE, AND PLANNING TO TAKE AN EDITING AND PHOTOGRAPHY CLASS TO ENHANCE MY SKILLS.

Who is your favorite television journalist?

BARBARA WALTERS. SMART, STRONG, TALENTED SURVIVOR AND A GREAT ROLE MODEL

Do you have a favorite author?

KHALED HOSSEINI, PATRICIA CORNWELL, TOM CLANCY

San Francisco Chronicle, or USA Today?

SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE AND THE MARIN INDEPENDENT JOURNAL.

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

I WOULD FINISH MY BACHELOR'S DEGREE AT SAN FRANCISCO STATE.

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

LEARN MULTIMEDIA SKILLS AND HOW TO WRITE. WRITING IS EVERYTHING!

Favorite vacation destination?

KONA, HAWAII

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?

1989 LOMA PRIETA EARTHQUAKE. I WAS THE FIRST LOCAL REPORTER ON THE AIR, COVERING THE STORY WHILE THE AFTERSHOCKS WERE ROCKING OUR BUILDING, NOT KNOWING WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO MY OWN LARGE BAY AREA FAMILY.

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

LEAST FAVORITE PART OF THE JOB IS THE AMOUNT OF TIME IT TAKES AWAY FROM MY FAMILY.

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

NO TIME TO LISTEN TO MUSIC. I LISTEN TO NEWS RADIO.

Wine tasting, or a cold bottle of beer?

WINE TASTING!

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

TRAVELED TO AFGHANISTAN FOR A STORY.

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

SOMEONE THEY CAN TRUST TO DELIVER ACCURATE NEWS THAT WILL HELP IN SOME WAY.

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

NAPA VALLEY. I WANT TO VISIT CHINA, JAPAN, SINGAPORE, INDIA, RUSSIA, AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND, AND MORE!

What do you like about social media, such as Facebook, Twitter and Google Plus? Does it help bring in new viewers?

I LIKE USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO KEEP ME IN DIRECT CONTACT WITH VIEWERS OR POTENTIAL VIEWERS.

Stay tuned: In the December edition of *Soundbites*, find out more about **Kopi Sotiropulos**, morning news anchor and all-around funny guy at KMPH in Fresno.

Fresno's Collective Effort A Great Idea *Chapter Governors Representing Central Valley City, meet to talk about the NATAS Mission*



By Richard Harmelink
Vice President, Fresno

The Fresno members of the Board of Governors of the San Francisco/Northern California Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences met in Fresno in October with **Darryl Compton**, the Chapter's executive director, to collaborate on ideas and issues pertaining to NATAS in Fresno and the organization overall.

Chapter Governors **Zara Arboleda**, **Sandy Sirias**, **Kim Stephens**, **Stephanie Stone**, **Justin Willis** and Fresno Vice President **Richard Harmelink** met with Compton for lunch in Fresno for the first time as a group.