



IAAS Walks of Life 2003
Denise Dufala

Denise Dufala, an Emmy Award-winning news anchor/reporter for OIO/WUAB-TV, has Irish-American roots here in St. Colman Parish on Cleveland's west side and grew up in North Olmsted, the daughter of Elizabeth (Lil) and the late David Dufala. Her maternal Irish ancestry is self-evident as the daughter of Elizabeth Scanlon Gilmore and the granddaughter of Catherine Mary Scanlon of Achill Isle. That heritage includes a Scots-Irish grandfather from Ayre in Scotland.

With a bachelor's degree in journalism from Ohio State University, Dufala's career began as a writer for the State of Ohio's successful "Heart of it All" campaign. Early in her television career she worked at WSYX (formerly WTVN) in Columbus; a dozen years ago she entered the Cleveland scene and was the original morning anchor of "Newscenter 8 This Morning." She now is anchor/reporter for the 6 and 11 p.m. "Action News" broadcasts on Channels 19/43. Her historic assignments have included President Bill Clinton's inauguration in Washington, D.C., Pope John Paul II's visit to St. Louis, and reporting live from New York City on the Sept. 11, 2001 disaster.

Dufala's community service has put special focus on helping children through the Make-A-Wish Foundation; a longtime supporter and former board member, she also contributed her outstanding singing talent to a CD to benefit the foundation. Besides her usual singing and cantoring with her Community of St. Malachi parish choir, she has sung the National Anthem to open Cleveland Indians, Browns, Cavaliers and Crunch games. Additionally, her beautiful voice has graced dozens of benefit events for area philanthropies, the Christ Child Society among them.. And she has been a board member, too, of Cleveland Community Building Initiative, a group dedicated to rebuilding city neighborhoods.

Dufala shares her Irish heritage with five siblings: James, Catherine Stark, Daniel, Martin and David (she notes that she's the youngest), and seven nieces and nephews. Her trips to Ireland, so far, number nine; her mother still has first cousins there. And her family folklore includes memories of "Aunt Biddy's chicken coop."

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