

Distinguished Achievement Citation

Byron Pitts
Class of 1982

With the presentation of Ohio Wesleyan's Distinguished Achievement Citation, the Ohio Wesleyan University Alumni Association Board of Directors is honored and privileged to recognize Byron Pitts, Class of 1982, as award-winning journalist, author, and inspirational leader.

As he details in his book *Step Out on Nothing: How Faith and Family Helped Me Conquer Life's Challenges*, Byron's beginnings at Ohio Wesleyan were rocky, as he dealt with a debilitating stutter and a faculty member's devastating assessment of his ability. Rescued, he says, by a faculty "angel," he graduated and began a career in journalism, with the goal of becoming a *60 Minutes* contributor.

He began his career more modestly, however, working as a weekend sports anchor in Greenville, North Carolina. Assignments in Virginia, Florida, and Boston followed, and he joined ABC News from WSB-TV in Atlanta, where he was a general assignment reporter. In 1998, he was named CBS News correspondent, based in the Miami and Atlanta bureaus before moving to New York in 2001. He also was a correspondent for CBS Newspath, the 24-hour affiliate news services of CBS News, based in Washington, D.C.

Just months after his arrival in New York, Byron was one of CBS News' lead reporters during the September 11 attacks, earning a national Emmy award for his coverage. As a war correspondent and embedded journalist, he reported on the invasion of Iraq and the American entry into Baghdad. He also played a leading role in CBS News' coverage of other significant stories: Hurricane Katrina, the war in Afghanistan, the military buildup in Kuwait, the fires in Florida, the Elian Gonzalez story, the Florida presidential election recount, and the mudslides in Central America.

In January 2009, Byron achieved his dream of becoming a contributor to *60 Minutes*, as well as Chief National Correspondent for CBS News. Prior to becoming part of the *60 Minutes* family, he occasionally had reported for the program; in 2006, his first *60 Minutes* story, an interview with New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin, earned him national attention.

During his career, Byron also has won a national Emmy for his reporting on the Chicago train wreck in 1999, six regional Emmys, and four Associated Press Awards. In addition, he has been recognized as Best Journalist of the Year, the highest honor awarded by the National Association of Black Journalists.

For his professional achievements; his dedication to the highest ideals of journalism; and his loyalty to his alma mater, which he now serves as a member of the Board of Trustees, we applaud and recognize Byron Pitts with the presentation of this Distinguished Achievement Citation.

