

Transcript of “Meredith Garofalo, Certified Broadcast Meteorologist at WeatherNation in Centennial, Colorado”

Clear Skies Ahead: Conversations about Careers in Meteorology and Beyond

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Kelly Savoie:

Welcome to the American Meteorological Society's podcast series, Clear Skies Ahead: Conversations about Careers in Meteorology and Beyond. I'm Kelly Savoie, and I'm here with Rex Horner. We're excited to give you the opportunity to step into the shoes of an expert working in weather, water, and climate sciences.

Rex Horner:

And we're happy to introduce today's guest, Meredith Garofalo, a Certified Broadcast Meteorologist (CBM), at WeatherNation near Denver in Centennial, Colorado. Welcome, Meredith. Thanks very much for being with us today.

Meredith Garofalo:

Thank you guys so much and hopefully the weather in all of your neighborhoods that you're listening are nice. And if not, well, we're going to do our best to try to fix it, right?

Rex:

Yeah. It's chilly but clear, but we're ready to talk.

Meredith:

Awesome. Me too.

Kelly:

Meredith, could you tell us a little bit about your educational background and what sparked your interest in meteorology?

Meredith:

Absolutely. I was one of those little girls that when she was three loved the weather. Fascinated by it. I grew up in Cleveland, Ohio, and so we definitely get a lot of weather from lake-effect snow to severe weather in the summer and spring. I was sitting with my mother one day and she started to tell me about how she survived the super outbreak of 1974 in the tornado that devastated Xenia, Ohio. Just something about the way she told me the story and how she saw the tornado forming above the house across the streets, the hail was breaking the window.

Meredith:

They ran down to the basement, and they could actually see the tornado through those little windows in the basement. The cone where you don't see the bottom [because] it's so wide. It just touched out in

the backyard. I'm getting goosebumps right now every time I tell the story, because she told me how they got through it. And then when they got outside afterwards, the house next door was the split level. It was half gone. Their house was fine and everything else on the street was obliterated. It was completely gone.

Kelly:

That's surreal to hear.

Meredith:

As a child you're sitting there wide-eyed and just trying to put together what could do something like that. And then she said how she volunteered for the Red Cross. I don't know what it was, but something inside of me turned on that I wanted to help people survive these events and prepare for these types of events. As a three-year old, I got a Fisher-Price tape recorder. And some of our newer generations, probably this would be like a Facebook Live for you or something like that.

Meredith:

I started making weather forecasts on my tape recorder, watching the local and national channels and just started watching every single video I could from NOAA on tornadoes and reading books from the library on tornadoes. And then just became very fascinated with the weather. I was always a little weather geek. And then I went to doing the broadcasts in middle school, the morning announcements. And then in high school, I was the first female at Trinity High School to ever do the weather of the morning announcements.

Meredith:

And then I went to college at Valparaiso University where I got my bachelor's of science in meteorology and minors in television and radio communications. And I had two internships in college, which I think really got me excited about the broadcast field, and that was interning at a local radio station in Hammond, Indiana, which is WJOB AM, and then I also was an intern with the legendary Tom Skilling at WGN-TV. And after that, I was ready to go into the TV world and the broadcast world.

Rex:

Wow. You had a lot of extracurricular experience packed in since kindergarten it sounds like almost.

Meredith:

Yes.

Rex:

You took advantage of every opportunity you could find and it seemed to help you find a job in your profession and get as in-depth with your profession as possible. Can you tell us a little bit more about some of those internships that you had and how those kind of cemented your passion for the field?

Meredith:

I think everybody that... whether you're going into a broadcasting career or a more research-focused career, getting into the internship while you're in school makes you stay passionate, because the math

and the science has always been a challenge for me. And even my freshman year of college, I had a professor tell me to rethink my career because she didn't think my grades would get me to graduation.

Rex:

Wow.

Meredith:

That stayed with me my four years of college thinking I was always behind the other students, the ones that were getting A's on all the exams, and here I was getting Cs and sometimes failing them, and trying to keep my focus and my childhood passion and remind myself that I could do this. And then once I got those internships my senior year, it made me push for the end to run through and finish the race.

Meredith:

Because when I was doing the radio internship, I got to do the forecasting myself in addition to what I was doing in my classes, and then actually be on the radio once or twice a week giving a local weather updates. And then when I was interning with Tom Skilling, I got the first look and glance at what the broadcast world looked like. I was helping Tom and his team doing forecasting for *The Chicago Tribune* and writing up the article and proofreading it, and then learning how Tom forecasted and the other on-air meteorologists in the office.

Meredith:

Being in that real life experience reminded me of how excited I was to be doing that for my career after graduation. It was all through networking. There was some seniors in my class when I was a junior that were doing the internship, and so I reached out and said, "Hey, what would it take to be considered my senior year?" It was all about doing that networking in school and then using what I would learn in my broadcasting classes to put that to use to help me get these internships

Rex:

Networking 100% matters. You had one professor who was a terrible mentor, but then through the help of your upper-classmates, you were able to find some much better mentors in the field that got you going and were able to help you build your skillset.

Meredith:

Absolutely. I'm so thankful for them, because there were a lot of nights where I was about to go to my advisor and say, "You know what? Maybe I'll try to find something else to do." But now I think looking back, I'm thankful for that opportunity. Because when I do a lot of school talks, whether it's college or even high school or even grade school talks, and these kids say, "Well, I'm not good at math, or I really struggle with science," I'm like, "It's okay, because I was just in your shoes as well, and now I'm doing what I dreamed to do since I was a child. Anything's possible. You just can never give up."

Kelly:

What were some of the things that helped you get through those math courses? Did you get any tutoring, or did you just really focus and study as much as you could? Because I know a lot of people have trouble with the math courses. Any advice you could give them would be great.

Meredith:

Take advantage of the mentors. They are there to help you. They're upperclassmen that had to go through the same test and the same professors themselves, and they know what it's like. And they also know where there might be those trickier parts. I was seeing as many meteorology upperclassmen to help mentor me, but then also I would go to my professors, my physics professor, Professor Stanislaus, and to this day, I am so thankful for him, and I want to give him a shout out because I was failing physics. I told him I was having a hard time.

Meredith:

He paired me with a fantastic lab partner who really understood everything. We were able to work together to get through those really tough classes, but also those tough labs that we had. And he said, "Because you're never going to give up, I'm going to help you get through this class. You're never going to fail my class because I can see that you're working hard." I ended up getting I think Cs in physics, but you know what? I still got through the classes. I still learned so much.

Meredith:

Between the professors and the upperclassmen, and even just some of the kids in my class that I knew that I got it, it was okay for me to ask for help. And I had to remind myself that if we don't understand something, that's okay, because it only makes us better by asking questions.

Kelly:

Once you graduated, what was your first job in the field and how did you end up in Colorado?

Meredith:

I've had a very interesting career path over the last decade. And although there were a lot of challenges and ups and downs, I'm really thankful for everything along the way. My first job was actually two weeks out of college. Again, going back to networking, one of my friends had worked at a station in Zanesville, Ohio and I'm from Cleveland. The thought of going back to Ohio is really exciting to me. I networked with him. He got my reel in front of his boss. And two weeks after I graduated, I was doing weekends there.

Meredith:

Unfortunately, it didn't work out after three months, and here I was without a job in a town that was a very, very small town and not knowing what to do with my life. Because the first time I had tried, it just didn't work out. I didn't give up. I ended up waitressing at two different restaurants, and I also wrote for the local paper to stay in the media business and worked really hard doing tapes with one of my friends who was a photographer at the station that I had worked at. And it took... Let's see, that was in June.

Meredith:

And then in January the following year, I got offered a job at Rapid City, South Dakota's ABC affiliate KOTA. I was so excited to have that I guess you could say your second chance, and I do want to give my boss a shout out at that first station. Because even though it didn't work out, he told me, "Meredith, don't give up, you're going to get back in. This is obviously a stepping stone to go to your next place." And then I ended up with my first full gig at KOTA and I did weekend weather. I also was a reporter, and I reported on everything from science to the stabbing in the local market. It was so frustrating.

Kelly:

Wow. Meredith, you were doing everything.

Meredith:

Yes, and then they had me start producing shows and anchoring shows. So literally I can say at my first full time TV station, I did everything in the entire newsroom, except sports, but I love sports. It was just kind of fun sitting back on the sidelines and watching. But my chief meteorologist there, Mike Modrich, fantastic, fantastic chief at my first station. He told me that the more you do, even if you are a scientist and that's your degree, the more you can do in broadcasting, the more you give a chance to and try, the better it's going to help you in your career and to getting jobs in the future.

Meredith:

From there, I went to Sarasota, Florida, and I worked as a weekend meteorologist there and a reporter. And then I actually got out of the TV business for eight months. I had a bad experience at the station I was at, didn't want to resign my contract. We left on good terms, but I kind of want to do explore outside of TV. I ended up working for Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Sun Coast as one of the managers for the region. I did that for eight months, but then deep in my heart, I realized how passionate I still was about weather and science.

Meredith:

I just kind of put it out there to the universe that if I'm meant to be, then I'll get back into television. And then a few months after I started applying, I got a job in Santa Barbara, California for the ABC and Fox affiliates there anchoring the morning shows. And then I spent three and a half years there before I got this job at WeatherNation that I've been here in Denver, Colorado for just about three and a half years as well. It's been a long twisty turny career for me, but I never had anything handed to me.

Meredith:

I always had to work really hard and work sometimes against the odds to get that next job, but I am so thankful for that because I feel like had I not had all of those challenges, I wouldn't be where I'm at today, and I wouldn't be able to give hope to anybody in the business that's just starting off that might be facing adversity themselves.

Kelly:

Well, it's definitely a very competitive field. You got jobs in that field. I think that you've done very well for yourself.

Meredith:

Thank you.

Rex:

Do you think it's kind of a fact of life that broadcasters will often come up against these contracts and have to deal with these tough situations? And that's just a part of having a job in that industry is sometimes having to move more often than you'd like or have to kind of reevaluate where you're at in your career, or if the station you're at is the right station for you, or if they think the same about you as you do about them.

Meredith:

Absolutely. I mean, I always look at the averages of how many times that you move in your life and I've already surpassed that average within just the last decade and literally all over the country, Ohio, South Dakota, Florida, California, Colorado. Places I never thought I'd live, but I'm actually glad I did. And South Dakota as well. But I think when you go into the broadcasting field, you have to have an open mind and also understand that there's a lot of personalities out there, whether it's people you work with, whether it's your management.

Meredith:

You have to expect that sometimes it's not going to go as you want, and there might be those opportunities that you get that just don't work out. But it's one of those fields that I feel if you are competitive, but you're also open to understanding how quickly things can change, as we have seen with a lot of things over the last year, especially with this ongoing pandemic, that if you're still really passionate about what you do and you love what you do, it will work out.

Meredith:

It's just sometimes you might have to take a few detours on the road to your career that you didn't expect to come, but eventually you'll always get that GPS working again and moving forward with these.

Rex:

I think that positive attitude is incredibly important as you go through all these twists and turns that you described. I've noticed that as you talk about leaving a job or leaving behind a mentor or professor, no matter what the situation, you've said, "We left on great terms." I think it's like you're a poster child for what good networking is, is being able to move on from a situation or from a person that's part of that situation and just know that that's a step and that there's more to come afterwards.

Meredith:

Absolutely. Contracts, I know they're tough, but I've always learned that if you're really open and honest with your management even when it's hard. Like you said, leaving on good terms, that maybe this wasn't where I wanted to spend the rest of my career, or you know what? Maybe you didn't feel that I was going to be the best fit moving forward. You have to remember, it's just business at the end of the day and that it's a very small business. You don't ever want to burn bridges or do things at a station or to management that you could regret later on because it could come around full circle.

Meredith:

That's why I've always felt that even if it wasn't the experience I had hoped for, I always hope that I leave a station and the people I work with better than when I came in.

Rex:

What does WeatherNation do and what is your day-to-day job like at WeatherNation?

Meredith:

WeatherNation, for those that may not be familiar, we are a national weather network. If you think about an AccuWeather or Weather Channel, we do 24 hours a day weather all the time. We do weather science, things like that. I have been on both sides of the shift. I've done the prime time and evening

shows, which I'm on currently, but I've also co-anchored the morning shows. Right now, working in the afternoon, evenings. I come into work.

Meredith:

I immediately jump into putting together graphics with my co-anchors and our weather producer, talking about the top weather headlines for the day for our shows, because we have three what we call our now's or our top weather headline shows per hour, and then there's also three regional shows where we focus on the East, the Central, and the West. We have a short amount of time to come in and forecast for literally the entire country, which is very tough. I can tell you, local news is so much different than forecasting from Florida to California to a hurricane coming through the tropics.

Meredith:

It's very fast paced, and so you really need to work together with your team. And if your co-anchor is an expert, for example, my co-anchor Devin worked in Salt Lake City. If there's something major going on there, I'll lean on him for advice from his forecasting experience, or if it's something from somebody that lived in the Northeast and they've covered Northeast their whole life, working as a team to come up with these shows where we can help keep people safe and informed, but also make sure we hit those top headlines.

Kelly:

Do you just pick the main weather events that are happening in parts of the country and focus on those? Because like you said, it must be so difficult to do it all.

Meredith:

Yes. We have a meeting. Every shift has a meeting when they get in to determine, okay, what are going to be the most impactful weather stories of the day? I can give you an example. We have the tropics this week finishing up by an iota and seeing about the next possible development of storms. And then there was also a storm that was coming through the Northwest, so the rain side of that and the snow side of that, but then also the wind going across the plains and the threat for power outages. That was a focus as well.

Meredith:

And then the Southwest heat that's building it, and then the cold that's going to come in behind it. And the Southwest heat is in an area where across parts of Arizona we're looking at a billion dollar disaster because of how dry it's been. We're literally day-to-day passing the torch from the morning to the afternoon to the evening team of what are the top weather headlines now that are going to impact the most people.

Rex:

The word triage comes to mind.

Kelly:

What do you like most about the job?

Meredith:

I love of going into work every single day and knowing I'm touching the life of at least one person. Because as I was mentioning earlier chatting with you guys, I feel like being on television is a privilege. It's an honor to be the person that millions of people watch every single day and trusting us to tell them what the weather is, how it's going to impact them. And if it is going to be very impactful, getting them through the storm, preparing them, going through the warnings, and then the aftermath.

Meredith:

Whether it's giving somebody good news that their kid's soccer game won't be rained out or that a drought is going to finally have a little bit of help from a couple of back-to-back storms, or that the snow pack is going to be great for our ski resorts, or even just being live during a tornado warning, knowing that I'm helping show people where the storm can come through or a hurricane where the worst case scenario that's going to happen, but being somebody they can look up to and trust to calmly get them through that and help them prepare and give them the information as it's coming in.

Meredith:

I go to bed every single night knowing I'm helping somebody, and I think that is the most rewarding part of my job.

Kelly:

Do you get to travel or is it all in Colorado and you do everything in studio, or do they ever send you out in the field?

Meredith:

It's mostly in Colorado right now. Having more than 10 years of experience in the business, it's really good to be in studio helping with our team coverage and giving the expertise I've gained from all over the country. But I did have a couple of opportunities to go out and do some field reporting.

Meredith:

If you remember back the GOES-S satellite, which is actually now our GOES-West satellite, I had an exclusive opportunity here in Colorado to go out to Lockheed Martin where the satellite was developed and tested, get a behind the scenes glance to share with everybody, and then actually fly with the satellite on the Super Galaxy, which is the biggest plane in the military from here to Florida, so they could get it to Cape Canaveral for testing.

Meredith:

And then actually come back a few months later and cover the launch live from Cape Canaveral. That was one of my favorite memories. I felt so small compared to that satellite.

Kelly:

That's so cool.

Rex:

Meredith, what are some of the biggest challenges of being a broadcast meteorologist or within your job?

Meredith:

There's a lot of different challenges. On the forecasting side, wanting to have the most accurate forecast and be right as much as we can. But as we all know, weather is ever changing. And sometimes just the slightest dynamic or the slightest shift in a pattern and you could have a completely different forecast within less than a minute. That I think is the most challenging part. I think another thing too is, and I know we talk a lot about this with AMS, is it can be mentally exhausting. It's a job where you are on 24/7, whether it's on the air, whether it's on your social media accounts.

Meredith:

You are a public figure to everybody and your life has followed so closely. I think one of the challenges is when you're having an off day, when you're going through a tough time, you still have to be on. You have to go on television and smile and do your job and clear the mechanism the best that you can when some days you might be hurting inside. And then on other days you have sometimes negative feedback from social media, for example, and you have to deal with that and not let it get you down so you could still do your job to the fullest

Rex:

Negative feedback and social media sometimes seem synonymous at this point. We've definitely talked about burnout on the show definitely with the AMS community before. Is it sort of what you've talked about, about how you're looking at even though your job encompasses your 24/7 life, you can compartmentalize part of it as being your job, and thus, even though it's ongoing all the time, it's still work versus personal time. Is there something to that idea?

Meredith:

I think the longer you're in this business, the better you can try to separate the two. But I still find myself sometimes when there's a big event and I know there are people counting on me even when I'm off air and at home on social media, trying to get information out, but then that impacts my relationships with my friends and my significant other and family sometimes. You get so caught up trying to help other people that you forget to take care of yourself or the people that you love the most.

Meredith:

I'm better at it now, I would say, than I was five years ago, but there are still moments where I know I could do better. You just want to be there for everybody. And sometimes you feel like everybody wants you to be there all the time, but we're just human like everybody else. The only difference between you and me is I have to put on makeup and do my hair and go on in front of millions of people to talk about the weather, but I'm just another average person and just trying to do the best that I can every day that I do.

Kelly:

You had mentioned earlier talking to your mother about how she experienced and lived through a tornado and hearing about that with hail breaking windows. I mean, I've never experienced a tornado. It sounds terrifying. But what is the most exciting weather event you experienced personally?

Meredith:

I'm smiling right now because I'm remembering how nerdy and geeky I was when I experienced this. But I went storm chasing a few years ago here in Colorado with one of my coworkers. We went out in the fields. We were intercepting a tornado. It was about a mile north of us, but it was rain wrapped, so we stood back and the winds came through. That was a very big rush because you could see the warnings moving into the county that you were in. But then afterwards, we went on to chase another cell, which ended up dropping golf ball size hail.

Meredith:

And we took shelter under a bank, one of those bank overhangs where you can pull in the drive in. I was sitting there and watching go from quiet to the hail storm that came through. Just seeing it up close and personal, these huge one to two inch hailstones just coming down, smashing on the sidewalk I mean, trying to protect myself, but just watching people all around me run. Some cars getting hit and just listening to it and actually experiencing severe weather right in front of me. I think that was one of the most exciting parts of my life.

Meredith:

I know it sounds so dorky, but I was in weather experiencing weather. And then afterwards, I mean, it felt like I just ran a marathon and got my medal. It was such a wild experience.

Kelly:

I can just imagine. I mean, I think the biggest hail I've ever seen is like, I don't know, maybe like the size of a nickel. Golf ball, I'd be running for the hills.

Meredith:

I was stuck in my track, that's for sure.

Rex:

It certainly sounds extremely exciting and thrilling and, like Kelly said, terrifying as well. Meredith, do you have any advice for students presently that want to become broadcasters, follow in your footsteps in one way or another? What would you tell them that would help set them up for success?

Meredith:

I know it might sound cliché, but I always just like to reiterate to never give up, because I have seen some ups and downs. I have lost jobs and I've gotten jobs that I dreamed about. I failed classes and I've also got A's in others. There are going to be challenges. This is not an easy career field by any means. And whether it's understanding the science and getting the degree or it's going out and putting yourself in the public eye, if it's something you're really passionate about, keep going.

Meredith:

Lean on the people that you know you can trust that want to build you up, whether it's professors, whether it's family members, whether it's friends. Lean on those people and stay positive, because you are going to have tough times. People are going to go on social media, and especially women, and they are going to comment on your hair, on the way you dress, on your body type, about the way you talk. They're going to comment on all those things. But at the end of the day, the only thing that matters is going to be how you feel you did.

Meredith:

And more so, pay attention to the positive comments that you get from viewers and from people, because majority of the people that watch you are going to feel the positive way and haters are always going to hate. They're always going to be out there, and there's going to be people that don't want you to succeed. But prove them wrong. Go out there and tell the person that said you couldn't do it that, "Yes, I can do it. And look at me." I'm not trying to say that to be spiteful, but that you actually helped inspire me to go for my dreams.

Meredith:

I remember when I was in high school and I was bullied and kids made fun of me and they thought I was weird and I was a geek. And they joked about me being on the news someday. And now I'm doing that. I'm doing that for my career. Those people are writing back to me and saying, "Wow! You actually did that." Go for what you want, stay focused, and just connect and network with the people in your field that you want to be like or that are going to help you move up, because life is way too short. But if you're doing what you love every single day, you don't want to do anything else.

Rex:

That's perfect.

Kelly:

You're currently involved with the AMS Station Scientist Committee, and you're going to be the chair next year. Could you tell us a little bit about that committee and what it does?

Meredith:

It's a fantastic committee, Kelly, and I'm so glad that after I got my CBM, I got more involved with AMS and found out that there were these opportunities you could volunteer. I've spoken at a few summer conferences, and I've done some things where I'll go to a conference and I don't see a lot of representation within the broadcasting community.

Meredith:

The Station Scientist Initiative is to help empower broadcast meteorologists all over the country to stand up and focus on the things that we know that are important to our viewers and to our globe, whether it's climate change or whether it's certain ways to prepare best for severe weather. There are so many things that to us seems easy, but to our viewers is complicated.

Meredith:

We try our best to put on these broadcast conferences every year to get broadcasters excited to go out and to do these stories and enjoy reporting on science and climate and different ways that people can best prepare for bad storms or for winter weather and making it easy to understand, so people at home are getting excited about science and they're watching our features, and they're learning something and getting more excited.

Meredith:

What we are going to do within the year is not only plan the broadcast conference for the AMS, but also give examples to other broadcasters and take really good examples of something that we see, whether it's network level or it's regional or it's local, and give ideas to other meteorologists within the AMS community, but also that are not in the AMS community of how they can best convey science to people and get people excited about science, especially kids.

Kelly:

I can just imagine too that at the station, the meteorologist is considered the science person. Even if it's an event that's not actually affiliated with meteorology per se, like say there's going to be an eclipse or there's going to be a volcano that's going to explode, I'm sure they look to you to report on that. I guess this committee can also help with that, provide some tips and resources for things outside of meteorology.

Meredith:

And that's one of the things that is our goal for 2021 especially. My co-chair right now, Amber Sullins in Phoenix, had this fantastic idea to start compiling a list of experts that we can share within the AMS community. That if you need an expert on volcanoes, you have somebody that you can work in tandem with to help tell that story, because not everybody's going to be an earthquake expert unless you live in California and you've covered earthquakes.

Meredith:

But say there's an earthquake as we saw near Boston, you'll have that contact that you can work together with, have them with the expert talk, but then take that and put together graphics that you can be the expert for the station and say, "Hey, this is coming from somebody who studies this daily. Here's how this is going to relate to us." I think there's so many opportunities, whether it's earthquakes, volcanoes, the planets or the eclipse, or even more so now with the space program, going into this new space era, our weather satellites and how space weather impacts us here.

Meredith:

There's so many cool things out there that we can be the leaders on. And I think through our committee, we want to get other broadcasters excited and say, "Here's that story that's coming through today. It's sunny weather. Let me dive into that and do a package on that to better explain it to our viewers and our DMA."

Rex:

Well, we are excited for 2021 and everything the Station Scientist Committee will put together and bring to the community under your leadership and with the rest of the committee. Meredith, however, before we end our podcast, we always like to ask our guests one fun question that is completely unrelated to meteorology. Are you ready?

Meredith:

As ready as I'll ever be.

Rex:

Okay.

Meredith:

Fire away.

Rex:

I've heard that you have a talent for singing and that you have performed our National Anthem more than 100 times at sporting events, including an NFL Denver Broncos game. Is this true? And can you tell us how this side gig came to be?

Meredith:

Yes, it is true. It was probably one of the most surreal opportunities getting up there. I mean, it's funny because I'll get up on television and know that I have millions of people watching. But when you're in a stadium and you have tens of thousands of people, I think there were 60 to 70,000 people at that game, and you're singing and they're right there in front of you, it's a little nerve-wracking. I've been singing since I was a little girl as well, and so my love for weather and broadcasting and performing always went hand-in-hand with singing.

Meredith:

It's just something that I can... Well, in Denver they nicknamed me the singing meteorologist in *The Denver Post* before I sang at the game, which I thought, "Oh, that has a nice ring to it. I wish I could sing the forecast sometimes."

Kelly:

You should. That would be fun.

Meredith:

Yeah, like AMS or something fun like that. I'm come up with a new slogan for us.

Rex:

We'll tap you when you need a jingle.

Meredith:

Yes. I love singing. My passion for weather in singing sometimes I like to put together. It also gets me out in the community as well and meet more people and network with more people. I just have always enjoyed it because it really helps connect me to the communities that I've served over the years. It's good because it's something I can do on the side and help people sometimes as we know through song. A lot of times we listen to a song on the radio or if it's our National Anthem, honoring our country. I just feel so privileged that God blessed me with this talent.

Meredith:

My grandfather was actually... He had his own accordion band. I knew music was in the family when I was born. It's such a privilege to be able to do that. And yeah, the NFL game was definitely the highlight so far in my singing career.

Kelly:

Did you have to audition for that? How did you get selected? That's so cool.

Meredith:

Yes. You just put together a tape of you singing acapella. Because when you're singing, a lot of times you don't have that background track unless you request it. I put it on tape. I did some networking for the right people, because I literally had just moved to Denver and, I don't know, I had a gut feeling that I'm going to make something happen. I started networking with people. And then I found a contact of somebody who knew one of the people that was on the boards and the committees there.

Meredith:

I figured, "You know what? I'm going to take a shot. I'm sure there's a lot of people out there that want this opportunity." I sent it to them. One day I was just coming home from work and I got an inbox notification. I looked and they said, "We have one game this season. We need a singer for the pregame, the Bears versus the Broncos. Are you available?" I was like, "Oh my gosh! Another childhood dream checked off."

Kelly:

That is excellent. Well, thanks so much for joining us, Meredith, and sharing your work experiences with us.

Meredith:

Well, Kelly, I appreciate it. The AMS is doing some great things both in research and on camera for the broadcasters. I really am glad you've given me this opportunity. If there's anybody listening out there that wants to be a meteorologist broadcast, especially reach out. I'm an open book. I am happy to mentor or to assist anybody. Don't be hesitating to send me an email or say hi on social media.

Rex:

Great. That's our show for today. Please join us next time, rain or shine!

Rex:

Clear Skies Ahead: Conversations about Careers in Meteorology and Beyond is a podcast by the American Meteorological Society. Our show is produced by Brandon Crose and edited by Peter Trepke. Our theme music is composed and performed by Steve Savoie, and the show is hosted by Rex Horner and Kelly Savoie. You can learn more about the show online at www.ametsoc.org/clearskies, and can contact us at skypodcast@ametsoc.org if you have any feedback or if you would like to become a future guest.