

Pat Gallen '07

Please provide your biographical information.

Pat Gallen, CBS3 reporter & anchor. Philadelphia, PA native. Communications Studies major, Journalism minor at WCU '07. I decided on West Chester because, for one, the school is incredibly budget-friendly. Also, I had just fallen in love with the town and the beautiful campus on a tour and realized it was the right place to go. Great decision!

What made you go into Communication Studies?

From a young age, maybe 6 or 7 years old, I knew that I wanted to be in radio and television. Growing up, my obsession with sports, and Sportscenter on ESPN, led me down the path I would eventually go. So entering into Communications Studies with an emphasis in journalism was a no-brainer, and it's served me well so far!

What is your official title and what are your responsibilities in your current position?

CBS3 reporter/anchor. It's a hybrid role with our morning show. I do everything from sports anchoring and reporting, to feature segments, to filling in on our traffic reports, and more recently, anchoring news for the first time in my career, which was fun. I started at CBS3 as sports reporter, but my role has evolved over the 3 ½ years I've been here.

What is a typical day like at work?

Monday through Friday my alarm goes off between 2:30-2:45am. Somehow, I do NOT hit snooze (although most days I wish I did!). I am in the office no later than 4am to prepare for our morning show which runs from 430-7am. Whatever my role is that day is typically known well in advance, and that usually requires me to be ready for multiple segments throughout the 2 ½ hours. Sometimes it's several sports-related hits, like reporting on the biggest sports story of the day. Other times I am unveiling a feature package. Some days I'm at the news desk in-studio. Really depends on the day. But each day is a new and exciting adventure.

After the live show is over, it's back to my desk to work on new stories/projects for future shows. That involves going through video, preparing scripts, or coordinating with an editor to finish a project. Some days I'm out shooting a story or interview.

Then comes Sunday morning...

During the football season, I am one of the co-hosts of our Eagles Sunday Kickoff show. It's a weekly half-hour program in which we preview the upcoming Eagles game – and that's truly my area of expertise. I have a decade in the sports media industry, so I love waking up to talk football on a Sunday.

The best part of the job is that no two days are alike, so it keeps it fresh and fun.

What have been the biggest challenges at work?

I think being creative every day can be a challenge. Also, I find that I was uber-connected to social media without taking time for myself for a long period -- and that can lead to feeling tired and burned out (not just in my business, but in any walk of life). So it's good to know when to go full bore and when to relax and shut it off. That way you're fresh when it matters most.

What do you enjoy most about your current position?

I would be lying if I said I enjoy waking up at 2:30am! But what I do love most is the fact that I get paid to have fun every day. My role in sports or feature reporting can lead me to some interesting places. I have done stories climbing trees, climbing walls, snowboarding, skiing, water skiing, cooking, canoeing, kayaking, and the list goes on! It has also introduced me to incredible people from all over our region and country, and in various walks of life.

I've also been lucky enough to interview so many star athletes and coaches here in Philadelphia. And ordinarily, when I show up, we get to have a fun, candid conversation, which is just the way I want it! I've found that most professional athletes would rather discuss topics outside of the "X's and O's." They are the best interviews -- fun, engaging, off the cuff.

What skills, talents, and other traits are useful and necessary to do your job?

First and foremost, to be in a communications-based career, it's important to be a good communicator! Seems easy, right? Specifically in television, the number one goal for anyone should be to hone their writing skills. Being creative with words is paramount in this industry and serves as a proper baseline for many of the activities you'll be involved with -- be it on-air talent, producer, or, wait for it...writer!

Another smart thing I was taught was that the best ability is availability. Be present. Be willing. You'll have to go above and beyond, because so many people are looking to break into TV, radio, and writing. Aside from that, TV and radio are so personality-driven that it's important to know your own strengths and weaknesses in that regard, and continually work on them as you progress.

Do you have a favorite or funny story about work?

The highlight of my career to this point is one that may never be topped. Last February, I was sent to Minnesota to cover the Eagles Super Bowl win over the Patriots. I spent 9 days in the frozen tundra of the upper Midwest, but it was a dream come true. As a kid growing up in Philadelphia, it was a goal of mine to one day cover a championship in Philadelphia -- and I was center stage for all of it.

During the week leading up, my interview with Kevin Hart was one of the funniest things I've ever done. He's a Philly native of course; we actually went to rival high schools (I went to Northeast, he is a George Washington grad).

Following the actual game, I was on the field as confetti rained down, interviewing players and dignitaries. After that, I was in the Eagles locker room, live, literally in the middle of the action as Doug Pederson made his final speech and led the team in a prayer. It was an incredible moment. The day consisted of seeing the Eagles finally hoist the Lombardi Trophy, sharing a hug with Brian Dawkins, being front row for Doug Pederson's speech...the list of craziness goes on and on!

What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

Love to stay active! Working out, playing basketball and tennis are some of the ways I try. My wife and I love trying new restaurants. We love the beach and traveling. We just went to Vancouver for the first time -- would highly recommend!

Where do you see yourself in five years?

Great question -- not even sure where I'll be in 5 minutes! Things are so rapidly changing in this industry that it's so hard to say. But it hopefully involves telling a fun, uplifting story. And as long as I keep having fun, then I'm in.

What advice would you give to a current student who aspires to follow in your footsteps and pursue a similar career path?

To work harder than everyone else – and when you think you’ve worked hard, keep working. As I said, TV is changing by the minute, so you’ll have to be a chameleon. How many things can you bring to the table that will set you apart from the competition?

And maybe most importantly, do it because you love it. So many students I speak with want to be famous or make a lot of money. Don’t fall into that trap. If you get into this business for the wrong reasons, it usually won’t work out.

How has your WCU education contributed to your success?

My professors at WCU preached hard work and dedication to the craft. When the TV studio inside the E.O. Bull center opened way back when, using a hands-on approach gave me a new perspective on the industry I was about to break into. It was so important for me to be able to utilize that space to be creative. Wish I could find some of my old stuff!

What do you consider to be your greatest accomplishments (both personally and professionally)?

Working for a TV station in my hometown, without having to leave to pass through smaller markets, had always been a goal of mine. To make that happen is really an accomplishment I do not take for granted. Personally, I just try to live life by helping and supporting others and being a good husband, son, brother, etc. I hope I’ve been able to do that and can continue to do that.

As I mentioned previously, being able to cover the Eagles Super Bowl victory and championship parade, as well as the Villanova championships, has been the highlight of my career.

What’s your favorite memory from when you were a student at WCU?

Don’t know that a singular moment stands out, but just being part of a vibrant, enthusiastic, academic community was exactly what I was looking for. I’ve made lifelong friends and to this day I still keep in touch with the one and only Dr. Ed Lordan. He always pushed me to be better, and still does! Looking back on group projects where we put in a lot time, energy, effort and laughs are some of my fondest memories. WCU taught me how to work hard and how to grow. And it’s something I certainly cherish.