



## **Oral History of Rebecca Lopez**

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JOUR 5260: Qualitative Research  
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December 9, 2019

## Journalism Story



Behind the cameras and bright lights of the WFAA Channel 8 television station, Emmy-award winning crime and justice reporter Rebecca Lopez wants to be remembered for pursuing the truth, opening the doors for a more diverse workplace and making sacrifices to get there.

Inside the station is an immediate harkening to its heritage. Old school TVs and rocking chairs are accompanied by historical timelines that run across the wall of the lobby, proudly displayed to all who visit, citing values of integrity of the featured reporters who have graced these walls and cameras in times past.

Those inscribed values aren't just for decoration to impress visitors. They're the tenets by which news reporters should abide, Lopez said.

"I would want my career to be remembered as a person who told the truth, made a difference, and maybe impacted people's lives where we brought about change that made our community better," she said.

Journalists care about the communities in which they live, Lopez said.

"We want our communities to be better, too," she said. "People think that we're somehow just this talking head on television, but we live in the communities, and we want the best for people as well."

Lopez said women add a diverse perspective in covering those communities.

“It's important to have different voices, and that's why diversity is so important to have,” she said.

Increased diversity of voices in broadcast has also caused audience reach to be more diverse, as well, Lopez said.

“That has changed over the years tremendously because I think that we realized that if we wanted to get a bigger audience, we have to speak to what we look like as a society,” she said.

Covering that society and balancing it with family life can be challenging, Lopez said.

“My parents were very, very excited,” she said. “They get nervous. You know, they get scared because I've been in tornadoes, hurricanes, riots. I was at downtown Dallas during the shootings. So they get nervous. I cover a lot of controversial stories now because I do more investigative work and a lot of law enforcement.”

While a work and life balance isn't easy in the career field, Lopez credits her mentors with helping her to get to where she is.

“I grew up in being trained by some of the best in the business,” she said. “A woman by the name of Carole Kneeland, who was the news director at KVUE in Austin. My mentors have always been big J journalists.”

Being led by facts regardless of the unpopularity it may cause is an ethical cornerstone of being in the news, Lopez said.

“We have to stick to our principles and our guiding principles and our ethics, and that is to tell the truth and go where the facts lead you,” she said.

Overcoming challenges to become an accomplished journalist are inherent with the job, but worth it, Lopez said.

“You might get threatened, you might be called fake news, but you have to keep telling the truth,” she said. “That's why we're here. That's the core of who we are as journalists, truth finders.”