



Don't Breed or Buy
While Homeless
Animals Die!

Robert Kovacik

(cont'd from p.1)

enthusiastic reporting of the 2013 Papal Conclave for Pope Francis in Rome. Both assignments in London and the Vatican earned Robert Emmy Awards.

From Shaker Heights and Hunting Valley, to the Ivy League halls of Brown University and Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, where he graduated with honors from both schools, to the rough and tumble world of New York City news reporting, the thread that runs through his career is his ability to discover the personal connection between a news story and the folks back home.

"I love that part of my job, being able to make the news relevant to my community, letting them see how what happens around the world affects their daily lives on a deeper level," Robert says. "For instance, when I went to Rome to cover the election of Pope Francis, I ran into people from Southern California who were thrilled to see a familiar face and share their experiences with me. And we share it with our NBC4 viewers, letting them feel that same excitement as if they were there with us on the streets of Rome."

Robert began his career right out of Columbia University when he became the youngest anchor in New York City for Nightworld at PBS's flagship station, WNET. In 1994, he relocated to Los Angeles to become an anchor and reporter for KCOP-TV. He praises the station for giving him the opportunity to cover and produce a wide swath of stories. When the opportunity arose to combine his journalistic background with his love for animals, he jumped ship to the newly formed National Geographic Channel, where he was named the West Coast correspondent.

Since joining NBC4 in 2004, he has quickly become a local favorite, whether out in the field or behind the desk. And keeping with his lifelong love of animals, Robert's been on the trail of Hollywood's big cat "P22" the California puma of Griffith Park who was discovered in the crawl space of a Los Feliz home back in 2014. He is the go-to guy for the wandering bear of the communities lining the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains (spotted recently in some backyard swimming pools). He also covered the touching stories of PJ the puppy shot in the face in South LA and Gordo, the white terrier hit by a driver fleeing a police pursuit in Culver City.

Not all of his assignments have been "feel good" stories, however. One of his most compelling live shots occurred right here in Southern California. While covering an extensive manhunt for an alleged murderer in 2007, the suspect suddenly appeared and surrendered to him live on air! His coverage of the event was recognized with an Edward R. Murrow Award, a Golden Mic and a Los Angeles Press Club Award for breaking and spot news

reporting.

Robert's exclusive examination into the Los Angeles Fire Department's 911 response times prompted then Mayor Villaraigosa to call for an audit of the LAFD. His reporting on the investigation surrounding President Clinton's impeachment was included in the Kenneth Starr Report, and his groundbreaking expose into overcrowded Los Angeles animal shelters pushed the city to change its laws.

Over the course of his career, he has been recognized with several industry accolades. In 2013, he was selected as Journalist of the Year at the 55th Southern California Journalism Awards, and he currently is serving his third consecutive term as President of the Los Angeles Press Club. The most recent Local Emmy Award nominations include eight for Robert and his co-workers among the 19 nominations the field-leading NBC4 received overall.

At this point, you are probably wondering when does this guy sleep? But wait, there's more!

When he's not covering local stories, you will find him working tirelessly for causes he believes in. For the past four years, Robert has been the emcee of the Best Friends Animal Society's "Super Adoption Weekend" jointly benefiting BFLA and their impassioned NKLA (No Kill Los Angeles) initiative. This June's event saw over 500 cats, dogs and domestic pets find new homes.

He admits with a smile that, while he has been offered different roles with other networks and news organizations, he has made a conscious choice to put down roots in Los Angeles, where he really treasures the strong sense of family and community. He is happy to contribute his time, energy and ideas for causes he believes in, such as the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce Foundation's "Heroes of Hollywood", the Found Animals Foundation, the Live for Others Foundation, St. Anne's Home for Unwed Mothers, US Vets, American Red Cross and the Braille Institute.

Robert credits his mother for allowing her children to follow their own paths. As he puts it, "She managed to raise a Democrat, a Republican, an Independent and a Socialist under one roof, remarkably," he laughs, "And with no bloodshed!" He doesn't identify which of those four is his ideology, but it is clear he is still close with his siblings. Brother David is a bilingual high school teacher in Yonkers who also started the successful New York City Water Ski and Wakeboard School.

(cont'd on next page)



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