Frances Louise (Lu) Parker is no stranger to action, to fast-breaking news, to finding a center in the midst of chaos. Born in Anderson, S.C., the English major earned her master’s in education at The Citadel and then taught at North Charleston High. It was while teaching in ygg that she won the Miss South Carolina USA pageant and went on to win the Miss USA contest, the students of North Charleston High cheering her on. She was a top finalist in the Miss Universe pageant. She traveled the world for a year in the Miss Universe pageant. She traveled the world for a year.

She has to be in the action.

“As a gal who has been active all my life, I know that once you make a decision you have to be in the action. So I get there.”

When she landed the weekend anchor and reporter for San Antonio’s KABB TV, she took a moment to gather herself, then jumps into the fray, ferreting out the who, what, when, why. She returns to her van and writes the story, not in a comfortable computer module, but from the passenger seat, her feet propped on the dash, her tablet in her lap, the clock ticking. Then, camera. She gives the report, the result of thousands of images she has observed and dozens of decisions she has made in order to tell the story coherently. She is in complete control.

PARKER’S LIFE AND WORK ARE NOT EASY, BUT SHE MAKES IT ALL SEEM EASY. WATCHING HER IN REPORT AFTER REPORT GIVES A WOULD-BE JOURNALIST A MASTER CLASS IN APPROPRIATE Demeanor AND PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATION.

Parker’s life and work are not easy, but she makes it all seem easy. Watching her in report after report gives a would-be journalist a master class in appropriate demeanor and professional presentation.

“Really, it was all about realmente making sure that my notes were complete, that I knew all the places on the map where we were going, that I had all the people who were coming along stoked and that the piece would be done in a very credible fashion,” says Parker, who has scored first in several events: women’s Five Stand, held in Nashville to benefit the Boy Scouts of America, and a cameraman cover a story for KTLA TV, they get a call from IT Is 6:45 p.m., DowNTowN los ANgElEs. wHIlE

“nothing is routine made possible in part by Parker’s handling of such a “most embarrassing moment.” She laughs, passes some tissue to him, and reads voraciously. Her blog offers thoughtful advice and insight into individuals and charities. She is an advocate for homeless animals, serves on the board of trustees at Saint Francis Hospital and participates in dozens of charity events annually. Perhaps she’s a one-trick pony? Not Lu Parker. expert marksman, news reporter, television news anchor, actor, model, author, athlete. She is in active in golf, rollerblading, kickboxing, yoga, basketball, softball, swimming, water and snow skiing, pistol shooting and horseback riding. Indeed, in Louise Mandrell’s annual Celebrity Shoot held in Nashville to benefit the Boy Scouts of America, Parker has scored first in several events: Women’s Five Stand, Sporting Clays and Trap. She’s a competitor through and through.

In the stereotype the one of the ditzy beauty queen? Not this woman, who has received several Emmy Awards for her journalism and reads voraciously. Her blog offers thoughtful advice and insight into her fans. She has written a book, Catching the Crown: The Source for Pageant Competition. Whatever prejudices you may have when you hear beauty queen or California girl, Parker dispels them.

No doubt, she is beautiful, though. Her first modeling picture was taken when she was 15. She has worked with the prestigious Elite Modeling Agency in Paris and Prestige Models in New York City. Her picture has graced the cover of Runner’s World Magazine. She appears in two recent movies: Winged Creatures, with Dakota Fanning and Marshall Allman, and An American Carol, with Trace Adkins, Kevin Parley and Kelsey Grammer. Her television credits include Jamaica (FOX), Monk (USA), Shark (FOX) and Commander in Chief (ABC). She also co-hosted the Hollywood Christmas Parade for the past two years with Mark Strasz of Entertainment Tonight. But Parker also possesses an internal beauty - a beauty we recognize in people who are self-aware and take proper stock of themselves. She is as quick to quote Gandhi as she is to cite The Grateful Dead. She takes the world in and then gives it back to us with grace and poise.

We see that poise in her honest demeanor. Once, on camera, she apparently spit a little on Bill Cosby’s sunglasses. No one noticed, but Cosby was comfortable enough to roll on it for a while, a routine made possible in part by Parker’s handling of such a “most embarrassing moment.” She laughs, passes some tissue to him, and reads voraciously. She laughs, passes some tissue to him, finds him lines. We laugh with them.

“I really didn’t spit on him,” Parker admits. “He was teaching me, so I played along.”

Only two masters of their respective crafts can finesse such a situation into good entertainment.

We should not be surprised that Parker handles the situation so professionally and yet so personally. She has interviewed numerous luminaries: Kanye West, Matt Damon, Kathy Griffin, Jimmy Kimmel, Fergie, Carlos Moncar, Willie Nelson, Jenny McCarthy, Larry King, Deepak Chopra, Bob Hope. And she is as professional in those interviews as she is when interviewing someone enjoying a local book fair or even the son of John Thomas, an alleged serial killer.

Parker’s life and work are not easy, but she makes it all seem easy. Watching her in report after report gives the would-be journalist a master class in appropriate demeanor and professional presentation. Examining Parker’s action-filled life and that unflappable grace under pressure gives all of us a master class in being alive.

-Paul Allen is a poet and professor of English.
American Beauty
by Paul Allen

Frances Louise (Lu) Parker is no stranger to action, to fast breaking news, to finding a center in the midst of chaos. Born in Anderson, S.C., the English major earned her master’s in education at The Citadel and then taught at North Charleston High. It was while teaching in 1994 that she won the Miss South Carolina USA pageant and went on to win the Miss USA contest, the students of North Charleston High cheering her on. She was a top finalist in the Miss Universe pageant. She traveled the world for a year of North Charleston High cheering her on. She was a top finalist in the Miss Universe pageant. She traveled the world for a year, including in the Miss Universe pageant. She traveled the world for a year, including in the Miss Universe pageant.

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Is she the stereotype of the ditzy beauty queen? Not this woman, who has received several Emmy Awards for her journalism and reads voraciously. Her blog offers thoughtful advice and insight to her fans. She has written a book, Catching the Crown: The Source for Pageant Competitions. Whatever prejudices you may have when you hear beauty queen or California girl, Parker dispels them. No doubt, she is beautiful, though. Her first modeling picture was taken when she was 15. She has worked with the prestigious Elite Modeling Agency in Paris and Prestige Models in New York City. Her picture has graced the cover of Runner’s World Magazine. She appears in two recent movies: Winged Creatures, with Dakota Fanning and Marshall Allman, and An American Carol, with Tracy Alkins, Kevin Parley and Kelsey Grammar. Her television credits include Ramadan (FOX), Monk (USA), Shark (E!BS) and Commander in Chief (ABC). She also co-hosted the Hollywood Christmas Parade for the past two years with Mark Stenzel of Entertainment Tonight.

But Parker also possesses an internal beauty – a beauty we recognize in people who are self-aware and take proper stock of themselves. She is as quick to quote Ghandi as she is to cite The Grateful Dead. She takes the world in and then gives it back to us with grace and poise.

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Only two masters of their respective crafts can finesse such a situation into good entertainment. We should not be surprised that Parker handles the situation so professionally and yet so personably. She has interviewed numerous luminaries: Kanye West, Matt Damon, Kathy Griffin, Jimmy Kimmel, Fergie, Carlos Monica, Willie Nelson, Jenny McCarthy, Larry King, Deepak Chopra, Bob Hope. And she is as professional in those interviews as she is when interviewing someone enjoying a local book fair or even the son of John Thomas, an alleged serial killer.

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