



LARRY WARREN: AUTHOR, PRODUCER AND JOURNALIST A PASSION FOR STORYTELLING

By Sedona Callahan Photo by Patrick Cone

Just in the telling of how he came to live in Park City, Larry Warren establishes himself as a great storyteller. The South Dakota plains where he was born were flat and tedious as far as he could see. "I had never seen a mountain, except on 'Bonanza' on TV," he said. Larry's father, however, through his work as a wholesale electronics distributor, was offered several opportunities to travel to locations in Europe, South America and Asia. In addition, he was a serious amateur photographer. The big family social event of the 1950s and '60s, the family slide show, was where Larry saw the places his parents had traveled to. "It was looking at all the places to see and things to do in those slides that kindled my lifelong passion for travel," said Larry.

His first big eye-opening, real-life road trip was to the Seattle World's Fair in 1962, when Larry was just 12 years old. "We crossed the barrens of eastern Montana and from there I could see the range of the Rockies, way off in the distance. I jumped out

of the car and took a whole roll of film. Every picture looked exactly the same, because the mountains were so far off and I stood in one place. But on that trip, we went to Glacier Park and into the Canadian Rockies. I saw all the best that year, and that started my passion for everything in the West."

Larry pursued this passion, for travel and the West, by leaving the northern plains for studies at the University of Denver, followed by taking a degree in journalism at the University of Utah, which enabled him to pursue his other passion, skiing. He later took off for six months of travel with his then-girlfriend, now-wife of 24 years, Carol Murphy. Driving to Alaska and down the West Coast, Larry made sure they returned through Utah so he could show it off to Carol. After Eurail and backpacking travels through Europe, they returned to reality flat broke. "I had \$200, and she owed me \$200," he said. "I landed a job in Salt Lake City and we returned here during Utah's worst drought. The slopes were brown in

mid-February." That was 1977, and Larry has lived in Utah ever since, calling Park City home since 1980, where he and Carol have raised their three children, Matthew, Megan and Andrew.

Over the next 27 years, Larry would work as news producer and broadcaster for Channel 2, KUTV, the CBS affiliate for Salt Lake City. "In those early days, KUTV was a really unique place. It was owned by a local family, and headed by George Hatch. He was a broadcaster who was here to serve our community. He was public spirited, and was a strong pull for me to stay. He believed in allowing us to take the time to go where we needed to go and get the story right. It was fantastic journalism, and in the years Hatch ran the station, it was a magical place."

While Larry has earned three Rocky Mountain Emmy® awards, he is particularly proud of three stories he participated in bringing to public awareness. "I was part of a team that made a connection between cancers occurring

downwind from the Nevada nuclear test site during the open air tests that took place during the 1950s. We were knocking on doors all over Utah talking to ‘Downwinders,’ finding clean-living Mormons devastated by cancers in their families.” Larry said team members found Atomic Energy Com-

Downwinders who were stricken with radiation-related illnesses prior to warnings of potential danger. Formal presidential and congressional apologies were also extended to the stricken people.

In the summer of 1979, Larry traveled to Miami to participate in the

Snow: The Park City Story. Silver and Snow tells the tale of Park City’s conversion from silver mining town to top international ski-vacation destination. “I had done two films on Park City earlier, *Park City Turns to Skiing*, and *Mines to Moguls*, but I felt like they were two incomplete jobs, not well done because I was not an accomplished filmmaker at the time.

I wanted to do the story right. I was able to talk with Tom and Will Sullivan and a lot of other old-timers who hung out at Alpha Beta’s café for coffee every morning. Now the genuine, native-born miners still in town can be counted on one hand.”

Most recently, Larry wrote the extensively researched coffee-table-style history book, “Park City Mountain of Treasure,” which details Park City’s 130-year history, profiling local personalities of the past, and exploring the evolution from mining industry to a world-class ski resort capable of staging the 2002 Olympic Winter Games. “Park City Mountain of Treasure” is being updated for a re-release this winter.

Recently retired from KUTV, Larry is taking a look both backward and forward. “I’ve done news for 33 years. I’ve decided I want to tell my own stories in my own way.” Larry expects to vigorously pursue good stories in an area he is passionate about — the environment. “I’d like to be more of an advocacy journalist, highlighting issues people should know about, such as the ratcheting up of pressures for the extraction of resources, the management and balancing of public land use, and preservation of open space.” Larry intends to tell his stories through film for public TV, books, and magazines, covering the Intermountain West, in the places he knows best, in the way he knows best. “Journalism allows me to tell stories, go places, and meet people. Every day is different. I’m doing what I love.”

The boy from South Dakota has indeed traveled a long way from home. ☺

Writer/Photographer Sedona Callahan must take 94 more trips to Yellowstone to catch up with Larry Warren’s trip count. And she will. With her camera and canoe.

“Journalism allows me to tell stories, go places, and meet people. Every day is different. I’m doing what I love.”

mission documents with specific instructions to wait on tests until the winds were blowing into Utah, with one document stating, “Utahns are a low-use segment of the population.”

Groundbreaking reporting by KUTV, the *Deseret News*, and Downwinders themselves becoming activists on their own behalf, contributed to the enactment of the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act. Signed by President George Bush in 1990, the act created a \$100-million trust fund to compensate

first routine use of satellite in local broadcasting. “I was proud of this because it was groundbreaking for local TV,” said Larry. “It was a big leap in technology.” It was also the nation’s most famous murder trial of its time — that of serial killer Ted Bundy, who, following a well-publicized trial, was sentenced to death for the murder of two college students. Bundy was also convicted and sentenced for the murder of a 12-year-old girl, and in his only interview, boasted of having killed hundreds of victims.

In 1988, Larry covered the devastating fires in Yellowstone National Park, a place he has visited over 100 times for hiking and wildlife viewing. During the fire, more than 793,000 acres were affected; about 300 large mammals, mostly elk, perished; \$120 million was spent; and 25,000 people participated in the firefighting effort, the largest in United States history.

Larry also invented a regional beat called “Out West,” that took him on road trips around the West doing issue and feature stories, producing documentaries and magazine show segments for a show called “Extra.” “My news career has taken me to Europe four times for Olympic coverage. I’ve also been to Armenia following an earthquake; to Moscow; to the Guatemalan jungle to spend a week at a newly discovered Mayan city called El Mirador; to the North Slope of Alaska for energy stories; and along the whole length of the Iditarod trail to do a film on the dogsled race.”

Warren also produced, narrated, directed and wrote a documentary for KUED and the Park City Historical Society and Museum, called *Silver and*

**DON'T MISS
PARK CITY LIVING**

Park City Living is a beautifully designed guide to graceful mountain living with articles related to the home, real estate and local business.

Available on brochure racks throughout town.

Park City
magazine