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Beth Fouhy To Speak About Presidential Election At Marconi Talk

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By: Tim Wood



Beth Fouhy.

CHATHAM – Beth Fouhy didn't intentionally follow her father, noted journalist Ed Fouhy, into the news business. Growing up, she took for granted the informed, lively family conversations about politics and current events.

"I think I had to leave home and go to college, go to friends homes for dinner and find out they had less interesting dinner conversations," she said.

Fouhy, senior political editor for NBC/MSNBC, will speak on the presidential election on Thursday, Oct. 13, at 7 p.m. at Monomoy Regional Middle School on Crowell Road in the second installment of the Chatham Marconi Maritime Center's Ed Fouhy Distinguished Speaker Series.

To take part in a program named for her father – a distinguished journalist, TV news producer and the producer of many televised presidential debates

and a longtime Chatham resident who died in 2015 – is “a real honor,” Fouhy said. “I knew he was such an important member of the community, and now I have big shoes to step into. I hope I can do right by him.”

Fouhy's talk will focus on coverage of the election, how it's changed and what the polarized environment it entails holds for the future. In a phone interview from her New York office last week, she said she has yet to write her remarks, because things are changing so fast, and there's a vice presidential and another presidential debate before the talk.

“The debates seem to be, at least perceptually, having a big impact,” she said.

This year's election coverage is different, for an obvious reason: the Republican candidate.

“Having Trump in the race changes everything,” Fouhy said. That's not all that makes this election different, she said. Social media has helped define the campaign, especially Twitter, which Trump uses as a major communications tool. The press uses it too, she noted, and it makes the news cycle faster than ever.

“We watch it constantly. You never know what's going to be there,” she said.

No stranger to presidential elections, she covered Hillary Clinton's campaign for the Associated Press in 2008 as well as the McCain/Palin campaign. She spent almost a year on the road.

“It was great,” Fouhy said. “Probably the best thing I ever did professionally. But once was enough.” In her current position as senior political editor for politics at NBC/MSNBC, she coordinates the network's campaign coverage across television and digital platforms. She also appears as an analyst on Hardball, Meet the Press Daily and MSNBC Live.

After graduating from Oberlin College, Fouhy worked for a bipartisan PAC that raised money for women candidates running for office. Her first news job was as a booker for CNN's Crossfire; she remained at the network until 2000, eventually working as a producer, writer executive producer. She was executive producer of the network's political unit during the 2000 presidential election.

After studying for a year at Stanford University as a John S. Knight Fellow, Fouhy began working as a political reporter for the Associated Press, where she remained for nearly a decade. She's been at NBC now for almost three years. She's won numerous awards for her work, including the New York Press Club Award for Political Reporting and the Newswoman's Club of New York Front Page Award for Wire Service Beat Reporting.

Fouhy acknowledged that she sometimes misses being out on the campaign trail covering the candidates.

“It was a great experience, yet I did it,” she said. “I couldn't see myself going back out there and covering Hillary Clinton again. It's time for other reporters to do it.”

The Ed Fouhy Distinguished Speaker Series was established to promote knowledge and understanding of world events, focusing on the impact of communications technology. After he retired, Ed Fouhy volunteered at the Marconi Center, and wrote and produce two videos explaining the role of wireless communications in the World War II Battle of the Atlantic and the rescue of the Titanic survivors.

(Note: This interview appeared approximately one week before the event. The no-longer-relevant event date, time and ticket reservation information which were included at the end of the piece have been deleted for brevity. Ed.)