



**H. Michael Mogil, CCM, CBM, President, How the Weatherworks, Naples, FL**

**How did you first get interested in weather?**

I grew up in New York City. We lived on the top floor of an apartment building with a great view to the north, up the Hudson River. It was an easy matter to become fixated on the sky, especially the unending cloud displays.

Then in the August – October 1954 period (when I was 9 years old); three hurricanes – Carol, Edna and Hazel passed nearby. I recall watching wind driven-rain (and an occasional TV antenna) blow past my window.

Once we moved out to Long Island, I was further captivated by the sky and weather.

My parents and my guidance counselors tried hard to dissuade me from following my passion. In retrospect, I'm glad I stuck with what interested me, not just what career choice was convenient or suggested.

**How did you find your first job, and what was it like?**

Since there was no one in my high school or even in my immediate area who knew about meteorology, I had to embark upon my own quest for career information. I was an early TV weather addict, and knew to track down a TV meteorologist in New York City. He could not offer me a job, but suggested that I contact the National Weather Service (which had a regional headquarters on Long Island). I visited them shortly thereafter and was given a chance to participate in their “student trainee” program. During my first year in college, I worked at JFK Airport as an observer. Later assignments included being observer at Tallahassee, FL Airport and working at the New York City regional headquarters in the Scientific Services Division.

These opportunities set the stage for being offered a job at the NWS' Techniques Development Laboratory as a severe weather researcher. Here I was involved in development of statistical severe weather forecasting procedures. I recall writing and debugging programs (on old style punch cards), doing extensive research, visiting the National Severe Storms Forecast Center (now SPC) and finally learning how to write. Back in those days, high school science majors were NOT encouraged to learn communication skills.

**How would you describe your current job and how is it different from a forecasting job and other jobs you've had?**

Currently I head [How the Weatherworks](#), a weather education services company. This focus evolved over the course of my NWS career (almost 30 years) and my private sector work in the past 14 years. Almost everything I did seemed to key on explaining, “how the weather worked;” so a colleague suggested the business name and it stuck.

My NWS jobs included research, forecasting (national and local levels), disaster preparedness, program management and evaluation, TV weather, training and so much more. I had assignments across the Nation that gave me extensive background in the geographical vagaries of weather and climate.

My related educational career has evolved from simply teaching a single class to high school earth science teachers in northern Virginia to a national educational services business. In the interim, I developed educational materials for teachers and students (including cloud charts and weather guides), wrote weather-based articles for national educational journals and Weatherwise Magazine, wrote weather education columns for several newspapers, crafted several weather books for national and international publishers, taught teacher workshops and visited schools to offer weather programs for kids and more. I even fostered efforts to create cloud stamps and then worked with the U.S. Postal Service to realize this “dream” in 2004.

Currently, in addition to other efforts, I am Director of the [Howard University \(Washington, DC\) Weather Camp](#) for high school students and engaged in efforts to expand the weather camp program to other colleges nationwide. This program, with a major focus on CAREERS, is helping to create the next generation of meteorologists.

Most recently I have become a frequent guest contributor on a local radio station (WGUF-FM). I often talk about weather topics (hurricane preparedness, El Nino, climate change), but also other science and education topics (e.g., mosquitoes, Star of Bethlehem, pre-college and math education).

There is no doubt that without my many years of experience in the NWS I would be a horrible weather educator. Fortunately that experience taught me what forecasting was all about, how the public and others can use weather forecasts and information and where to obtain weather information of all types. It also taught me about the weather infrastructure that exists in this country (government, university, TV and private sector). The richness of this interconnectivity has truly enabled me to be an effective “weathercator.”

But, my weather education experience does not stop here. Back in 1995, an attorney in Washington, DC contacted me because she needed someone to explain a weather event to a jury. I came highly recommended to her because of my educational background. That incident set the



stage for my transition into forensic meteorology. The more I got into this unique blend of event reconstruction, scientific research and communication, the more I realized just how well my NWS career had prepared me for life beyond NWS. This has now become a very large component of my educational efforts.

**Figure 1. H. Michael Mogil provides expert witness testimony in legal cases involving weather. Here he explains a weather event during deposition testimony.**

I am also involved in many weather-based organizations that serve to further meteorology as a

profession, as a natural resource and a business. I am a member of the American Meteorological Society, National Weather Association, NCIM (National Council of Industrial Meteorologists) – An Association of Private Sector Meteorologists and the Commercial Weather Services Association. In many of these, I have served on various committees and Boards and participate in annual and other meetings.

### **Is forecasting the weather part of your job anymore?**

I am ALWAYS forecasting, although my audience is limited these days to my immediate family (unless I am teaching a weather class). But, I have found that observing the natural world is even more important than forecasting. I do this at every opportunity and have discovered that without this, learning becomes very difficult. I now serve as an “observationalist” role model to as many people and students as I can.

### **What would you say to those interested in working in the private sector?**

Go for it! But wherever you decide to work (public, private or university), be sure that you never stop learning. Experience from any sector of our discipline can easily qualify you for a job in a different sector. And those who understand the role each sector plays can capitalize on all sectors as they develop their careers and provide services.

Consider my work as Director of the Howard University Weather Camp. First, the program is housed at a university. It is also largely funded by NOAA, which ensures that there is a governmental component. I have extended that connectivity to ensure that NOAA and NWS experts participate in the camp. Finally, I have tapped numerous private sector people to showcase their companies, jobs and expertise in the camp.

Also, recognize that each of us has a long list of mentors or people who have helped shape us into what we are. I pondered this recently and was amazed at how many people contributed to my professional evolution. Dr. William Bonner gave me a communications focus; Earl Estelle showed me the importance of multi-tasking; Herb Lieb provided the link between media and weather; and Phyllis Marcuccio afforded me the chance to link to education. My wife, Barbara, the consummate educator, has given me the equivalent of a graduate education degree program. And, there are so many more. Some of these people are meteorologists, but many are not. So, as you move through your professional life, capitalize on all of those whose paths intersect yours. Gain from the richness of their experience, but be sure to give back, as well.