

UMBrella

Speaker Series 2020



In a virtual event Nov. 10, 2020, former White House correspondent Ann Compton talked about past and current events and how she balanced work and family during her pioneering career in TV journalism.

[Read about the event in UMB News](#)

[Watch a video of the event](#) 

[Ann Compton's Biography](#)

Ann Compton, a journalism pioneer as the first woman assigned to cover the White House on network television, built an impactful career during her 41 years on the air for ABC News.

After retiring from daily coverage in 2014, Compton reignited her career by returning to ABC to cover the 2016 political conventions and accepting a fellowship at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government focusing on media coverage of the 2016 election. She also holds a seat on the governing council of the University of Virginia's prestigious Miller Center, a nonpartisan affiliate of the school that specializes in presidential scholarship, public policy, and political history.

Compton's career at ABC News spanned seven presidents and 10 presidential campaigns. Assigned to the White House in 1974, she reported for ABC News broadcasts from Washington, D.C., and around the globe, traveling with presidents, vice presidents, and first ladies.

President Barack Obama announced her retirement when calling on her at a West Wing news conference saying, "Ann Compton, everybody here knows, is not only the consummate professional but is also just a pleasure to get to know."

Compton was traveling with President George W. Bush on Sept. 11, 2001, and was the only broadcast reporter allowed to remain on Air Force One to report on behalf of all the news media during the chaotic hours after the terrorist attacks when the president was unable to return directly to Washington. For that coverage, which she considers the most significant story of her career, Compton received special recognition in the awards bestowed on ABC's coverage, including an Emmy, a Peabody, and the Silver Baton from the DuPont Awards at Columbia University.

Her colleagues elected Compton president of the White House Correspondents' Association for 2007-2008. She was chairman of the Radio and Television Correspondents' Association on Capitol Hill in 1987-1988. The Commission on Presidential Debates selected Compton to serve as a debate panelist in 1988 and 1992. Additionally, she has been inducted into six halls of fame and has received five honorary university degrees.

Compton is married to William Hughes, MD, a doctor in Washington. They are the parents of three sons and a daughter and the grandparents of four granddaughters and a grandson. Compton says her most valued award is a golden statuette bestowed by the National Mothers' Day Committee naming her a Mother of the Year in 1988.
