

Profiles in BLUE Tom Leach



Photo: Tim Collins

It's a cliché to say that Tom Leach is living his dream job, but there's no way around it — that's simply the truth. He is one of those few individuals who knew as a teenager what he wanted to do with his life. Through hard work, persistence, and a bit of luck, he's built a career for himself around sports that now entitles him to the "Voice of the Wildcats" moniker.

Leach, who earned a degree in journalism from UK in 1983, began his sportscasting career at age 16 when he worked for his hometown radio station in Paris.

Pursuing his dream career just out of high school, he sought guidance from sportscasting icon Cawood Ledford and sent him a tape to critique. "My mom and dad always encouraged me to shoot for the moon. Don't set limits on yourself," says Leach.

Ledford gave the young reporter valuable insight. "Cawood told me it's good for the audience to know the UK broadcaster wants to see the Cats win," says Leach, "but you must also tell your listeners when the team is playing poorly."

Leach played baseball at Bourbon County High School. His father, Alvin, played for the Lexington Hustlers, a semi-pro baseball team. Brother Steve played for the Georgetown College football team. An uncle played for UK during the "Bear" Bryant days.

Leach loved UK sports and he sought a front row seat calling UK games just like Ledford and Ralph Hacker.

Leach began on the UK Radio Network in 1989 and eight years later was doing play-by-play for Kentucky football, adding basketball in the 2001-02 season. He is sports director for Clear Channel Radio of Lexington and anchors afternoon sports reporting on WLAP 630, the flagship station for the Big Blue Sports Network. He handles NBC and ESPN assignments. He's been Kentucky Sportscaster of the Year four times and is a two-time winner of the prestigious Eclipse Award for excellence in coverage of Thoroughbred racing.

He is kicking his career up a notch with Tom Leach Productions, launched last year with Jim Host of Lexington and J.C. Faulkner of Charlotte, NC.

Married for almost 20 years to Robyn Rabbeth, formerly of WLEX-TV, they are the parents of two children, Connor, 15, and Caroline, 9, both of whom enjoy competing inyou guessed it...sports!