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### Ken Rice

*By Daniel Casciato*

The qualities of a television news anchor that most appeal to viewers are someone who exudes enthusiasm, energy and inquisitiveness. It's also someone who possesses a warm smile and charismatic charm.

Ken Rice exemplifies all of these great qualities. A national award-winning journalist, Rice co-anchors the weeknight editions of KDKA-TV News at 5:00 and 11:00 and the KDKA 10:00 News on UPN-Pittsburgh.

He has been honored with local, state and national journalism awards including a 1990 Associated Press award, Golden Quill awards from the Pittsburgh Press Club in 1990 and 1991 and awards from the Radio-Television News Directors Association for investigative reporting in 1994 and 1995.

While his journalistic achievements are remarkable, Rice is also admired for his multiple contributions to the community.

One of his favorite organizations is Pittsburgh Cares, a membership organization of over 3,000 volunteers who do community service at about 100 Pittsburgh agencies. Rice has been the chairman of the Pittsburgh Cares Advisory Board since it was instituted in the late 1990s. He has emceed, signed fundraising letters, and performed hands-on service projects with the organization.

"You can see the difference Pittsburgh Cares is making in this region," he says. "I love the success of the organization. It's been very rewarding for me."

Valerie Staats, Executive Director of Pittsburgh Cares, is appreciative of his time and dedication. "Ken is responsive to our requests for ideas, help, and resources, and somehow manages to do it all with grace and humor, setting the bar high for all of us," she says.

"He generously lends us his stature in the community, his contacts, and his total professionalism at all times. He isn't just a pretty face for Pittsburgh Cares. He actually delivers his time and services to us. Ken not only comes to the board meetings, but he attends our special events and supports them fully with his time and services."

Rice also serves on the advisory board for Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council, and has worked with many organizations including the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank, Share our Strength, and the Western Pennsylvania Chapter of the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of America. He serves on the board of the Allegheny District Chapter of the Multiple Sclerosis Society and is Honorary Chair of Pittsburgh's annual MS Walk. He is also a past board member of the Southwestern PA chapter of the American Red Cross.

Rice says he's often surprised that when he and his colleagues receive a request to speak at an event or become involved with a charitable cause, the organization usually assumes that they're unavailable.

"I think I can speak for my colleagues when I say this, but we do like to get involved more than people expect," says Rice. "If I can do it, I will. It's a rare occasion when I am unavailable."

Working with children is another favorite activity of his. On Saturday mornings, you'll see him hosting Hometown High-Q, KDKA-TV's quiz show for local high school students.

"That's just plain old fun," he says. "The kids are always excited. The program shines a light on students who achieve academically. Most times stations focus on student-athletes. This show offers a great change of pace."

Rice is frequently called upon to speak at local schools and community organizations and he recently taught a television news reporting course at Point Park University. He's always wanted to try teaching and plans to do it again when his children are older.

He offers one piece of advice for those who want to study journalism: "It's all about being able to write well," he says. "If you're a good writer, you will stand out. I think it's a rare skill and journalism departments should be adamant about writing. Broadcast journalists should also learn to write in a conversational style."

Before joining the KDKA-TV News team in 1994, he spent six years reporting and anchoring for WTAE-TV. A native of the Chicago area, Rice began his career in journalism while attending the University of Wisconsin in Madison, reporting and anchoring news on Wisconsin Public Radio. Rice moved into television after college, reporting and eventually anchoring nightly on Madison's WISC-TV.

In addition to his co-anchor duties, Rice shares hosting duties on KDKA's Sunday morning public affairs program, The KD/PG Sunday Edition. He has hosted various special programs on the station and has moderated numerous debates among candidates for U.S. Senate, Governor of Pennsylvania, Chief Executive of Allegheny County and Mayor of Pittsburgh.

"I can't imagine doing anything else," he says about his career. "It's a great way to spend your life. You meet many interesting people along the way."  
In what spare time he has, Rice enjoys spending time with his wife, Lauren, and their two children, ages 7 and 4. "It's home now," responds Rice when asked about this region. "I've been fortunate to find a good fit here. It's beautiful – there's so much green and the rivers are coming around. It's a wonderful place to live.

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