

JENNIFER C. THOMAS

EVIDENCE OF PARTICIPATION IN CREATIVE ACTIVITIES MAJOR MEDIA PRODUCTION

ELECTION 2016: DEMOCRATIC DEBATE

Role: Producer / Executive Producer
Live One-hour News Special

February 11, 2016

WHUT-TV

PBS Affiliate

Washington, DC

and livestreamed on WHUT.org



Guest panel, host Mo Ivory on set for live recording of Election 2016: Democratic Debate.

Please find all supporting documents in the attached PDFs

Contribution and Impact

[“Election 2016: Democratic Debate”](#) live one-hour election special was impactful by providing an audience of more than two and a half million viewers an opportunity to be informed by a diverse voice of experts in academia, politics, journalism and public policy as much of the nation was posed to view the first major democratic debate in the 2016 presidential election season. It also provided the audience an opportunity to hear from a panel of African-American experts on crucial issues relevant to the American public. This live news special was broadcast immediately before the democratic debate which was hosted by the PBS network. Being that WHUT is a PBS affiliate, there was prime viewership of this programming.

I was contacted by PBS General Manager Jefferi Lee to take the helm of this original live news special. He indicated that he needed an experienced producer who could execute the debut of a series of election specials for the PBS affiliate.

I included several avenues for more inclusivity for viewership- by adding in Social Media- Twitter questions and interview snippets throughout the program with millennials. We also included a pre-recorded interview with a Howard University senior and law student to include the millennial viewpoint. I was active in all phases of pre and post-production including:

conceptualizing the news/magazine special

- Creating the title, theme music, and direction of the broadcast
- supervised staff of twenty full-time and part-time managerial and union professionals
- including engineering, operations, director and supervisors and students
- Writing ALL promotional material including press releases (which were shared with Howard University Office of Communications)
- Writing scripts for voiced reporter stories
- Writing scripts for the entire show as well as for the teleprompter.
- Researching and selecting all video clips
- Creating graphic content
- Implementing deadline management strategies

Guest Relations: In addition to the aforementioned duties, I also contacted and organized guests, held numerous planning meetings with WHUT management and staff, ensuring all of the professional guests were informed and updated on daily changes in the news and subsequent content and flow of the program. I also managed post-show meetings and distributed follow-up communication with all involved.

Pre-Production Planning: I managed all video selection and music for the theme,

RELEVANCE

The 2016 U.S. Presidential Elections were historic in many facets. The race for the successor of the country's first African American President, Barack Obama became contentious as the country grappled with significant issues of race, the economy, terrorism, healthcare and technology. In June of 2016, each party was preparing to hold its national convention to select its party's presidential candidate. Donald Trump appeared to be an outlier to many in the conservative Republican party, while U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton were embattled in discussions over Democratic themes. This Election special was vital, in that it allowed members of the African American community to speak on relevant issues to them, from their perspectives. Guests representing academia and both sides of the aisle took part in an intelligent impactful conversation on the country's only black-owned PBS affiliated network.

Challenges

This production was challenging in that WHUT did not have the technology that is standard for a live news production-style broadcast.

This affected the

- Rundown creation of the show and the
- Timing and Scripting

Both of these major show components are usually managed electronically via content management software.

As a result, I created Rundowns and Scripts in Excel and Word, and timed the LIVE broadcast manually.



About WHUT TV

WHUT-TV, Howard University Television was founded in 1980 in Washington, D.C., as WHMM. At its inception, the station became the first public station in the United States to be licensed and operated by a historically black college and university (HBCU) - Howard University. The station broadcasts reach over 2.5 million households in a 60-mile radius. The station endeavors to underscore Howard University's overall mission in its commitment to excellence, leadership and public service. For over 35 years on air WHUT has become a leader in broadcast communications by providing quality programming for the Greater Washington, D.C., viewing community that is relevant and informative, while offering exceptional professional training in television production, engineering and management. For more information, please visit www.whut.org.