



“Mr. Everything!”

Dominic Massa Saluted for 30 Years of Outstanding New Orleans Television Production

By Dean M. Shapiro, Senior Editor

PHOTO BY MATTHEW HINTON

Ever since he was a teenager, Dominic Massa knew which career path he wanted to follow. He followed it and more than 30 years later he is still on that path.

A hardworking, behind-the-scenes titan in the world of New Orleans television production, Dominic started early in the visual media, learning from, in his words, “the best in the business” at two major local TV stations. And now, at 46 years old with many more years of productivity still ahead of him, he has become one of the best himself, as a producer and a visionary. He loves New Orleans and loves touting “all the great and fun things it has to offer” and that love is what drives him to excel in his chosen profession.

Appointed executive vice-president and chief operating officer at WYES-Channel 12 in the fall of 2021, Dominic took a major step

upward after a long, productive, award-winning stint as a producer and executive producer at WWL-TV News. It was there at Channel 4 where he was nicknamed “Mr. Everything,” the man who could do it all. And now he’s back where it all began for him when he was 16 and interning at New Orleans’ longest continually running Public Television station.

“I always knew I wanted to be in the broadcast media,” Dominic fondly recalled. “I started with a fan letter to Peggy (Scott Laborde) at Channel 12, telling her how much I loved her ‘Steppin’ Out’ show and that I watched it every Friday. I also watched Errol Laborde’s

show, ‘Informed Sources’ and told both of them ‘I love what you all do.’”

His fan letters fell on receptive eyes and Peggy invited him to take a tour of the station, which he did. He began volunteering there in any way he could, including working the station’s annual Showboat Auction fundraiser.

“After school on Fridays I would come to the station and watch and help them record,” Dominic continued. “I would do anything I could to be around broadcasting in the studio and be with people who were doing what I wanted to learn. I was encouraged by the people I worked with to take any opportunity you can: soak up every opportunity you have and I did that. So it was an exciting time for me.”

Following his passion even further, he appeared frequently on “Our Generation,” WWL’s Saturday morning talk show for teenagers, hosted at the time by retired longtime morning news anchor Sally-Ann Roberts. As a student at Jesuit High School and editor of the school newspaper, Dominic was an active participant in the on-air discussions they had. Years later he would be working closely with Roberts as a producer of her early morning news programs on Channel 4, as well as on special projects for WYES.

Most recently Dominic served as executive producer on an hour-long tribute documentary narrated by Roberts on Dr. Norman Francis, the recently retired longtime president of Xavier University that aired on WYES in late September/early October 2022. “He is in his 90s and I felt it was very important that we honor him while he’s still with us,” Dominic emphasized.

He is equally proud of two other recent documentaries he helped produce on the late Blaine Kern, widely known as “Mr. Mardi Gras,” and the World War II Museum. Another one of his documentaries highlighted memorable TV commercials with a unique New Orleans spin. He also authored two books for Arcadia Press on the history of New Orleans radio and television and he periodically contributes articles to some of the city’s major print publications.

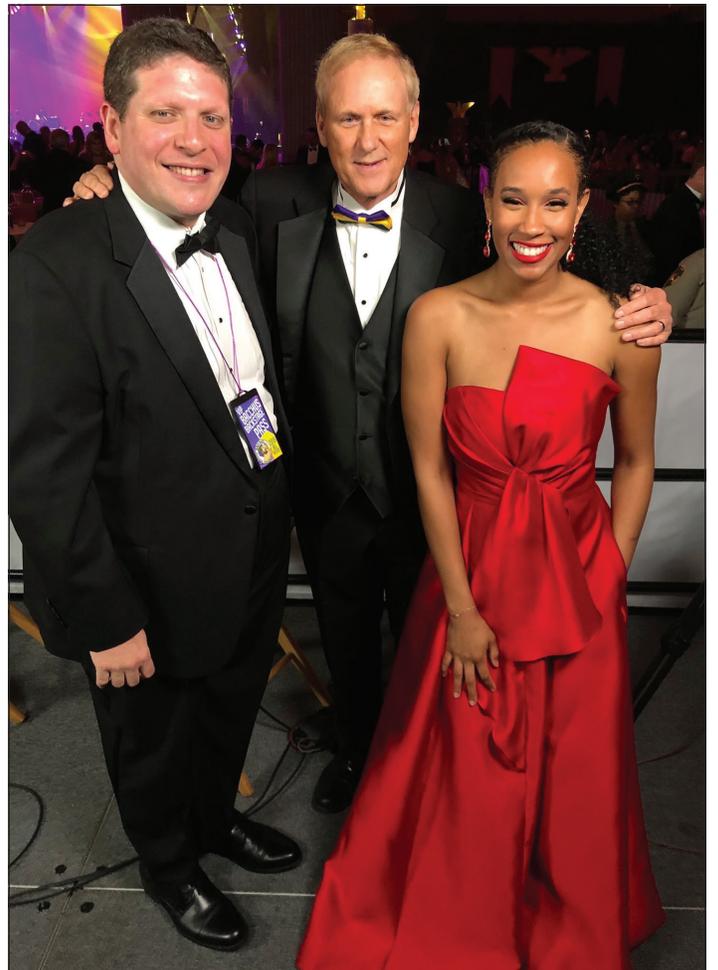
After growing up in Kenner and graduating Jesuit High School in 1994, Dominic went on to Loyola University where he majored in mass communications. Noting that, at the time, WWL-TV was owned by the Jesuits, attending Loyola “was a logical choice for me,” Dominic said. “They had the best communications school locally; the best journalism school. And, since WWL was the city’s top station, that’s what I gravitated toward.

“I really got to touch all aspects of the newsroom,” Dominic fondly recalled. “I worked every shift, including overnights, weekends and anytime there was a big news story happening; especially during hurricanes. I worked every Mardi Gras and later I got to produce the Mardi Gras coverage. That was a great joy of mine because I love its colorful history.”

However, being a producer was not initially Dominic’s goal. “I wanted to be on-camera,” he said. “Everyone who starts out wants to be an anchorperson or reporter but when I discovered what



(l. to r.) Eric Paulsen, Gayle Benson, Dominic Massa and Derek Waldrip PHOTO BY: MICHAEL C. HEBERT



(l. to r.) Dominic Massa, Eric Paulsen and Sheba Turk PHOTO COURTESY OF WWL-TV

being a producer entailed, I realized that it suited me better. It was more about managing and organizing and I'm good at both. You basically get to run the show and be creative and that was fun to me."

Dominic says he has no higher aspirations than to be where he is, at the top of his game in the city that he loves, among family, lifelong friends and co-workers, some of whom are icons in the 70-plus years of New Orleans broadcast history.

"I have really the best of all the worlds here," he emphasized. "New Orleans is a heck of a news town. There's always something happening here. Many great news stories come through here. We have our unique culture, our history, our arts and more. Other cities don't have this.

"In terms of news I like to be where the action is," Dominic added. "To be where things are happening and you have a chance to share somebody's stories. One of the things I appreciated – but not enjoyed – was doing people's obituaries. It was a chance to honor and pay tribute to someone who deserved the accolades. That became kind of a niche for me at WWL,



Dominic at his WWL-TV going-away party with Peggy Scott Laborde and Errol Laborde

PHOTO COURTESY OF WWL-TV

one which I took pride in doing."

Dominic is equally proud of the volunteer work he does in the community, including leadership roles with the Press Club of New Orleans, St. Michael's School Chefs' Charity for Children fundraiser and

other professional and alumni organizations. His media work has won Emmys, Press Club awards and other prestigious honors.

So what are Dominic's plans for his new position at WYES? How can he add to the legacy and inventory of the station's already impressive list of visual products and accomplishments?

"We're always looking at 'What's the next thing? What's the next project we can work on?'" he explained. "A big push of ours is to do more digitally; more online, because oftentimes that's where the audience is watching us. A lot of our viewers still watch us on TV but now we're streaming because it is so popular. We're trying to offer things that meet the demand. The world has changed. The media landscape has changed. So it's a challenge for us to keep up with but it's fun. You get to create new things."

Summing up, he said, "As a producer we're trained to be more humble; be in the background. I've always tried to make it not about me but make the star look good. Making the talent look good. Making the product look good. I've always felt that way and always will."



Dominic and Sally-Ann Roberts at going-away party PHOTO COURTESY OF WWL-TV