



Perris News

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Perris Announces Grand Marshal for 22nd Annual Holiday Parade

Emmy Award winning television news journalist Mary Parks has been named the grand marshal of the City's 22nd annual Christmas Parade on Dec. 11.

Parks said she is pleased to participate in the parade and accepted the honor of grand marshal after a request from Perris City Councilwoman Joanne Evans, who has known the NBC4 reporter for many years.

The two met when Evans was a spokeswoman for Cal Fire and Parks worked in the Inland Empire bureau of the news station, covering fires and other stories.

"Joanne Evans is a dear friend and when she asked me if I would take part in the parade, I was happy to," Parks said. "I think Perris officials are making great strides in improving the community. I look at Perris from the point of view as a parent. I think it's a great place to raise children."

The theme of this year's holiday parade is "An Evergreen Christmas" and features floats, marching bands, school groups, dancing troupes, equestrian units and classic cars. The annual parade draws thousands of people and is one of the major community events in Perris each year.

The parade begins at 10 a.m. at Perris High School (Perris Boulevard and Nuevo Road) and travels south on Perris Boulevard to Second Street. Parade announcers and judges are located on Perris Boulevard between San Jacinto Avenue and First Street.

At the conclusion of the parade, trophies will be awarded in the Bob Glass Gymnasium, 101 North D Street. Children may visit with Santa in the Bob Glass Community Room. Parking is available at the Civic Center, Foss Field Park and local community parking lots and city streets along the parade route.

Parks said she will be attending the Christmas Parade with her children, daughter Hayleigh, 17, and son, Hunter, 15.

Evans said she is delighted Parks accepted the invitation.

"It's just like getting a celebrity," she said. "She is so busy and I was unsure whether she had the time to spare for the parade. I am very happy she is able to do it."

Parks began her career as a radio reporter in her home state of Michigan and has since worked in Florida, Indiana and California. She joined NBC4 in 1994 and now serves as Inland Empire Bureau Chief as well as a reporter for the region.

Over the years Parks has covered space shuttle launches at Cape Canaveral, East Coast hurricanes, as well as Los Angeles earthquakes, wildfires and riots.



Emmy Award winning television news journalist Mary Parks.



Rain and cold temperatures could not deter hundreds of people from taking part in last year's annual Christmas Parade.



The biggest parade marcher last year was this elephant, who dressed in appropriate seasonal garb.



Santa's elves rode a tractor as they made their rounds in the 2009 Christmas parade.

She has garnered various journalism awards for her work in California, including local area Emmys, Golden Mikes, Associated press and Los Angeles Press Club honors.

As a reporter in Florida, Parks reported on the search, capture and trial of America's first female serial killer Aileen Wuornos. Wuornos was later the subject of the Hollywood movie "Monster" starring Charlize Theron.

In 2005, Parks wrote and produced a mini-documentary, "Journey of Hope," detailing the separation of rare conjoined twins. Parks is also a children's book author.

Parks donates her time serving various Inland Empire organizations such as Inland AIDS project, Loma Linda Children's Hospital and Olive Crest Homes and Services for Abused Children.

She has been involved with Special Olympics in several states and, in 1993, then Governor Pete Wilson appointed Parks to a special commission that advocated for the rights of the developmentally disabled.

Parks is a graduate of Western Michigan University and Southwestern Michigan College.

Parks said she is uncertain about what type of vehicle she will ride in during the City's Christmas Parade. "I have a convertible," she said. "Maybe I will ride in that."