

This Time Patt Morrison is Interviewed

The 'Voice' of Pasadena City College, KPCC Host Answers the Questions

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When Patt Morrison's name is mentioned in Los Angeles circles, people respond with various, random shoutouts: the lady with the crazy hats, the KPCC radio host, the Los Angeles Times columnist whom Pink's, in Hollywood, named a vegetarian hot dog after, and the list goes on.

But how did a little girl from a small town in the Mid-West become a reporter for The Los Angeles Times at the age of 17 and evidently become such a personality in the city where millions dream of doing what she has done?

When Morrison was about 8 years old, she found a book, a biography about an American woman, whose penname was Nellie Bly. She lived in the 19th century, when women had no rights. They could not own property, could not vote.

Despite all that, this woman became a famous journalist, she wrote for the big New York papers, uncovered the injustice of mistreatment of immigrants, children and animals, and exposed corruption in New York.

"What a phenomenal job! I knew that this is what I want to do," said Morrison with a tiny smile on her face as her eyes dreamingly gazed into the air, remembering her inspiration to become a writer.

Morrison was the first in the family to attend college and studied history, political science and art at Occidental College. She primarily financed her education on scholarship.

"You can study journalism, but you need to know people's life to paint an accurate picture of the person and the circumstances. For example, when interviewing a WWII veteran, I can refer to explicit places and names, and the fact that I know about the events and subjects he talks about puts my subject at ease," said Morrison.

She emphasized that a good journalist reads a lot. She named several publications where she gets information from; including the Los Angeles Times, the New York Times, the Economist, the Washington Post and the New Yorker.

"Her radio career is a typical radio story," said Craig Curtis, program director at KPCC. He added that people they want on the radio know a bit about a whole lot and have a broad range of interests.

"First, we invited her to be a guest host then she became a regular host when Larry Mantle or others went out of town. She was comfortable talking on air, smart, interesting, well-rounded in sports, politics [and] arts. So, we offered her a full-time job," remembered Curtis.

He said they both wear hats, love dogs and feel they have to have the last word when in a conversation, or during a late night instant messaging before somebody has to give up and go to bed. "It is nice to know interesting people, but even better to work with them," Curtis said.

Morrison, as the radio host of the "Patt Morrison" show at KPCC, mainly airs current topics that concern Los Angeles and often a national audience, while as a columnist she covers things she feels strongly about.



Szilvia Gogh / Courier

Patt Morrison displays one of her famous hats during a show.

Haven't seen anybody passionate lately? Ask her about animals or recycling.

When animal cruelty was mentioned to her, Morrison's eyes were glowing like somebody ignited a pilot light inside her. It grew into flames of full-blown passion as she said that

go through the trash to sort it because it is wasteful. I hate waste, whether it's waste of energy or waste of minds," she said.

Morrison goes through her neighbor's trash sometimes, if she feels they didn't do it quite right. She takes the big bin of cans and bottles to Skid Row and gives it to the homeless. "People there can get money for it. So, it is all recycled, nothing goes to waste," she said.

On 89.3 KPCC, or in her articles at The Times, she wants to convey to the reader what it is like to be there (in the different situations) and let them make their choices about the way they feel about certain issues. "Everybody is entitled to their opinion, but not to their own facts," Morrison said.

If she were born again, and could not be a journalist, Morrison would enthusiastically opt to be a fiction writer, regardless that most likely she could not feed herself on fiction.

Morrison has nothing to worry about. She is an accomplished media personality at the present. "She recently took home the Golden Mike award for the Best Public Affairs Program to stand proudly next to the numerous other awards she won over the years, including a share of two Pulitzer prizes, six Emmys and six Golden Mike awards," said Aimee Machado, senior producer of "Patt Morrison" on KPCC.

Morrison's immiscible trademark is her wearing of "crazy" hats. Of course, everybody offers an educated guess on why she is never seen without them. The truth is always simple.

"I have very sensitive skin and eyes," said Morrison and added enthusiastically that hats keep her warm in the winter, cool in the summer, and that she never has to worry about a bad-hair-day while wearing them.

"people around the world treat livestock with such casual cruelty." No wonder she became vegetarian.

Recycling, a subject all-too-often addressed in dry encyclopedias and consumer guides, is also given new life by Morrison.

"I am shameless about recycling. I