

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Deborah Roberts

PERSON

Roberts, Deborah, 1960-

Alternative Names: Deborah Roberts;

Life Dates: September 20, 1960-

Place of Birth: Perry, Georgia, USA

Residence: New York, New York

Work: New York, New York

Occupations: Television News Reporter; Television News Correspondent

Biographical Note

One of the top black women in broadcast journalism, Deborah Roberts has worked as an anchor, a talk show host, and a reporter. Born on September 20, 1960 in the small town of Perry, Georgia, Roberts was one of nine children. Her father, Ben Roberts, owned a carpet installation business. Even as a girl, Roberts admired television newscasters and dreamed of making it big. She attended the University of Georgia and graduated in 1982 with her B.A. degree in journalism.

After graduating from college, Roberts began working at WTVM-TV in Columbus, Georgia. She later worked in Knoxville, Tennessee for a time, and then, in 1987, moved to WFTV-TV, ABC-TV's Orlando affiliate. In Orlando, Roberts became a bureau chief and served as the station's field anchor at NASA during shuttle launches. She also co-anchored the weekend news. The Orlando Sentinel named Roberts the top local female anchor.

In 1990, Roberts began working for NBC news as a general assignment reporter for the Atlanta and Miami bureaus. She traveled to the Middle East in the wake of the Gulf War. In 1992, she went to Barcelona to cover the Summer Olympics and her coverage later garnered her a Sports Emmy. Later that year, when NBC started the newsmagazine Dateline NBC, Roberts was picked as a reporter for the show. She also worked as substitute anchor on the evening news. After five years at NBC, three of them with Dateline NBC, Roberts returned to ABC, as a correspondent for Dateline NBC's rival show, 20/20. In her time on 20/20, Roberts has reported on such varied topics as sexual abuse in the Amish community, the plight of refugees in Rwanda and manic depression in young children. She did a segment on the emotional journey of African Americans

returning to the places in Africa where their ancestors were held as slaves as well as an interview with baseball's Darryl Strawberry exploring the destructiveness of alcohol abuse. She has also worked as a substitute anchor on other ABC shows, including Good Morning America and World News Weekend. Roberts' work is widely acclaimed, and she has received the Clarion Award for excellence in communications.

Roberts married NBC weatherman Al Roker in 1995. The couple now lives in New York City with their children.

Roberts was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on July 26, 2007.

Related Entries

Perry High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

H.S.

Perry Elementary School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Perry Middle School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

University of Georgia [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

B.A.

NBC News [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Correspondent

ABC News [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Correspondent

WFTV-TV [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Reporter

WBIR-TV [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Reporter

WTVM-TV [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Reporter

Women in Need [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

