

Cable Comments

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She strolled into my office the first summer that we were developing the concept of Community Television in 1983. Sharon McDonald was just returning from a tennis match and decided to follow up on an article she had read in the Observer. "Just what is this opportunity involving television?" she asked. Having a teaching background with a blend of Journalism and Television, Sharon's curiosity had been aroused. You could feel the energy and enthusiasm in the room. As usual when the opportunity came to talk about my favorite subject, I had many ideas.

One of the special privileges of my position is the ability to help people turn their ideas into real results through television. Sharon and I definitely had ideas!

Since she was teaching she agreed to join up with a team of folks and share in the production of a News Show which we entitled 'Community Upbeat'. Eventually the team turned the show into a documentary talk show format. They explored issues of social significance. Everyone learned the skills they would need to produce the show through hands-on experience.

Sharon McDonald always looked for opportunities for practical applications of her newly found skills. Since she was teaching science in the Plymouth School District, Sharon videotaped a Science Fair and incorporated interviews for television.

In 1986 Sharon was offered the position of Cable Television Manager/Teacher for Clarenceville Public Schools! She directs all the functions for the school district's educational access channel, which provides 5 hours of student programming on a

daily basis. She was now in a situation to explore the creative relationships of the educational and governmental bureaucracies which are dedicated to the service of community television.

The lessons learned through MetroVision were just the beginning to the expanding horizons of many people. Sharon put into practice the following production elements: script writing, producing, on-camera performing in studio, remote productions, scheduling, and teaching about various pieces of equipment. Working with her students to produce the award winning series "Every Year" provides Sharon with the motivation to explore new ideas.

Patience and foresight are characteristics she found necessary, as she has diligently attended meeting after meeting to nurture the relationships necessary to open the doors to future technology.

Meanwhile, because of its relationship with the Community Upbeat team this type of television programming was receiving Statewide acclaim. The Archdiocese of Detroit encouraged some of the productions to take place in their Detroit studios.

Throughout the past eight years Sharon and I continue to cross paths. This past fall we were honored with the opportunity to teach at Oakland Community College. Our class is called Radio and Television Studio Management. We have had fun sharing our resources with students and learning from them each week. There are many times throughout the three hour evening that our minds will tune into the same idea and the entire class will join in on a lively discussion.

What we are witnessing is a real success story. Community Television has received a great deal of acclaim. Community Television reaches out and explores new ideas which will en-

hance the industry. A person with Sharon McDonald's wisdom, intelligence, and personality is always in demand. One indeed does become a goal-oriented professional with excellent communication, organizational and leadership talents.

Each of her students will take great strides towards their own success. Here are some of the awards which the students and Sharon have won:

1990 — Six LARA Awards for student produced programming (Livonia Access Recognition Award)

1990 — Two SADD Video Production Awards (Students Against Driving Drunk)

1989 — Six LARA Awards for student produced programming

1988 — National Education Association Award for excellence in education (one of ten national recipients)

1988 — Michigan Education Association Award for excellence in education (one of two recipients in the State of Michigan)

1987 — Third Place Student Emmy Award for 30 second PSA on substance abuse.



Sharon McDonald