

CBC journalist Diana Swain returns to her passion

By Dominik Kurek
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Oakville's Diana Swain has been the host of *CBC News Toronto* for the past six years, but now she's going back to her roots as a reporter.

Known as Swain (her maiden name) on television, but as Kuipers in her private life, she has been appointed as a senior investigative correspondent for the CBC News' investigative unit.

"Reporting is in my blood," Swain said. "It's what I love doing and the opportunity to really get into stories is something, I think, that most journalists really envy. Daily news is fantastic work, but on some levels can be very frustrating because you don't get to get into the story like you do when you have a little more time."

Swain, originally from British Columbia, has gone through various roles in the television news industry. She began in a television newsroom in Prince George, B.C., and then worked with Global in Winnipeg, Manitoba, until she moved on to the CBC in Manitoba 20 years ago. She was a local reporter, but over the years she moved on to bigger roles.

She worked as an investigative reporter on the *fifth estate* and later became the host of the current affairs program *Disclosure*.

However, more and more work done on *Disclosure* was taking place in Toronto and she found herself constantly flying back and forth. Because both her husband, Ron Kuipers, a freelance producer and writer, and herself were from western Canada, they remained in Winnipeg for as long as they could. But eventually it became too much hassle and seven years ago they moved closer to Toronto.

"We only had a weekend to find a house, just knowing we wanted a nice neighbourhood for our kids," Swain said. "The realtor that helped us showed us 31 houses in two days from east of Toronto in the Beaches to Oakville. The last one we saw was the one we bought in Glen Abbey. We still marvel at the fact we didn't know where we



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MOVING ON: Oakville's Diana Swain, host of *CBC News Toronto*, is moving onto a senior investigative reporter position with the public broadcaster.

were, we didn't know anything about neighbourhoods or Toronto and we can't believe our luck."

The show *Disclosure* went off the air about a year after Swain moved to Oakville. At that time she

became the anchor of *CBC News Toronto*, a supertime news program and an occasional replacement for Peter Mansbridge on *The National*. She is a two-time Gemini Award winner and was the CBC's

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host of the Beijing Olympics coverage in 2008.

Now her roles are changing once again.

"For journalists like me this is a dream job where I'll be doing investigative journalism," she said. "They've put together a team of really strong journalists that I'll be working with and I'll still have the opportunity to fill in for Peter (Mansbridge) when he's away. I still get to do the anchoring piece, so it's a perfect blend of all the things I really enjoy."

She will still work out of the Toronto office, and unlike when she worked with the *fifth estate* and *Disclosure*, Swain said she will be at home a lot more.

"With my previous roles with the *fifth estate* and *Disclosure* I had a chance to do stories really all over the globe. To get the chance to do that again is really exciting," Swain said.

"The focus is obviously Canadian stories, but sometimes they'll pull you abroad as you try to pull the pieces of the story together. Our focus is certainly what's going on here, but if it means going abroad we'll certainly do that to get the story."

Unlike the position she's leaving, her hours will be far more irregular.

"Nine to five is almost non-existent in this business today. The closest you can get to that is the role I've had with the CBC for the last six years as anchor of the *CBC New Toronto*," she said.

"It suited us well as a family when our kids were younger. But they're both moving into their teens now and it allows a little bit more flexibility for us at home for me to take this on and the timing is right."

And this is exactly the job she wants. She talked to the CBC and this position was created.

"I'll be working now with an investigative team that's been put together. Investigative news has really been the cornerstone of the CBC for a really long time. This is a way of enhancing that and giving it more presence on programs like *The National*," she said.

The team of about eight or nine consists of a senior producer, story producers and researchers. It's her job to do the main interviews, write the story and to deliver it on the air.

When she begins her new position on Aug. 9 she will meet with the team individuals, and look at its existing files and then begin working on the stories.

She's looking forward to her new role, but added she will miss her former position as well.

"The hardest part about it is leaving the team that we've put together. When I came to the program six years ago it was much smaller than it is today and it needed to be rebuilt. I had a hand in trying to attach people to the program."

Swain said she built connections with the individuals on the team.

"I enjoyed anchoring the local show very much. I'm very proud of what we've accomplished. It was such an all-encompassing, consuming job that I didn't have time to do any of the other work that I've done throughout my career which included the investigative work."

The Kuipers still live in the same home they did when they first moved to the area. Their children, Mason, 14, and Lara, 12, enjoy their Oakville home and participate in local sports programs.

Why does Diana go by Swain on television when her driver's license says she's Kuipers?

"I had already started my career as Swain, so I've kept Swain on the air, my maiden name," she said. "My husband can say it's my work persona. Privately, my kids' friends never know what to call me, Mrs. Swain or Kuipers, so I let them go with both."