

# This is Ernie Anastos. Positively.

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BY CHRISTOPHER A. PAPE

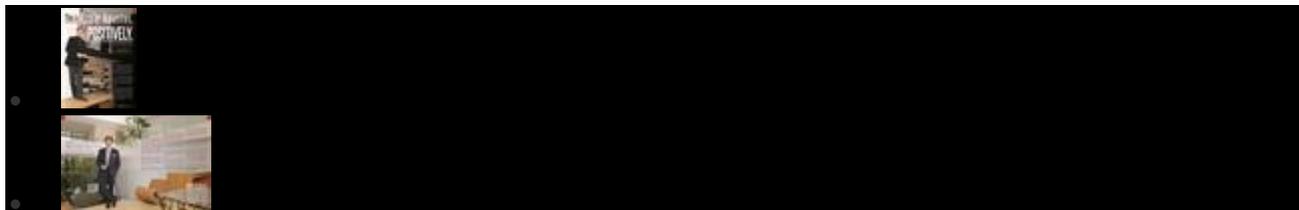
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The pressure of being the font of information in this city is intense. But it is a responsibility that Ernie Anastos does with circumspection and with a smile. After all, he is New York. Forever synonymous with our fair metropolis, Mr. Anastos has enjoyed recognition and success beyond which many achieve.

Now in his third decade of anchoring, Ernie is excited to present a new show that he's hosting called "Positively Ernie." A new concept, which revolves around the reporting on and celebrating of positive news stories, the show is set to be a success. And Ernie couldn't be happier.

He sat down with us for an exclusive photoshoot and chat. What resulted was a wide-ranging discussion from his love of ties to what his full Greek name is. It was evident that Mr. Anastos is proud of his achievements and especially of exploring new territory with "Positively Ernie." We thank him for his time and hope you like the piece as much as I liked interviewing him.

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About the Space:

Incomparable. Groundbreaking. Iconic. Legendary. These words describe not only the spectacular space we shot in with Ernie, but also those that have lived at 101 East 63rd: Halston, Gianni Agnelli and Gunter Sachs. Designed by Paul Rudolph, as his only complete Manhattan townhouse, it is on sale through for \$38.5 million.

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Resident (R): Thank you for doing a photo shoot with us today!

Ernie Anastos: I liked doing something different. We had a lot of options and I liked the fact that I didn't wear a tie. As you may know, wearing a tie is my signature and it was very comfortable to go without one.

R: Okay. You've got me. How did a tie become your signature?

EA: I have always had a passion for ties. I have so many that I don't even want to tell you how many... it's in the hundreds. I have been on the air for so many years, 34 in New York City and I just started collecting them.

A tie's color is very important because it sets the tone of my personality. I am very careful about my selection; I don't go overboard; viewers appreciate them. In fact, I gave a few away on the air as part of a charitable giving drive. We gave away several ties with a personal label on it and it was a good thing to do because every time a tie was placed, I

made a contribution to St. Francis Food Pantries and Shelters, which feeds the hungry. The organization provides 1.5 million meals a year to needy families in New York.

Clearly, then the ties have become a signature and if I go into a store I just sort of lose myself; I start looking at the ties and the difficult thing is that I have collected so many that it is hard to find something different. When I am traveling I am always looking for one that hasn't been worn before. They are my obsession and I love it!

R: You talked about being in New York for 34 years; can you talk about the process of getting into the media business?

EA: I started very early in life; I was probably 10 years old when I used to sit under the kitchen table listening to the radio. I'd turn the volume low when the announcer was speaking, pretending I was a disc jockey and when the music would come back on I would turn the volume back up again. I had wires and speakers all over the house and I would make my parents listen to me; they had to listen - they were a captivated audience. This went on until I was at least 13 years old.

I had a teacher who was very encouraging. One day I asked: "Mrs. Ryan, how do you know what career to choose?" She was so sweet, she replied, "Whatever you enjoy doing will be the avenue to your success; so do what you love."

So when I was 16 I went to the local radio station; I grew up in a small town in New Hampshire. I knocked on the door and spoke with the program director and asked if I could sweep floors, put records away; anything I could do to be involved with the station? He liked my voice and had me read some news. He must have been impressed because he offered me a job hosting a teenage talk show on Saturday mornings.

That was my first job in radio and I started there working as a weekend announcer. I would sign the radio station on and off, morning till night. I worked at the radio station while I was a student at Northeastern University in Boston.

As an aside, several years ago, I started investing in radio stations. I bought ten of them in upstate New York and in the New England area. One of the stations that I bought is the first one I worked at - talk about coming full circle. Later, I sold it to the governor of New Hampshire.

Back to the main story, eventually, I came to New York as a desk assistant for CBS and carried news copy for Walter Cronkite. Eventually, I decided I wanted to be on the air and I knew I would have to make a change. I landed a job as a newscaster in Boston at WRKO, the number one radio station in the city. I had a terrific time there for about five years and they promoted me, as the news director, to Chicago where they company had bought a new station.

I wanted to make a break into television so I started applying to different places and it was hard to get your foot in the door because back then there weren't all of the outlets we have today. Finally, I landed a job in Rhode Island at WPRI TV.

Shortly after I was on the air, people started knocking on my door. The offers were in different markets and I chose New York because my relatives was all here. The rest is history.

R: What stations have you worked at in the city?

EA: In 1978, I was hired by WABC, Channel 7, Eyewitness News. I did the weekend anchoring. Three months later they named me the 11 o'clock news anchor. I took over with Rose Ann Scamardella (the inspiration for SNL's Roseanne Roseannadanna). I spent eleven years there and as fate would have it, I was made an offer from WCBS that I couldn't refuse. I left on good terms and had a great time at CBS. I was there for ten years. I moved over to Channel 9, WWOR – it's the same company now as FOX 5. I've been with FOX 5 for seven years.

R: You've moved onto something a little different at Fox 5; can you tell us about that?

EA: Many people have been upset about the coverage of the news; it's so negative and disturbing. Everywhere I've gone, people have asked if they could get news that is more positive. In an effort to confront that need, I wrote a children's book called "Ernie and the Big Newz." It revolved around the adventures of a TV news anchor. The fun-filled book delivered engaging news stories with positive endings. The colorful illustrations were the work of Bill Gallo, the late legendary cartoonist for the New York Daily News.

A spin off of that book was to create this new program called "Positively Ernie." It has created a forum for people to be able to hear the advances in our world; everything people should be hearing that shows the world is not falling apart. We are doing four shows, on Saturdays, starting December 1st at 5:30pm on FOX 5.

The show will feature compelling stories and helpful information about actions and choices that make a real difference in people's lives. America's favorite medical expert, Dr. Oz, will be on every episode. He talks about the power of an optimistic attitude. Both he and I are dedicated to reinforcing a positive message with this new program.

It's my hope that my program will bring life and meaning to the work of America's volunteer firefighters; how sports athletes and celebrities contribute to charities and help with specific causes and how we all can make a difference. I recently delivered a speech on civility in the media and I am respectfully asking my colleagues at local television stations across America to join me in reporting on positive news.

R: What does it mean to be New Yorker?

EA: I have always been a New Yorker – always. When I came here as a child I knew I belonged here. I love the dynamics and diversity of the city. As I matured, I was able to appreciate it even more. I like the uniqueness; I like the people. I feel comfortable here, because it's the whole world in one city.

R: What do you do for fun in the city?

EA: Everything. If I start naming all the restaurants...I like a lot of the Greek restaurants. I love going out to dinner; I like the range of options. You name the cuisine we have it. I know one thing; my picture is up in all of the diners because Greeks own so many of them. They are all very proud.

I love the Museum of Natural History – I'm a big fan of Teddy Roosevelt. The Museum of Modern Art and the Metropolitan Museum are also my favorites. I love concerts; Broadway is fabulous. I can go shopping and not buy anything and still have an amazing time.

R: Everyone knows you as Ernie Anastos, but what is your full Greek name?

EA: I was named after my grandfather. He was a pioneer in the Greek Orthodox Church in America. He was one of the first one hundred ordained priests. His name was Anastasious Anastasiou. My father abbreviated our family name to Anastos.

My grandfather was very important to me; he left me many beautiful books. He was tall, had a white beard, shocking white hair. He had a strong voice and shared his family values with all of us. My grandfather respected everyone; respected mankind. He believed we all have a purpose.