

# Hannah Horne, on and off the air



By Susan Benesh/Photography by Lee Bradshaw

**H**annah Horne, the smiling television anchor who greets many Columbians every weekday morning, offers more than just pleasant confidence along with the daily news. There's also that welcome dose of serenity.

"Worry and faith are incompatible," Hannah explains. A series of conversations with the long-time WIS-TV newswoman reveals her steadfast Christian faith, which, she says, has guided her along unpredictable paths, personally and professionally. She's glad she let her faith take charge.

"A happy childhood following a straight and narrow path" is how she describes her beginnings in Mobile, Ala. Raised in a Christian home and surrounded by a loving family, she inherited her pianist mother's talent for music. "I've been singing as long as I've been speaking," Hannah says, remembering her first solo at age four. She gained a firm foundation in Christian music and was active in church choirs through high school. "Christian music and singing always had



strong pull on me. I was in the high school Glee Club before it was cool.”

After high school graduation, the religiously affiliated University of Mobile offered her a scholarship to sing with their traveling music group. For Hannah, it was “a dream come true. I was performing music with an incredible message and it was not uncommon for us to sing in four churches every weekend around the Southeast. Instead of a student-athlete, I was a student-singer.”

Her plan was to cultivate her musical talent, believing it to be God’s plan for her life. “The Christian music scene was strong in Mobile, and it still is. My ultimate goal was to sing in a Christian music group called Truth. And after that, well, I just knew God had a life planned for me either in a church or school music ministry. I placed my life in His hands and headed off to college.”

But it wasn’t long before she realized she didn’t want to study music. She transferred to the University of South Alabama and began a major in communications. During one of her classes, she met a group of students who were starting a campus television station. Hannah volunteered to help with a news magazine show by reporting on student issues, and “fell in love with television news – the people, the stories, the pace, and the ability to effect change. I would have never dreamed God would

purpose me for a most unique career in journalism, where my life and talents would serve the community and my ‘light would shine.’”

Still a gifted vocalist, Hannah says music, particularly contemporary Christian music, remains an important part of her life, but not the foundation of her career. “When I prayed that God use my life, I didn’t know it was going to be in the role of a TV news anchor, but He did.” The reporter bug had bitten Hannah Home and the rest is history.

Hannah joined WIS in September 2000. Since then, she has served as producer, reporter, and anchor. She has been morning anchor for the *Sunrise Show* for nearly eight years. She says she feels at home at WIS and on the 4:30 – 7 a.m. show, and that the WIS people are a very close working team. “I am blessed to

have several colleagues around me who share my faith. I have an incredible support network of Christian sisters at WIS who are unbelievable examples of how to live your faith in the workplace.”

It’s very important to WIS that their team is engaged in the



community on every level, Hannah says. On behalf of the station, she makes frequent personal appearances, many for churches and religious groups. People often tell her they’re thankful to have Christians reporting the news. “They will tell me, ‘You hear so much about the liberal media. It is surprising that someone can be a Christian and a journalist.’”

Hannah says her goal is to honor God through her work, by helping people get the news and information that will make their lives richer, healthier, and happier. “I can’t always report the happy news, but I can report every story with honesty, integrity, and compassion.”

On the air, she keeps her beliefs private. “When I report the news, I don’t talk about my personal relationship with God or Jesus. It would not be appropriate or ethical to inject my personal beliefs into the stories that I report. However,

## coverstory

people I meet often tell me that they hear a compassion or uniqueness to my delivery. I'm convinced God's children are placed in every profession, using their gifts and talents to honor Him while serving others.

"One of my main messages to women's groups is how valuable we are to God's kingdom. No matter the focus of your talent, profession, or passion, God can use it. As I move about my day, whether in my role as an anchor and reporter or in the bank or grocery store, there are precious, God-given opportunities to share kindness and compassion with others."

The stories Hannah reports and the people she meets touch her deeply. One special person her profession led her to was her future husband. For three years, she was a presenter at an annual event, which he also attended. After the third year, he asked her out.

Once the spark flared, the couple knew the Lord had brought them together. Within a year, they were engaged and soon married. Hannah, her husband, Joseph Horne, and his two daughters share a Christian faith, creating a loving home with a strong foundation in God's word.

"The girls are my best friends and I am so blessed to have them all in my life," she says. They also share their home with Dottie, Hannah's border collie, who does her best to add comic relief and a bit of 'trouble' every now and then.

Currently Hannah is studying for an MBA at USC's Darla Moore School of Business. "It's the most challenging thing I've ever done," she says, eyes twinkling. "My faith tells me that there is a plan that I cannot see but have to trust. Twists and turns are part of the journey, right?" **ROC**

*Susan Benesh is a spokesperson for the American Red Cross and a free-lance writer. She lives in Columbia.*



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