

Text of ABC 11 News Director Rob Elmore's Hall of Fame Induction Speech

Good evening. Chancellor Thorp, Dean Folkerts, the Stogner family, distinguished guests, and my colleagues from ABC 11...

They say that you are known by the company you keep... and our friend Larry Stogner joins some very special company tonight.

Tonight, Larry takes his place among legendary Carolina broadcasters, giants in AMERICAN journalism... Among them, Charles Kuralt, David Brinkley, Charlie Rose and Carl Kassal.

Larry grew up on the back roads of North Carolina. His story reads like a Kuralt feature on the evening news. Small town upbringing up in Yancyville, a fateful decision to chose Chapel Hill over the U.S. Military Academy; distinguished service in Vietnam... and his first broadcasting job FITTINGLY at UNC-TV! Larry is a Carolina man through and through.

And it's his unique Carolina perspective that has shaped our local news on ABC 11 and set the gold standard for local anchors for nearly 35 years.

But that's enough about Larry's BIOGRAPHY. I'd like to speak to you for a moment about Larry's CHARACTER.

Now... legend has it that Larry can be very demanding. CBS 60 Minutes Correspondent and former ABC 11 Intern Byron Pitts writes five pages about Larry in his new memoir. Byron considers Larry his first mentor and they remain close today. In his book, Byron describes Larry as "a chain smoker with a demeanor as hard as the briefcase he seemed to carry everywhere." And that's the nice part!

By the time I came along about a dozen years ago, Larry had kicked the smoking habit and his harder edges seemed softer... but the journalism fire was still burning hot in his belly. Then as now, Larry cares deeply about what we do and the audience we serve.

Nearly 40 years into his distinguished career, Larry still asks the tough and RIGHT questions... What makes this a lead story? Why are we repeating the same video over and over with little new information? Is that REALLY breaking news? These questions and our answers shape Eyewitness News coverage on a daily basis.

Finally a personal note... A couple of years ago Larry and I were standing outside the ABC 11 street-level studio in downtown Raleigh. Larry spotted former Congressman and ex- Raleigh Police Chief Fred Hinneman and waved Fred over. I was reminded about this moment a few weeks ago when the Chief passed away.

I recall that we exchanged pleasantries and a few laughs... but it's Larry's introduction that stuck with me. Larry introduced me... and I'll never forget it... as MY NEWS DIRECTOR. HIS NEWS DIRECTOR. Looking back on it, that's the moment I REALIZED I had finally made it in broadcasting! Because those of us who KNOW Larry Stogner KNOW that he does not say things like that lightly and I knew I had earned his trust and respect.

Well... tonight I am proud to call Larry MY ANCHOR. But he doesn't just belong to me or to ABC 11. He belongs to all of us here tonight and to all the viewers across the Heart of Carolina. And he is a VERY deserving member of the North Carolina Halls of Fame. Congratulations Larry!