Heather Hays – Fox 4 News

Heather Hays, the nightly news anchor for Fox 4 News in Dallas, Texas. Hays, born in Houston, Texas describes herself as a wife, mom and anchor. You may know Hays as she’s been with Fox 4 for 18 years, but it’s her humble beginnings that allow us to truly connect with her.

When you ask if it surprises her today about where she currently is she would tell you, “The person who dropped classes when the teacher said there was going to be an oral presentation could never be an anchor!”

She didn’t always know her path would lead to broadcast journalism and to her it almost didn’t. She graduated from Chaminade University of Hawaii with a Bachelor of Science degree, with her sights set on becoming a Sports Psychologist. After her bachelors, and a bit unsure as to what her career would look like, Hays took some time to herself where she became Miss Hawaii and competed in the Miss U.S.A pageant. The pageant allowed her not only to practice speaking in front of people but it gave her many opportunities to give back to the community.
Upon completing the pageant, Hays went on to receive her Masters in Television and Film from Boston University.

“My first real job was in Yakima, Washington.” She took a humble 15k a year, got some experience under her belt and met a few women who are considered mentors to her and to whom she still speaks with today.

Hays talked about her many internships and mentors she has had over the years and emphasized the importance of both in order to succeed. When we talked about how social media and technology have changed the game, she agreed they have but that she is not expected to know as much as those coming into the newsrooms now.

“I’m not on social media probably as much as I should be, but it’s gotten harder since those coming in will be expected to know and use it more.”

We talked about how technology, (although exciting) and how it soon will replace a lot of jobs. For example, those who currently run the teleprompter are not needed since anchors are now able to operate it from the a handheld remote. Technology is constantly changing and evolving, we’re expected to know more now than ever before and do it all at the same time. Write notes, record audio, all while posting direct quotes on social media.
Hay’s career has shown us (especially those in grad school), never be afraid of a late start. Her career is important to journalism not only based on the fact that she reports local and national news daily, but also because of the fact that she is a woman. Women in this industry, although we have made strides, we still have quite a bit left to go. Women are 50% of the world yet the representation could be greater.

It was an honor to sit with and interview a woman who has knocked down a few barriers for women and who encourages those like myself who want to get into this industry to take a chance. The industry won’t always be kind but we can always control what we do and how we react.