Podcast transcript of "Kandis Boyd, Deputy Division Director at the National Science Foundation in Alexandria, Virginia"

Clear Skies Ahead: Conversations about Careers in Meteorology and Beyond

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Kelly Savoie:

Welcome to the American Meteorological Society's podcast series, **Clear Skies Ahead: Conversations about Careers in Meteorology and Beyond**. I'm Kelly Savoie, and I'm here with Rex Herbst-Horner, and we'll be your hosts. We're excited to give you the opportunity to step into the shoes of an expert working in weather, water, and climate sciences.

Rex Herbst-Horner:

We're happy to introduce today's guest **Kandis Boyd**, Deputy Division Director at the National Science Foundation in Alexandria, Virginia. Welcome, Kandis. Thanks so much for joining us.

Kandis Boyd:

Thank you so much, Rex and Kelly. I'm really glad to be here today.

Kelly:

Kandis, could you tell us a bit about your educational background and what sparked your interest in meteorology?

Kandis:

Absolutely. Absolutely. I'm glad to be here to talk about my career in atmospheric science, which spans nearly 30 years. I'm a continuous learner and I've acquired several degrees and certifications over the years. So first I have a bachelor's of science in meteorology. I was the first African American female to receive a degree in meteorology from Iowa State University. I have a double masters from Iowa State University as well in meteorology and water resources. And water resources is the intersection of ethics, policy, and hydrology. And I have a doctorate in public administration from Nova Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. In addition to that, I have two certifications. The first is a PMP, it's a Project Management Professional certification, and this certification provides skills to execute a project from idea to implementation. And my second certification is a CLTD certification that stands for Certification in Logistics, Transportation, and Distribution.

Kandis:

And that's similar to the PMP in that it manages logistics in a cohesive system, through the planning, designing, and controlling of processes. So, how did I get involved in atmospheric science? Well, I remember I was a curious kid and I asked a lot of questions. So, I'm from Chicago and I was watching the Chicago Bear's football game with my family. And even though this was in the winter, there were storms overhead. And out of nowhere, a bolt of lightning hit the tree in our front yard, it connected with the underground power line and it came straight into the house and blew up by dad's prize color TV!

Kandis:

Now I'm dating myself, but this is back in the day when TVs were considered pieces of furniture. So I'm not sure if my family was more disappointed that we couldn't see the game or that the TV was ruined. But I remember looking outside the window and seeing what used to be the tree. It was split down the middle and smoke was coming from it. And I started asking questions and that's where my interest in meteorology, or more broadly, atmospheric science—that's where it started.

Rex:

Wow. Talk about meteorology coming into your living room, walking right through the front door.

Kandis:

Yes, literally. Yes.

Rex:

Kandis, those are amazing accomplishments, with the certifications and the degrees you've achieved, we're here to provide inspiration and information to people that would also like to follow in your career footsteps or would like to learn from it. I think one question they might have is seeing all them listed at once is like, "Wow, that's a lot. How would I ever start?" What did it feel like as you went from one to the next, as far as deciding the point from, "Okay, I have my undergraduate, I'm going to go for this dual masters." And then I want to add on this certification and this certification, what prompted you into each of those choices and how does it feel to you? Does it feel like it all happened at once or in 30 years of career? How did that kind of spread itself out?

Kandis:

Yeah, I go back to what I said before. For me, I was a curious person. I mean, even as a kid, even as now, and when opportunities presented itself, I would try something new. So, even though I have a love of meteorology and atmospheric science, I've used it in so many different ways. And like you said, sometimes you do need to acquire a new skillset, and so degrees, certifications, they help you along the way to get that experience that you need in order to succeed in different positions throughout your career.

Kelly:

So, certain jobs you had, did you think to yourself, "Wow this project management sort of would be really helpful", or was that suggested from supervisors, or mentors that you've had that suggested you look into these certifications? How did you go about finding them and deciding that, "Oh, this is going to be helpful for me."

Kandis:

Kelly, that's a great question. For my project management professional certification, I was actually doing the work and someone said, "You need the certification to compliment the work that you're doing." So someone actually suggested, "Yeah, you want to get this certification to help you, and kind of get your foot in the door. It shows that you are accomplished in addition to the experiences that you have." So I think that's pretty much been my experience along the way is that someone has suggested something or I've been working in a certain area, and having an additional certification or an additional degree has definitely helped me in that area.

Rex:

Where did you start out after you graduated college? What was your first job or your first experience in the field and how did that take you to Deputy Division Director?

Kandis:

Okay.

Rex:

I know that's a long question, so we'll take it step by step.

Kandis:

Yeah. So, I can kind of take you through my progression or my career path, so to speak. So, I know the first part of your question was what did you do after you got your degree? But believe it or not, I started working, air quotes, while I was in college. So I've had several positions in atmospheric science over the past years. So, first, I went to school because I wanted to be an on-air meteorologist, but after an internship at a local television station, I was told that I did not fit the demographic of the central Iowa viewing population. And I was devastated because I thought my career was over, but it actually turned out to be a great pivot in my career because I then moved and started focusing more on research and operational forecasting in atmospheric science. So I interned at the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) in Boulder, Colorado.

Kandis:

Dr. Peggy LeMone, a past AMS president, was my mentor. And I worked on a project called TOGA COARE. Long acronym: the Tropical Ocean Global Atmosphere Coupled Ocean Atmosphere Response Experiment. So, this was an international collaboration of over 20 nations, and over 100 scientists to research the propagation of thunderstorms near the equator. So, while I was at NCAR, I met Dr. Warren Washington, another past AMS president, and he invited me to present my TOGA COARE research at my very first AMS conference in 1995. So, do the math, over 20 years ago. So then after NCAR, I started working at NOAA's National Weather Service, as a student intern, and I worked part-time while continuing my undergraduate and graduate degrees at Iowa State University. So the program was called SCEP, Student Career Experiences Program. And from SCEP, I was actually able to move into a full-time position, and then I completed my master's degree.

Kandis:

So, the SCEP program allowed me also to spend a summer in Maryland, where I live, now at NMC. It's the National Meteorological Center, and that's in Camp Springs, Maryland. It was later renamed NCEP, which is the National Centers for Environmental Prediction in College Park, Maryland. So, at NMC, I worked rotating shifts in the technical support group at the MOD, which was the Meteorological Operations Division. And I worked with operational meteorologists during, at the time, it was the most active hurricane season to date. And then I also got to interact with Dr. Louis Uccellini, again, another past AMS president. I think you're starting to see a pattern here. After the SCEP program, I became a meteorology intern. I worked at two weather forecast offices: WFO Des Moines and WFO Quad Cities. I also worked as an operational hydrologist at the River Forecast Center in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and there I was in charge of maintaining the Red River Basin, which is the second largest river basin in the Southern Great Plains.

Kandis:

And so from there, I actually had a detail. It was a detail to the ROC, which was stands for the Regional Operation Center in Fort Worth, Texas at Southern Region Headquarters. So, what was great about this internship is that I got to meet a lot of people at Southern Region Headquarters. And a couple of months later, I applied and I was accepted as the Hydrology Program Manager. So as the Hydrology Program Manager for Southern Region Headquarters, I managed the hydrology program in 10 states and Puerto Rico. So that included 32 weather forecast offices and four river forecast centers. And I worked on a lot of great projects, including AHPS, which is the Advanced Hydrologic Prediction Service. I spearheaded TADD, which is Turn Around Don't Drown, a national call to action campaign. That actually reduced the number of flood and flash flood related fatalities. And I was the on-site meteorologist during the 2005 landfall of Hurricane Katrina, where I provided around the clock forecasts for 11 days before, during, and after the hurricane's landfall to the governor of Louisiana and her executive team.

Kandis:

And I also received a DoC [Department of Commerce] Bronze Medal for my efforts. So, after my time as the Hydrology Program Manager, I then came to Washington, D.C. for a one-year detail in the Program Coordination Office at NOAA headquarters. And there, I worked as a liaison between senior leadership at NOAA and senior leadership at the National Weather Service. Now it was supposed to be a one-year detail, meaning I was supposed to go back to my position in Texas, but I ended up staying in Washington, D.C. And then I started working for NESDIS. Another long acronym. It's the National Environmental Satellite Data and Information Service. It's another line office in NOAA and I worked with the Assistant Administrator and the Deputy Assistant Administrator as the executive officer for eight years. And I worked on special projects like satellites, data, and project management. So after my time in NESDIS, I worked at the Department of Commerce Office of the Inspector General, where I managed a $2 billion satellite portfolio.

Kandis:

And then I became the Deputy Director of the Office of Weather and Air Quality, where I managed a team of both contractors and federal employees from entry level all the way up to the position of senior program manager. And as a team, we supported, what's called R2O—Research to Operations—for NOAA as well as NOAA's partners. And so we sponsored grants and also cooperative agreements to further advance atmospheric science. So, the office was later renamed WPO—Weather Program Office. And once it was named WPO, I served as the Acting Director after the sudden passing of Dr. Bill Lapenta, who many who are listening will know he was a pioneer in atmospheric science. So, my most recent position is with the National Science Foundation. And I serve as the Deputy Division Director of the Division Of Grants And Agreements in the Office of Budget, Finance, and Award Administration. Say that fast five times.

Kandis:

All right. So, in this position, I manage a team of 35 individuals. It's a $5 billion portfolio for grants, and we cover 128 scientific disciplines. So, that's my federal career. But I also want to mention that I'm a professor as well. And my research is AI—artificial intelligence. And I've written papers about how to infuse AI into transportation, like driverless vehicles; AI and education, like infusing teacher bots into the online classroom; and AI and weather, such as installing weather instruments on planes, trains, and automobiles. So I know that's long, but that's like 28–29 years in five minutes or less. So that's a snapshot of my career and my career experience.

Kelly:

Pretty impressive, I must say. And I have to say that you were talking about all these things you had done and I was realizing it was while you were still in undergrad, which is amazing. So I have one question for you, once you decided that broadcast meteorology might not work out, when you started doing these internships and tried these other government positions, were you comfortable in the fact that, okay, this is kind of the direction I want to go in and I'm happy doing this?

Kandis:

I think the honest answer is I didn't know what I wanted to do. I mean, I know that I had my mindset on I'm going to be an on-air meteorologist and when that didn't pan out, I really didn't know what I was going to do. So, I think I'm like a lot of people who are listening. You just kind of make the best of the situation that you have. And so different opportunities presented themselves to me. And I was curious, I was open-minded, I was willing to try. And I think that was the defining factor in my career is that I was always interested or open to trying something new.

Kelly:

So, Kandis, at the National Science Foundation: that's a pretty great organization. I know that a lot of our listeners would like to learn more about how to even get a position at the National Science Foundation. For meteorology positions there, is there a certain level of education that you need, or is it such a large organization that there's something for anyone who's interested in science working there?

Kandis:

I'm going to say the latter. So the great thing about the National Science Foundation is that you see science everywhere in the organization. There are individuals like me that have a mix of science, and administrative experience, and you'll see us in budget, in policy, legislative affairs, communications, even international science and engineering. And that's in addition to what you would consider the traditional meteorologists, who are working in our directorates, such as geoscience, and education, and human resources. So it really depends on your position. It runs the gamut. We have student interns that are pursuing bachelor's degrees, all the way up to people with doctorates in atmospheric science. So, again, it just depends on what you want to do with meteorology. There are so many areas where your expertise would be needed.

Kelly:

Is there just one main office for NSF or are there satellite offices in different parts of the country?

Kandis:

So, the National Science Foundation has its headquarters in Washington, D.C., or I should actually say Alexandria, Virginia, which is a suburb of Washington, D.C. And then we do have research facilities around the country. And I mentioned earlier, I worked at NCAR and of course, I didn't know the connection at the time, but NCAR is one of those facilities. So, that's just an example of different ways that atmospheric science is infused into the National Science Foundation.

Rex:

So, you've seen many aspects of the government sector throughout your career. Looking forward to the future, what do you see the job market like for folks that would want to have a career in meteorology,

either in the government sector or in a different sector? What's the outlook from your personal perspective?

Kandis:

Yeah, that's a great question, Rex. So, first, I'm a optimist, so I'm going to always provide you with the positive side of things. So I feel the future is brighter than it has ever been. And I would encourage people to pursue atmospheric science if that's their passion. So, we've seen from the past 18 months in this pandemic that so many people have had to pivot and sometimes at a moment's notice, and the meteorology community is not immune from this, pun intended. So, I think the future is bright for meteorologists who can tap into the latest advancements and serve a building need. So, for example, I mentioned that I work with artificial intelligence and there's a lot of advancements in artificial intelligence when you think about atmospheric science and technology, from creating apps to adding weather instruments, to vehicles, disaster preparedness, using drone technology to automating data ingestion. And yes, of course there's research as well. So, my advice would be to follow your passion and to be open to using meteorology in a variety of ways.

Rex:

And do you think that differs from how, let's say thirty years ago, someone felt going into meteorology?

Kandis:

Absolutely. So I'll take a page from my parents' playbook. They were shocked because every two or three years I was telling them, I'm moving someplace else. I have another job. My parents came from that mindset where you get a good job, you work 30 years, you get a pension, you retire. And that has not been my experience. I've had a different position I want to say on an average of like two to three years throughout my career. So I do think that the mindset is changing that the likelihood that you're going to be in one job for your entire career, I think is very, very low. So, that means that you're going to have to have a skillset that's marketable, that's usable, that people want. And so that means you need to be relevant. You need to be current and you need to have some type background that will help you in an emerging area.

Kelly:

Hence the AI and machine learning. Very important for both government and private sector. I wanted to ask you now that you are working at the National Science Foundation, tell our listeners a little bit about what a Deputy Division Director does at the National Science Foundation. What's a typical day on the job like?

Kandis:

Well, like Kelly, Rex, and probably like many of our listeners I've been working from home for the past year and a half. So I communicate with my team using video conferencing technology or using the phone. So, a typical day is a lot of meetings and a lot of planning. So, in my role, I'm looking into the future. I'm looking in some cases, 5 to 10 years into the future to understand what resources are needed now in order to be successful in the future. So, as boring as it may sound, I read a lot. I read about federal government policies. I read about advancements in science and technology, and I read about what's going on in the world, and trying to figure out how all of that intersects. So, at the time of this recording, we're in the fourth quarter of the fiscal year. So from my office, it's really busy as we're processing 12,000 scientific grants in the last two months of the year. So, as the Deputy Division

Director, I spend a lot of time checking in with my team just to make sure they're okay, and that their workload is manageable.

Rex:

What do you like most about your job?

Kandis:

Okay, well, Rex, that's easy. People, people, people. I really enjoy the people that I work with. We have a strong sense of family and collaboration, and we have to work together to get the work done. And like I said, sometimes it's under stringent deadlines. So, what do I like most about my job? It's the people that I work with.

Kelly:

So, on the flip side, what's the most challenging part of your job?

Kandis:

So, Kelly, oddly enough, I'd say the same thing. So, again, as a Deputy Division Director, the biggest challenge is motivating your team. And I'm motivating my team through a screen or over the phone I haven't had in-person interactions with anyone on my team because I started this position about a year ago. And there's a certain cultural connection, from an office perspective that is, and it's a little bit harder to attain in a virtual environment. Now, it can be attained, but you have to be creative and you have to find innovative ways to interact and connect. So, I think that's the most challenging part of the people aspect of the job.

Kelly:

It must be tough, too, to be able to make projections so far into the future, too, about what's needed and what society's going to need and you don't even know like what the advancements are going to be in science. So I'm sure that's pretty challenging as well.

Kandis:

Yeah, absolutely. The only thing that is certain is that there'll be some type of change. So, change is inevitable and just how we handle it. I think that's really important.

Rex:

Right. I too was curious about what it feels like to be focused on future sight, and kind of to an extent living in the future in terms of the projects you're thinking of are 5 or 10 years in the future versus it's sometimes difficult to even live in the present, to manage what's going on in the present. So I was wondering... you said reading a lot, kind of just having a lot of context floating around helps you envision the future. And I also imagine that some of these tools from your project management certification and your logistics certification probably also give you some techniques that help you see the future more clearly. I was wondering if you could give us any hints or tips on how you can focus on something that's 5 or 10 years out and see it clearly, and be able to make concrete decisions about it in the present.

Kandis:

Great question. So, we're all forecasters in that respect, we're trying to figure out what the future is, and the reality is we're not going to get it right every time, we're going to fail. And I know sometimes people think the F word, oh my gosh, that's so terrible. But we're dealing with atmospheric science and it's a broad field, and sometimes you're just not going to get it right. So, how do I make decisions in the future? Well, first I want to surround myself with the best and brightest so it's not just only that I want to be around people that I really get along with, but I want to surround myself with experts, or people who are in the know and people who have a different or varied perspective that they can contribute to the conversation.

Kandis:

And then let's just be honest: we need partners, we need collaborators and both in and outside the government. So reaching out to other government agencies, reaching out to private sector, and even international groups, organizations as well, volunteer organizations like the American Meteorological Society. There's so many ways to take an idea and try and move it forward. So I think what I've realized after 30 years is I don't have the answers, but I can find people and we can work together. And as a group and in terms of partnerships and collaboration, we can try and develop the best possible answer and make our decisions based on that.

Kelly:

Yes, safety in numbers is definitely a good perspective to have for sure.

Rex:

Uncertainty is a reality is also fair to say.

Kandis:

It is.

Rex:

So, Kandis, you're a fellow of the AMS, and you're also the 2021 recipient of the AMS Charles E. Anderson Award for career achievement in diversity and inclusion. I was wondering if you could tell us a little bit about why diversity is so important in the field of atmospheric science, obviously across all other fields and aspects of life as well, but how would you put it in your words?

Kandis:

Yeah. Great question, Rex. So first, yes, it is such an honor to be a fellow of the American Meteorological Society, as well as an award recipient. I mean, especially because this award was specifically for my career efforts in diversity, and inclusion. So, the short answer is why is diversity and inclusion important? I'd say three reasons. One, it's the right thing to do. Two, we need the best and brightest of all communities to contribute to the advancement of atmospheric science. And three, a diverse team is stronger because diverse ideas drive innovation, and better decision making. So in the federal government, we have a term that has been recently introduced and it's called DEIA. And so it kind of expands on diversity and inclusion, DEIA is diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. And so these are all areas that we need to devote resources to.

Kandis:

And there is a government wide effort to address these areas. So I would be remiss if I didn't highlight the fact that in every single one of my positions, over my nearly thirty years of experience, I was the youngest, I was usually the first female, the first African American to hold the position, or some combination of those three. And so think about that: that's thirty years. So it highlights that even though while we're making advancements, we still have a long way to go in order to truly reach equitable levels of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.

Kelly:

So, Kandis, you definitely have had many accomplishments in your career, but is there anything in particular that you're most proud of or you feel is your biggest accomplishment?

Kandis:

The first thing that came to mind is most people know me because I spearheaded the Turn Around Don't Drown Campaign, which is a flood and flash flood safety campaign geared to encourage individuals to avoid flooded roadways. I was also the on-site meteorologist during the 2005 hurricane of Hurricane Katrina. But if I were to say, really, what's my biggest accomplishment, it's actually something you're not going to find on my resume and that's my ability to mentor others. So, I've mentored over 50 individuals over my career, both professionally and personally. I did not have a mentor for the majority of my career. And I can tell you firsthand that there are a lot of mistakes that made, too many to count that could possibly have turned out differently if I had a trusted source to talk to, and for someone to just lend an ear and just give me some guidance. So, if we are really committed to creating a pipeline of future scientists, especially scientists that represent our country's demographics, then mentoring, to me, is essential for an individual's success and the success of the organization.

Rex:

This might be a good segue. Looking back, is there anything you wish you had done differently in your career that you've maybe been able to apply to advice you'd give to one of your mentees?

Kandis:

Yeah. I mean, obviously, just the mentoring piece that I just mentioned before, I wish I had known more about mentoring, coaching, sponsoring, those are all the buzzwords that you kind of hear. But the point is, is that there's sometimes unwritten rules that you just don't know. And unless you have someone to kind of guide you, hold your hand, show you the way, especially, in specific organizations where there's a strong culture, you'll miss some of those unwritten rules. So, I've been in atmospheric science for nearly thirty years. And when I look back on my career, I can appreciate the good and the bad, the successes and the failures. And I should point out that I've probably had more failures, than successes, but really all of my career experiences they've defined who I am, so I wouldn't change it. But if I could go back and give my younger self some advice about careers, it would be four things.

Kandis:

It would be, one, don't worry, be happy; two, enjoy the journey; three being flexible; and four building your network. So, the first one "don't worry, be happy." I was a worrier. I always overanalyze things. And so I would tell my younger self, "It's going to work out in the end, don't worry, be happy." The second one is "enjoy the journey." I was always so worried about that next project, or that next research, or that next award or that next job that sometimes I didn't really take the time to, as cliche as

it would sound, stop and smell the roses, because you have to enjoy the journey as well as the accomplishments as well. The third one is being flexible. And as I mentioned, when I kind of told you about my career path, it's really varied. I worked as an operational meteorologist an operational hydrologist, a program manager. I worked in policy, I'm working in grants right now. And so if someone had told my younger self, when I started my career, that I'd you here right now? I probably couldn't even fathom it. So I mean, I would tell my younger self, be flexible and be open to the possibilities.

Kandis:

And then the last one is build your network. You want to be a friend before you need a friend, and I want to encourage everyone who's listening today to share your experiences. Because again, I think we're more a then we are dissimilar. And especially when it comes to career progression, I think really it's that mentoring piece. Again, we can learn from each other it doesn't necessarily have to be a mentor with fifty years of experience. I mean, sometimes your peers can give you great advice, and actually it could be someone that you are working with that can give you great advice as well. So just learning to build your network, I think that is important as well. So, that's the advice I would give.

Kelly:

So, Kandis, what advice do you have for students and early career professionals looking to establish careers in your field?

Kandis:

Intern, intern, intern. I believe that internships are the key to helping you test out a job. It can give you a competitive edge when you're applying for positions. And once you join a company, you can participate in an internal internship, they're usually called details, where you can move from one office to the other, and you can try a position out before making a commitment. So when I talked about my career progression, a lot of those positions that I acquired are because in some way, shape, or form, I participated in a detail or an internship. So, even if the internship is unpaid, find ways to volunteer, and work in the field as often as possible, and as early in your career as possible.

Kandis:

So, especially, now in the virtual environment, it's a prime opportunity, especially for students because you have more possibilities for an internship, especially if you don't have to move to that location or for some students who can balance going to school, and working a few hours a week. And so I will tell you that I have a few colleagues who kind of have those golden handcuffs, meaning that they love their salary, but they don't necessarily love their job. So they kind of feel stuck. So I would tell students to find the job that you enjoy, find the job where you are wanted and the job where you can pursue your passion. So give it 200% and everything else will come.

Kelly:

And I agree with you that it doesn't matter if the position is paid because employers just want to find someone who has experience. They don't care if you got a salary, they just want to know that you've done the job and you can do it well. So, yes, that's really good advice. Thank you.

Kandis:

You're welcome.

Rex:

I can think of no better way to end our podcast than to leave everyone with those pieces of advice. But I am going to ask you one other question. We always like to ask our guests one non-meteorological question at the end of each podcast asked. So, I'd like to ask you, what's your all-time favorite book?

Kandis:

Ah, okay. My all-time favorite book is *Where the Sidewalk Ends* by Shel Silverstein. It's a nonfiction poetry book. And if I can take a moment to just give you my thought process, it's probably my favorite book for all the wrong reasons. I went to the library, Okay, so when I was in school, I mentioned it before I was curious, and I loved to go to the library, even though I wasn't a big reader, because I was a curious kid and I knew that books could, to some degree, answer my questions. So I remember for most kids, they loved gym class. They loved music class, but for me it was the library because those books had the answers to the questions in my head.

Kandis:

So, every week I would get books that were really varied by authors like Judy Bloom and Beverly Cleary, who recently passed away. And then like books like *Charlotte's Web* and young adult science fiction novel as well. And I really love those books where you would read it and you'd read the chapter all the way to the end. And there was option A or option B, and then you could jump to another part of the book.

Rex:

Choose your own adventure books.

Kandis:

Okay. I don't know what they're called. I don't know the genre, but I absolutely love those books. So I love those books so much that's what kind of stayed ingrained in my head. So now going back to *Where the Sidewalk Ends,* why is it my favorite book? There was a waiting list to get this book like months. Okay. Because it was only one copy in the library. Everybody seemed like they wanted it. And while I was waiting, everybody who had the book talked about how great it was and it really built up my expectations. So when I finally got it, I felt like I won the lottery, and I literally read the book from cover to cover in like a couple of days. And I think the book was like close to 200 pages. But what stuck with me is that the book was a rhyming storybook with pictures and images that helped you capture the moment from the writer's perspective.

Kandis:

And again, that always stayed with me. And that's one of the main reasons why I created a children's book series about STEAM, science, technology, engineering, arts, and math, and it's a rhyming storybook with diverse images of children. So, every child that reads the book can see themselves in a future STEAM career. So many of the books I read growing up, they didn't feature people who looked like me. So, I'm just a firm believer in diversity. And while it's important to instill in our next generation of leaders, that you can be anything that you want to be.

Kelly:

Oh, that's so awesome. My son loves that Shel Silverstein book too. That's one of his favorites.

Kandis:

I think that's a top 10 children's books of all times.

Rex:

Well, thanks so much for joining us, Kandis, and sharing your work experiences with us as well as your love of books and Shel Silverstein and sorry about that color TV way back when that your folks lost.

Kandis:

Yeah. They recovered, not as soon as they wanted to, but they did recover.

Rex:

Thank you so much, Kandis.

Kandis:

All right. It's been a pleasure. Thank you, Kelly. Thank you, Rex.

Kelly:

Well, that's our show for today. Please join us next time, rain or shine.

Rex:

Clear Skies Ahead: Conversations about Careers in Meteorology and Beyond is a podcast by the American Meteorological Society. Our show is produced by Brandon Crose, and edited by Peter Trepke. Our theme music is composed and performed by Steve Savoie, and the show is hosted by Rex Horner and Kelly Savoie. You can learn more about the show online at www.ametsoc.org/clearskies and contact us at skypodcast@ametsoc.org if you have any feedback, or if you would like to become a future guest.