

WALLIN *Pamela*

Journalism truly gave my life meaning. Work - for many of us - provides definition and identity, and if you are lucky or determined, it also provides a sense of purpose.

Charles Dickens once wrote that what is meant by knowledge of the world is simply an acquaintance with the infirmities of man. In other words, to be truly knowledgeable we must recognize human frailty.

And that's how I always saw my work as a journalist – the art of collecting and telling stories of the human condition.

I was *the accidental journalist*...in fact, I did not have a life plan nor a charted course –but I was willing to take a risk. Seduced by the politics and possibility of changing the world, I gave up on becoming a French teacher and signed on to political science and psychology....and eventually became a social worker.

I began my professional life in the Prince Albert maximum-security penitentiary, where I was on a mission to save troubled souls, reform a system and try to help change the painfully dysfunctional family and community structures that are so much in evidence in our native communities.

The warden -more realistically, said I was a hostage incident waiting to happen! But, in the end, he proved willing to take a risk.

So – I was launched on my mission to save souls –one at a time.

But as John Lennon once wrote –life is what happens once you've made plans!

In less than a year, a phone call came from a frantic CBC radio producer, asking if I could somehow wangle a couple of weeks off work to fill in as the host of his open line show – I was, he confessed, his desperate last choice –but at least I could form a sentence as I had done a lot public speaking at university.

I wasn't in the CBC radio building 15 minutes until I understood the power of the medium – that we/I could save --well, at least influence- many souls at once!

It was one of many serendipitous moments in my life for which I am truly grateful.

(The word serendipity, though not the thing itself, was coined by the 18th century novelist Horace Walpole who wrote a fairy story about three princes travelling thru the land of Serendip. The princes, wrote Walpole, " were always making discoveries, by accident and sagacity, of things they were not in quest of. Serendipity is the province of the happy accident.)

So, I bid farewell to the prison and began a 30-year adventure in radio, newspapers and television –on both sides of the microphone, and in many countries.

My mission –simply put – was to, without fear or favour, inform minds and provide perspective so that others could choose wisely – about where to live, how to vote, or what to think.

It was work worth doing.

A brief history of where that serendipitous turn led....

In the mid 70's, Pamela was first hired by the public broadcaster to host an open-line radio show in Regina. She went on to produce the three-hour morning show there before moving to the nation's capital to produce the radio morning show there, while also providing on-air reporting during that time. She then moved on to Toronto to work first for radio syndication and then for the ground breaking nightly national radio show *As It Happens*, as the senior political producer. She covered federal politics, elections and leadership campaigns and international breaking news. She also worked as a researcher and producer for *Sunday Morning*, producing feature interviews and documentaries on leading political and literary figures.

Pamela was then recruited by the country's largest newspaper, the *Toronto Star* for their Parliamentary Bureau, focusing on political coverage and while there, she began guesting on CTV's *Question Period*, which led to her hiring by CTV less than 2 years later.

Pamela was recruited by the country's largest television network to Co-Host the morning show - Canada AM. In addition, she reported from international hot spots including the Mid-East, Central America, and was one of the few female correspondents who covered the Falklands War. She also covered other major stories such as economic summits, royal visits and elections and Pamela also conducted the annual year end interviews with Canada's prime ministers.

She then became the first woman to serve as Ottawa Bureau Chief when she took on the task for CTV. She ran an operation of 30 reporters and crew, and reported, on air, as the network's Chief national correspondent, and continued to regularly host the morning show, Canada AM! She also produced and hosted the program *Question Period* and regularly anchored the weekend national news and co-anchored, with Lloyd Robertson, all election and special network coverage.

In 1992, Pamela became the first Canadian woman to co-anchor the nightly national television newscast, *Prime Time News* for the CBC.

Pamela went on to build her own production company, Pamela Wallin Productions, and was a partner in a studio production facility called Newstheatre. She created, produced and hosted a live, one-hour nightly national interview program. She launched two ground breaking Internet projects working in partnership with The Globe and Mail and Chapters, then the largest national book chain. Pamela hosted the Canadian edition of *Who Wants to be a Millionaire*, garnering the highest ratings ever for a Canadian network production, and during that time, she authored three books based on her own life and her experiences as a reporter and television interviewer.

Pamela has won many awards for her journalistic work including a Gemini and she was named to the Broadcasting Hall of Fame.