

Joe Birch co-anchors Action News 5 at 5, 6 and 10 o'clock weeknights on WMC-TV.

Joe marks his 32nd year of service to WMC-TV and its viewers in 2010. WMC, Tennessee's very first television station, went on the air on December 11, 1948. Joe joined the Mid-South NBC affiliate in 1978 and has had the honor of serving the station for more than half of its rich history. In 2009, the Emmy Award winning News Anchor was inducted into the "Silver Circle" of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences (Mid-South Region) for more than a quarter century of service to WMC's viewing audience.

But Joe is hardly resting on his laurels as the senior journalist at Action News 5. Joe and his co-anchor Ursula Madden personally produce Action News 5's weekly Taking Back Our Neighborhoods reports. The solution-oriented stories shine a light on what the people of Memphis and the Mid-South are doing about crime, problem properties and other threats to healthy neighborhoods. Joe's reports air on the 6 o'clock Wednesday newscast. Birch delivered numerous scoops on Action News 5 in 2009, including an exclusive interview with Leigh Anne Tuohy, whose true life story was portrayed by actress Sandra Bullock in the hit movie, *The Blind Side*.

Joe has travelled across America and around the world for WMC, covering stories of interest to people of the Mid-South. He spent 25 days in Atlanta, covering Memphians and Mid-Southerners attending the 1996 Centennial Olympic Games. Birch visited The People's Republic of China for three weeks in 1986 to cover a visit by representatives of Memphis In May International Festival which honored China in 1987. The newsman went on assignment to Italy in 1992 to prepare a documentary on the Memphis bound Wonders cultural series exhibition from the Vatican Museums. During that assignment, Birch met Pope John Paul II and recorded the exchange for broadcast on Action News 5. Birch told the Holy Father, "the people of Memphis send you their warmest greetings." The Pontiff responded in his Polish accent, "God-a-bless-Tennessee."

Closer to home, Birch has won honors from the National Council on Problem Gambling for his reports on the positive economic and damaging social implications of casinos in the Mid-South.

Joe also serves as host of WKNO-TV 10's SMART MEDICINE. The monthly program on the local PBS affiliate highlights the latest news from the Memphis medical community and focuses on trends in health and fitness in the Mid-South.

Birch has won numerous awards for his charitable and civic endeavors. In 2009, Joe Birch was named "Newsmaker of the Year" by the Memphis Gridiron Show, Inc., an award cherished deeply by the newsman as it had once been bestowed on Joe's hero, Danny Thomas, Founder of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. Joe's other 2009 honors include "Volunteer Fund Raiser of the Year" from the Association of Fund Raising Professionals (AFP/ Memphis Chapter) and the Ave Maria Award for years of service to Ave Maria Nursing Home in Bartlett, TN. In 2008, Christian Brothers University made the newsman its 14th recipient of the Maurelian Medal, CBU's highest award for service to the University or community. Diversity Memphis (formerly the National Council of Christians and Jews) named Birch "2008 Humanitarian of the Year" along with four other distinguished Memphians noted for community service. Birch is the first "on air" person to receive the honor in the organization's long history. Birch received the 2008 "St. Peter the Rock Award" in September 2008 for his service to St. Peter Villa, the nursing home and rehabilitation center where Joe's father spent the last year and a half of his life. In 2007, the Metropolitan Inter-Faith Association introduced the "Joe Birch Media Award" which is presented to those who use the tools of communications to enlighten the community about MIFA's many services. Birch was the first winner of the award. He's delivered MIFA Meals on Wheels (Route #12/ Foote Homes) since 1997.

In this time, Joe has been blessed with countless friendships with MIFA clients. One client, Rosa Wright of 597 Mississippi Boulevard, was 105 years of age when she asked Joe Birch and others to repair her dilapidated home. Birch prepared a news report about "the Matriarch of Mississippi Boulevard" who was radically independent and refused to move even in the face of drug dealers who pushed their illegal substances just a few feet from Ms. Wright's front door. The 2004 news report prompted responses from many kind hearted souls and led to the complete renovation of Ms. Wright's residence by the good people of LeMoyne Owen College Community Development Corporation, The Home Depot and many others. At no cost to her, Ms. Wright enjoyed her refurbished home until the summer of 2007. She died December 7, 2007 at age 109.

The Memphis and Shelby County Optimist Respect for Law Committee named Joe Birch "Citizen of the Year" in 2007 for his Taking Back Our Neighborhood reports and other community efforts.

Joe has raised nearly \$70,000 for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital as he has participated in all eight of the St. Jude Memphis Marathons and Half marathons since the inaugural event in 2002. Joe has completed four 26.2 mile full marathons (2002, '04, '06, '08) and four Half Marathons ('03, '05, '07, '09) and while slow to make it to the finish line he has completed each event and placed among the top fund raisers each year. In addition, Birch is the Co-Founder/ Race Director of the Gibson Guitar 5K Run-Walk for St. Patrick Learning Center, Inc., a 501 (c) 3 non-profit agency that serves children and families in 38126---the city's poorest zip code. A record crowd of 1,542 enjoyed the 2009 Gibson 5K which ended with a fabulous party atop the Gibson Guitar factory rooftop patio in Downtown Memphis. You are cordially invited to participate in the 14th annual Gibson 5K at 7pm on Saturday, June 12, 2010! Learn more at [www.gibsonguitar5k.com](http://www.gibsonguitar5k.com).

In the aftermath of the 9/11 terror attacks in 2001, Birch visited New York City to deliver the \$527,000 WMC-TV collected to help the United Way of New York City agencies and the people they serve.

The Memphis Chapter of UNICO, the Italian American service organization, bestowed their Community Service Award on Joe in 2004. Associated Catholic Charities honored Joe in 2002 with the Bishop Carroll T. Dozier service Award, the agency's highest honor for community service.

Birch is deeply involved in the fight against Alzheimer's Disease. His beloved father suffered from the disease for fourteen years until his death in Memphis in 2002. Joe regularly serves as emcee of Alzheimer's Association events, including the annual Memory Walk. Birch was the honoree at the 2008 Alzheimer's Assn. of the Mid-South Gala.

Birch serves on the Board of Trustees of Christian Brothers University, his alma mater. Joe and native Memphian Robyn Davis Birch (CBU 1977) were married in June 1983. They have been blessed with two sons, Joseph III, (age 20), a junior at CBU and Matthew (age 17), a CBU freshman. The Birch Family resides in Hein Park in Midtown Memphis, Tennessee.