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style

Couric poised to be first fashionable evening anchor

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Fashion mavens don't want their almost fetish obsession with Katie Couric's style to end, even if her new job demands it.

Of course, Couric's supporters are thrilled that her career success has landed her a historic opportunity. On Sept. 5 she joins The CBS Evening News as the first woman to anchor a network evening newscast solo.

Image consultants, designers and makeup artists expect to see a more toned-down and buttoned-up side of Couric some say is more suitable for a serious, night-time viewer.

But true Couric fans secretly hope she'll still sport the latest Manolo Blahniks, even if they can't see them behind the dark anchor desk.

"I wish there was some way we could continue to see Katie's stilettos and the latest find she's got in her shoe collection," says Tasha L. Jones, a wardrobe consultant and owner of Aisle of Style in Denver.

"I think that she has definitely established this kind of permission that makes it OK to be womanly and stylish while still being credible," Jones added. "I just hope she will be able to bring some of that over with her to the CBS evening broadcast."

Couric's signature sweater sets, bubbly personality, brassy hair dos and brushed on tan woke up morning audiences on the Today show. Her clothing creativity established her as a fashion icon in the broadcast industry, while peers looked to her in terms of what they could get away with at their own local stations.

Early CBS promos featuring Couric in a conservative black suit and pearls seemed to be a death knoll to a style that once hinged on brightly hued colors, daring prints and skirts that showcased glorified glams.

When she arrived in a beige pantsuit at the Television Critics Association press tour last month, many feared the make-over had already happened.

Couric responded with an indignant, "You're kidding right?" when reporters asked her about her wardrobe plans for CBS.

But supporters think Couric can still have fun with her styling if she wants too.

"I don't think you can keep her in dark suits five days a week," says Patti Shyne, a television appearance coach with Channels 9 and 2, as well as several stations across the country.

Since the focus will likely be from Couric's waist up, she'll probably make the most of tailored suits in neutral tones. Jackets with contrast piping, blouses with subtle

prints and light jewelry pieces will help Couric tone down the glitz and the glam while retaining her femininity.

"I'll bet you anything she'll be in Chanel, Christian Dior, and Dolce and Gabana," Shyne said. "I'm sure she's already getting hit up by some designers."

Jones wants to see her get rid of the bottle of sprayed on tan, or whatever Couric uses, to opt for a creamier, natural skin tone.

Lisa Holste, owner and stylist at Salon Posh in Denver, thinks Couric should lose the flip and darken her hair, adding just a few highlights for dimension.

"No more streaky blonde," Holste says. "I would say she needs a dark blond with some golden undertones or a rich brown with lighter highlights around her face so it doesn't look too thin. Don't go shorter. I don't want them to cut off all her wonderful locks."

Some say Couric will be forced to undergo criticisms her competition won't have to deal with simply because she's a woman in a male dominated industry. Her almost celebrity status will keep tongues wagging too.

"She's an icon on all fronts, not just in the news, but in our public consciousness," Jones said. "She's been our morning personality for years. The public identifies with her on a personal level, so she's apt to be critiqued on a personal level in terms of what she wears, how she does her hair and what color she wears."

Shyne just wants Couric to listen to her inner self.

"When everybody starts barking at her, I hope she can continue to express her opinion about what she feels comfortable in, beautiful in and professional in," says Shyne.

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