

Former FOX 5 anchor breaks ground with 1st digital deaf network

By Deidra Dukes | Published 1 day ago | Black History Month | FOX 5 Atlanta

Black History Month: Karen Graham

Former Good Day Atlanta anchor Karen Graham has been a pioneer in broadcasting with her latest venture being Sign1News.

ATLANTA - Headquartered in Atlanta, Sign1News provides up-to-the-minute news and information in American Sign Language for deaf and hard of hearing viewers around the world.

The first of its kind digital news network is the vision of FOX 5 Atlanta alumnus Karen Graham, who now serves as Sign1News CEO and executive producer.

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Graham told FOX 5's Deidra Dukes that "it was an idea, seed that was planted, and it grew into all this."

Graham combined her passion for journalism and American Sign Language, also known as ASL, to form SIGN1NEWS. It is the only female-owned, minority-owned, network-affiliated digital news network for deaf and hard of hearing viewers in the world.

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She got here with a spirit of curiosity and a passion for service.

Graham took an interest in ASL and immersed herself in the language.

"Taking college classes and volunteering in the hearing-impaired community for years. Then came that day back in 2013, "My mom and I were on a Thelma and Louise girlfriend, mother-daughter trip, and she just looked at me and said, 'Hey why don't you merge your love of sign language with your skill as a journalist,'" and I said 'Hmmm' and I sat on it for a while."

Three years later, in 2016, Sign1News was born. The popular Good Day Atlanta host left FOX 5, teaming up with business partner Jabari Butler to launch the network. It's now being broadcast in 45 countries around the globe with over a million viewers every month.

"Being a hearing person in the deaf world that was the toughest because when we first launched a lot of people in the deaf community were like 'Who are you, why are you here? Why are you doing this?' with good reason. I wasn't coming in to save the deaf community. No. I was like, 'This is a gift I have. God has told me to offer this gift. Take it.' And over time, the deaf community here in the states and globally leaned in if you will and was like, 'OK. OK.'"

SIGN1NEWS has celebrated many historic achievements in the political, entertainment, and sports realm since its inception. It is the first and only CNN-affiliated digital deaf network and the first deaf network to be named a Google partner. Graham is proud of her team of anchors and multimedia journalists, who are all deaf and from diverse backgrounds, a reflection of the international audience.

Nearly four years after her first broadcast, Sign1News has become all Graham envisioned, a trusted news source for the deaf community.

"In the four years, through rain, snow, sleet, covid, we have not missed a day of broadcasting and I think we had to do that to prove that we are here, we are serious, we are not just playing around with this," Graham said. "We are here to provide news and information in American Sign Language. You need to be able to rely on us just like anyone else who turns on their tv set to CNN, FOX, ABC, CBS. Your newscaster is always sitting there. They have grown to trust you. They've grown to trust our staff. They're going to be there. Something is popping off, they're going to be there to show what's going on in the world because we are going to give it."

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