

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – January 12<sup>TH</sup>, 2022



## AWARD-WINNING JOURNALIST DARLENE MELENDEZ NAMED CO-ANCHOR FOR KOAT ACTION 7 NEWS EARLY NEWS

**ALBUQUERQUE, NM** – KOAT 7 announces award-winning journalist Darlene Melendez as co-anchor for KOAT Action 7 News Live at 4:00 p.m., beginning January 24<sup>th</sup>. Melendez will work alongside co-anchor Ron Burke and Meteorologist Kelly Franson.

Prior to joining KOAT 7, Melendez served as weekend anchor at News 12 in New Jersey since 2019. She also worked as a reporter at KLAS-TV in Las Vegas, NV and KYMA-DT in Yuma, AZ. Melendez reported during the horrific October 1 mass shooting in Las Vegas. The coverage presented Melendez with many challenges but lead to a deep connection to community. Soon after joining News 12 in New Jersey, Melendez covered another tragedy during an anti-Semitic terror attack in 2019.

“We are thrilled to have Darlene join the KOAT Action 7 News team,” said Jess O’Neill, KOAT 7’s News Director. “She’s a very talented journalist who is passionate about the important stories we strive to cover in New Mexico. Her experience and drive will be a welcome addition to our high performing team. We look forward to getting Darlene settled back into the Southwest.”

Melendez’s live coverage during 24 hours of the October 1 shooting garnered a Pacific Southwest Chapter Emmy award. She also received a New York Chapter Emmy nomination for her coverage of the Jewish Deli attack in New Jersey.

“I look forward to engraining myself in the community, one I will be very familiar with given my strong roots in the Mexican-American community,” said Darlene Melendez. “I’m excited to tell the small stories that make big differences, while bringing a sense of joy and authenticity to the team.”

Melendez is a graduate of Pepperdine University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Journalism and a minor/focus in Media Production and Marketing.

#### About KOAT Channel 7

KOAT is New Mexico’s broadcast/digital media leader, providing news, weather, community service and entertainment on multiple platforms including KOAT Channel 7, koat.com, and the KOAT App. Founded in 1953, KOAT is committed to its mission to serve the state of New Mexico with quality local content. The station has been honored with numerous prestigious national broadcasting honors including multiple recognitions as Television Station of the Year by the New Mexico Broadcasters Association, the RTDNA Edward R. Murrow Awards, the regional Emmy’s, Associated Press Awards, and Walter Cronkite Awards. KOAT, an ABC affiliate station, is owned by Hearst Television Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of the Hearst Corporation, a leading media company whose global holdings include 33 television stations and two radio stations. Follow us on Facebook (koat7) and Twitter (@koat7).

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