

Q & A for NHC



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You were born in Cuba. What memories do you have of the island?

It is the hurricanes. When I was a child, Hurricane Flora (1963) hit the eastern part of Cuba, and I was fascinated with the weather. This was the first time I was in the eye of the hurricane, but I did not know it at the time. What I did know was I wanted to study something related with nature.

Where did you take your studies?

I lived in Camaguey and moved to Havana to get my studies at the University of Havana.

What happened after graduation?

I went to work full time with the Cuban Weather Service but had another job in radio & TV in Cuba.

How did you enjoy the broadcasting job?

It was interesting. At the beginning, I was so shy. I wanted to do something to improve on that, so I went into television. I figured I had to do it, and I did, for 10 years.

When did you leave Cuba?

I came to the United States in early '90s. My family in Miami invited us to visit at Christmastime and I decided to stay.

Where did you work?

I worked a few years with Climacentro alongside John Morales (currently Chief Meteorologist at WTVJ-TV6 in Miami). I enjoyed the job, as I knew how to do it from my years in Cuba. It was my first job in the United States, and I was delivering Spanish language weather forecasts to 40 markets in the U.S. and the Caribbean. After Climacentro, I got a job at The Weather Channel-Latin America in Atlanta as a senior meteorologist and tropical coordinator. It was brand new at the time, so I was a pioneer and I stayed six years.

That must have provided some good opportunities.

Working at the Weather Channel, I had the opportunity to travel on the C.H.A.T. (Caribbean Hurricane Awareness Tour) for three consecutive years, where I met (NHC director) Max Mayfield. My goal was to work for the National Weather Service. I did all of the paperwork and got a position at the forecast office in San Juan. For me, it was perfect, because you prepare everything in English but you have to deliver everything in Spanish. It was certainly the best place to go to prepare for the National Hurricane Center.

You were at NHC in 2005 right before Hurricane Wilma, weren't you?

I came here as part of the Hurricane Liaison Team for Hurricane Wilma, serving a Spanish language translator to the media. It was really my first assignment here. Meanwhile, the paperwork was going through as I went back to San Juan after the storm. I came back to NHC permanently the next month as a meteorological intern in the Tropical Analysis and Forecast Branch. I was a forecaster in San Juan and took a downgrade to come to NHC. But I am now a forecaster.

What aspirations do you have today?

My next step is to be a lead forecaster. I also have some great opportunities coming up, including being on the "Best Track Change" committee. I will also be working to translate many of the English language items on our website into Spanish. NHC provides forecasts all through Latin America and the Caribbean, and Spanish is the language.

What's the best part of your job?

For me, it is when I go on the air. I can deliver the message and help to save lives and property.

What's the worst part of the job?

Working shifts. We have families, daughters, grandkids, and you know it is not easy working midnights. But that's part of the job and I love my career.

When you are not working here, what do you like to do?

We like to travel. Every year we plan on a new place to go and learn because when you travel, you learn a lot about culture, food, everything. I love to take a lot of pictures, prepare my album, and keep a life of memories.

Send comments to: nhc.public.affairs@noaa.gov