

## Barbara Boyd Trailblazes in the Field of Journalism and Broadcast Anchoring

TUSCALOOSA, Ala.—First African American woman to be inducted into two Indiana halls of fame, Barbara Boyd, changed the journalism and broadcasting game for women and African Americans, and opened conversation for cancer survivors through her years of work at Indianapolis' WRTV.

July 11, 2000, Barbara Boyd sat down with The HistoryMakers interviewers in her Indianapolis home to recall her life, her work, and how she wants to be remembered.

Boyd recalled how at 20 years old she applied for a job that the employer claimed she was a perfect fit for. She soon received a call that she would not be given the job because of her skin color. However, Boyd did not let this stop her from pursuing what she wanted.

“You are going to have to try harder than everybody, that’s the thoughts I grew up with,” Boyd said.

Barbara Boyd, now 94, had no experience in the journalism field when she got a job at Channel 6 WRTV Indianapolis. This did not discourage her, as she became the first African American woman on television in Indiana.

Boyd was later inducted into the Indiana Association of Black Journalists' Hall of Fame and the Indiana Journalism Hall of Fame, the first African American woman to do so.

Boyd gives all credit to the WRTV staff who helped her through it all. “There are no stars in the newsroom, this is a team effort,” Boyd said.

Boyd was 40 years old when she got the WRTV Channel 6 job, a late start in the broadcast journalism field. WRTV had called her current job looking for an African American to become a reporter. Rather than referring them to an interview candidate, Boyd said “If you are looking for a star, here I are.”

“Very often I’ll say to older women, even if you are forty and if there’s something you want to do or something you always wanted to try, try it,” Boyd said.

Boyd grew up in Evanston, Illinois and attended the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign to study speech. She grew up a very creative child always “making her own fun” as an only child. “I was precocious. I was a dreamer,” Boyd said.

After only working for a few years, Boyd found a lump in her breast that had become cancerous. She underwent a double mastectomy, shortly after being assigned to write about Reach to Recovery, a mastectomy support group.

Still in her hospital bed post-surgery, Boyd called the WRTV assignment editor and said that she wanted to do a story on Reach to Recovery. She covered how to be aware of symptoms, support groups, clinics, and more topics that could be considered taboo at the time.

Her Reach to Recovery story was seven minutes long, unheard of for a news segment at the time. The story reached hundreds of people, leading WRTV to receive a mass number of calls in response.

Her breast cancer story catapulted Boyd into the community, leading her to travel around the country answering questions on breast cancer and giving stories on talk shows.

Boyd would share with patients and survivors what she had learned through her life, that “when you think you’re at the end of your rope, there’s always somebody up there looking out for you.”

She wants to be remembered as a “fun, honest person who tried to give back to the community that gave so much to her,” Boyd said. Boyd has three children with her husband Theodore Boyd and worked 25 years at WRTV before retiring.