



PHIL & CAROLYN BAYLY

Facing Life with Passion, Humor & Love

By Jenna Caputo/ Photography by Tara Wiley Photography at West Mountain & Contributions from the Bayly Family

Life is funny. Sometimes you're stuck tagging along to something as a kid, and years later, it suddenly not only becomes your passion, but even manages to seep into your career! That's what happened to Phil Bayly.

Phil grew up in the Chicago suburb of Evanston before living in Colorado for 11 years. He studied journalism, economics and political science at the University of Denver and Colorado State University. He knew he would have to start at the bottom and work his way up, but Phil wanted to be in journalism because he wanted to find a way to help. "I wanted to help the world," he says. "I grew up in the 1960s and '70s. There were things in the world that needed fixing, like racism. I wanted to help. As a journalist, I always tried to provide my viewers with raw data with as little bias as possible. I just wanted to provide viewers with true data, then they could use their own life experiences to reach their own opinion."

He started working in radio news in Colorado for six years before he made the transition to television. He initially had the typical transient journalist lifestyle, living in places like Pennsylvania, Wyoming and Michigan before he moved to NY and eventually landed a job with WNYT TV 13. He became so fond of the Capital Region that he decided to stay and worked 32 years as reporter and

anchor for Newschannel 13, quickly becoming a Capital Region favorite. He loved his years as a field reporter, repeatedly turning down offers to be an anchor. "I liked being in the field, 'rolling around in the mud, the blood and the beer,'" he explains. But that all changed when local anchor, Ed Dague, became sick and had to leave his evening post. Channel 13 moved Jim Kambrich to Ed's spot and asked Phil to take the morning position. To his surprise, he enjoyed the post much more than expected and quickly formed a great team with morning meteorologist Paul Caiano. He enjoyed it so much that when they asked him to anchor full time, he accepted without hesitation.

Journalism has always been a fulfilling career, and Phil was passionate about the work he did every day. He woke up at midnight and headed to the station by 1AM to work with his producer to settle everything for the show that day, usually writing all his own copy and inserting the things he thought the audience would appreciate. The job was never boring, and the thing he loved the most was the content itself. "I loved to find out what was happening and why," he says. "I also loved the people I met. I met seven presidents of the United States. I met great athletes and rock music stars. I was lowered into a bear's den where she was hibernating with her three

new cubs. I also covered stories of enormous impact – the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center, presidential primaries and elections, murders, fires, natural disasters and all the rest.”

He considers himself very lucky to be a part of all that. His big frustration these days, though, is seeing the change in media and what people are now mistaking for journalism. “People with agendas are fooling people with their publications, inserting opinion in the place of facts. Some people are being tricked into believing things that aren’t true. It’s hard for people, right now, to figure out who to believe.”

He never lost his passion for journalism, but he always loved to write, and he realized he wanted to take a step back and focus more on his writing. He decided to retire and leave television. He had written a few drafts of a story he had been tinkering with since 1998, and felt it was time to focus on publishing it. The book, *Murder on Skis*, pulls from one of his other passions in life – skiing. “I’ve been a snow skier all my life,” Phil says. “I literally cannot remember when I was too young to ski. I’ll admit, I didn’t love skiing from the beginning, but I was the youngest of four kids and too young to leave home. I didn’t mind the skiing, but it was FREEZING in Wisconsin. That’s where the skiing was. And, I was a child wearing only knickers (seriously, mom dressed us all in knickers and thick socks to go skiing) and homemade knit sweaters (pretty sweaters, but not warm). But by the sixth or seventh grade, I found that I loved skiing. I’ve been kind of a ski bum ever since. I chose to go to college in Colorado. I’d schedule all my classes in the morning, no matter how early. Afternoons were set aside for skiing.” He has always been a competitor, playing football and track in high school, and ski racing and rugby in college. But ski racing he stuck with, racing until he was 61 years old.

Who knew that skiing would find a way into his career? Combining two of his passions has been a labor of love that finally paid off with his book published this year. *Murder on Skis* is a murder mystery set at a fictional ski resort in Montana. A number of deaths originally explained as accidents, gets another look from a TV journalist and law officers, raising the possibility that a serial killer may be lurking in the resort community.

Since the book was originally started so long ago, there was a lot of work that needed to be done. It was a daunting task. “Let me tell you about Phil’s book,” says Carolyn Micheli Bayly, Phil’s wife. “After retiring, he had many full days watching every episode of *Monk* and *NCIS*. He loved to watch skiing, football, baseball,



basketball and NO mention of completing a book he started 22 years ago. I never saw his book manuscript until this past year. A lot has changed in our world in the last 22 years, like everybody wasn’t carrying a cell phone then! He had to rewrite to accommodate that. Phil hinted he’d start writing his book when his office had an extra bookshelf. So that’s where this book started. I picked up the bookshelf at a tag sale and it began... if I only knew it wasn’t that easy.” A big transition in the revising process came with his formatting. Used to writing all in lowercase letters since the studio prompter changes everything to caps, Carolyn had to remind Phil to put it back to normal sentence case.

Carolyn grew up right here in the Capital District after being born in Jamaica Queens in NYC. Her parents were from Poland and Canada. She, too, was exposed to the cold, snowy winters of the Northeast and Canada, and loved being outside making igloos out of snow piles and skating at Ann Lee Pond. Her mom was the youngest of 16, and they would often pile into her dad's Volkswagen Beetle a few times a year to go see the family, skiing with a rope tow, flying down a hill on a saucer, eating heated maple syrup on the snow and all the fun winter activities that kids did without technology. She started skiing in her teens.

Carolyn was a Fine Arts major at Junior College of Albany (now Sage), originally pursuing a career as a graphic artist. Life took a turn, and she ended up with various jobs working in the Department of Criminal Justice before becoming a General Contractor and then moving into real estate where she has worked the past 31 years as a Broker for Coldwell Banker Prime Properties in Clifton Park and at Prime Companies in Latham. It was a hard business to get started in. Her aunt initially recruited her, but Carolyn didn't realize at the time that she really needed 5K in the bank to stay above water with all the expenses and dues. Interest rates at the time were 16%. It was a flexible job, but hard on family life. It turned into a rewarding career for her. "It's a people business. It's always been rewarding to help people and share what I know so buyers/sellers can succeed with the biggest purchase they may ever make. The real estate market can be so vulnerable, so susceptible to bad information. That being said, I work with so many amazing real estate agents in the Capital District."

Carolyn and Phil met on a blind date in 2010, were engaged on the Winding Brook ski run on Jiminy Peak, married in 2014 and have had a lot of humor and love in their lives since. "He called me and asked me out," Carolyn remembers. "I didn't even know who this guy on TV was, but it began there. It led to more dates and adventures and even to dancing outside Provence Restaurant on the sidewalk in Stuyvesant Plaza with a small ensemble playing music."

"Doing almost anything with Carolyn is fun," says Phil, "kayaking, tennis, skiing. She has a tremendous gift of laughter and loves to share it. It's one of her many great qualities, maybe the greatest. She is a saint to put up with my odd schedule while I worked for Newschannel 13. I'm so glad I have more time to spend with her now, as well as our kids."

The two love to travel in the U.S. and abroad. Phil has traveled to all 50 states. "Traveling with Phil is like an open history book," says Carolyn. "He loves the mountains and I love the beach. Accommodating both on the same vacation is always fun." They are also active with STRIDE, a group that teaches disabled athletes how to ski and snowboard, among other things. Phil is an advocate for preserving the area's historic buildings and sites, and they often support the local arts community.

They have had fun promoting Phil's book and learning and participating in the creative aspect of the business, and Phil is pretty excited to not have to get up at midnight anymore! He's working on a second book now, and even though he is no longer part of television journalism, he still strives to make a positive impact on the world. As he always says on his school visits, "Have fun in this life, but make sure you leave the world a better place than you found it." Carolyn agrees. "Remember where you came from, treat people like you want to be treated, and heck, smile, say hi to the people you walk by. Be mindful, things are never what they seem."

If they could affect the big things in the world in the future, they would love to see peace and no discrimination, cures for cancer and Alzheimer's and protection for our environment.

"I wouldn't object to world peace," says Phil. "I'd like people to forget their differences and recognize all the things they have in common. I'll bet dogs couldn't tell us apart if they couldn't sniff us. Man's inhumanity toward man is one of the big reasons I went into journalism. Hmm... what else would I like in the future? I always look forward to chicken wings!"

For more information on Murder on Skis, visit murderonskis.com.

