

# Broadcasting Multichannel News + Cable

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2022 ICONIC NETWORK



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B+C Broadcasting + Cable  
HALL of FAME



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# Broadcasting Multichannel + Cable News

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FROM THE CHAIRMAN

# Welcome to the 30th Anniversary 'B+C' Hall of Fame



**T**onight we gather to celebrate a very special event — the induction of the 30th anniversary class of the B+C Hall of Fame in recognition of their special contributions to our industry.

In 1991, on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of Broadcasting magazine, the Hall of Fame was created to honor 60 individuals who had through the course of their careers made significant contributions to TV and electronic media. The original class included industry legends ranging from Guglielmo Marconi to William S. Paley, Bob Hope, cable pioneers Bill Daniels and Dr. John Malone and C-SPAN founder Brian Lamb, to name but a few. Lucille Ball was one of three women honorees, alongside Irna Phillips, creator of the daytime soap operas Guiding Light and As the World Turns, and Joan Ganz Cooney, one of the founders of Sesame Workshop.

This year's class, announced in 2020 with the celebration delayed due to concerns over COVID-19, is a special one indeed. Its 12 members include six women, ranging from on-air journalists Hoda Kotb and Savannah Guthrie, co-anchors of NBC's Today, to Emily Barr, the recently retired president and CEO of Graham Media Group. They are joined by Pearlena Igbowke, chairman of NBCUniversal Studio Group; and Susanne Daniels, former global head of original content at YouTube and a media consultant and lecturer. Also included is Nomi Bergman, president of Advance/Newhouse Investment Partnership and a director of Comcast Corp.

Nomi is joined by her brother Steve Miron, CEO of Advance/Newhouse Partnership; their father, Bob Miron, was a member of the Hall of Fame Class of 2002, creating a First Family of Cable, if you will. The breadth of our class includes Katz Television Group president Leo MacCourtney along with the former CEO of ION Media Networks, Brandon Burgess. They are joined by Steven R. Swartz, president and CEO of Hearst, and Curtis Symonds, now CEO of HBCUGo.tv Network following a lengthy career at BET Networks and ESPN. Radio is well represented by a career-long veteran, Dan Mason, the retired president and CEO of CBS Radio and subsequent chairman of the Broadcasters Foundation of America, a primary beneficiary of our event, in addition to the Paley Center for Media. ESPN will also receive a first-time honor, recognized as our Iconic Network for its 40 years as the "Worldwide Leader in Sports" and a major entertainment industry presence.

We are grateful to our co-hosts for the evening, Hannah Storm, anchor for ESPN, and Al Roker, weather and feature anchor of NBC's Today and co-host, third hour of Today, for their contributions to the festivities. Thanks also to our in-house editorial and sales staffs at B+C; the marketing and production teams; and Future events leader Kelly Boon. And, of course, our event producers at Live Star Entertainment, Eric Drath and Danielle Naassana; as well as Alan Winnikoff and Carina Sayles, our PR team; and especially our sales team, led by Jessica Wolin and Jo Stanley. Finally, thanks to you, our inductees and company sponsors, alumni and attendees, for your 30 years of support and generosity.

Thank you all!

*Bill McGarry*

Bill McGarry  
Chairman  
B+C Hall of Fame

*Kent Gibbons*

Kent Gibbons Content Director  
Broadcasting+Cable,  
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# The Evening

## Location

Ziegfeld Ballroom, 141 W. 54 St., New York  
Thursday, April 14, 2022  
Cocktail Reception: 5:30 p.m. |  
Dinner and Program: 6:30 p.m.

## Welcoming Remarks

### Bill McGorry

Chairman, *Broadcasting+Cable*  
Hall of Fame

### Kent Gibbons

Content Director, *Broadcasting+Cable*  
and *Multichannel News*

## Presentation of Awards

### Al Roker

Weather and Feature anchor, NBC's  
*TODAY*; co-host, 3rd hour of *TODAY*

### Nomi Bergman

### Steve Miron

### Emily Barr

### Brandon Burgess

### Pearlena Igbokwe

## Hoda Kotb & Savannah Guthrie

## Dinner

## Presentation of Awards

### Hannah Storm

ESPN Anchor & Founder:  
Brainstormin' Productions  
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## Iconic Network ESPN

### Susanne Daniels

### Leo MacCourtney

### Dan Mason

### Steven R. Swartz

### Curtis Symonds

## Closing Remarks

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# Emily Barr

Former President & CEO  
Graham Media Group



By Paige Albinia  
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@PaigeA

**T**he career hallmark of longtime Graham Media Group president and CEO Emily Barr, who just stepped back to serve as a consultant before she retires, is that she has kept her stations connected to their communities while encouraging journalism to thrive.

"She is truly motivated by the mission of broadcasting," National Association of Broadcasters president and CEO Curtis LeGeyt said. "That's always been larger than her role at her specific company. She knows the importance of having a medium that unites and serves as a real local nexus to which people can turn to find the resources they need."

That's on the macro level. On the micro level, to a person everyone notes Barr's warmth and authenticity.

"The first thing that strikes you if you spend time with Emily is that she's a very good listener," LeGeyt said. "Her role at NAB [as chair of the Television Board] was to find common ground on advocacy solutions. She's someone who can do that because she's willing to put herself in others' shoes."

Catherine Badalamente just succeeded Barr as Graham's president and CEO after working closely with her as Graham's VP and chief innovation officer.

"She's everything that you see and more," Badalamente said. "I always tell the story about how I worked closely with Alan Frank [Graham's CEO before Barr] and he told me that I was going to love working with her. I read every article I could find on her and I went to the comments, because that's where you

“She knows the importance of having a medium that unites and serves as a real local nexus to which people can turn to find the resources they need.”

**Curtis LeGeyt** President and CEO, NAB

get the real story, and every story about her was how she was real and genuine and hard-working. All of that turned out to be true."

After graduating from Carleton College in Minnesota with a bachelor's degree in film studies, Barr got a job as a news editor at KSTP St. Paul in 1980.

She decided to get her master's degree in business administration (MBA), starting first in Minneapolis and then transferring to George Washington University after she was hired as writer and producer at WJLA Washington, D.C. She transferred again to the University of St. Thomas in Houston when she was hired as promotion manager at KHOU, later moving up to creative services director.

MBA finally in hand after four years, she began to look around again, landing a job as director of broadcast operations at WMAR Baltimore working for then-general manager Arnie Kleiner.

She remained in Baltimore for six years, rising to assistant general manager. "I felt like Baltimore was the place where I really got involved in the community and started to understand the nuance of what it took to be a general

manager," Barr said.

Kleiner departed WMAR five years later to run KABC Los Angeles, and Barr started setting her sights on a GM position. WMAR's owner, Scripps, thought that at 35 Barr was too young to run a TV station, but Kleiner tipped her off to a position at ABC's WTVD in Raleigh, North Carolina.

Just after she got married in October 1994, she and her new husband, Scott M. Kane, a freelance videographer, moved to Raleigh where she ran the station for just under three years.

## Getting Rooted in Chicago

In 1997, at seven and a half months pregnant with her first child, Barr decamped again, this time for Chicago, where she lives to this day. She ran ABC's WLS Chicago, well-known as Oprah Winfrey's home station, for 15 years.

"I was very happy working for ABC and Disney for all those years," she said. "I really got connected in the city and the community. I knew everybody — I was connected to the mayor and knew the governor — and I was on a lot of nonprofit boards."

In 2011, Frank was due to retire and was helping Graham find his replacement when Barr's name came up. After discussing the move for a year, Barr finally agreed to leave WLS to run Graham Media's seven TV stations, remaining in Chicago even though the company was headquartered in Detroit.

"When you are running seven stations versus running one, you have a slightly wider viewer of the industry and of the issues concerning the industry," she said. "I also had to learn how to deal with the people directly at corporate and on the board of directors. It adds a different layer of complexity to what you do."

After that full career, her guiding principle hasn't shifted. "The ability to hold important people accountable in your community and celebrate and uplift your community — that's the key to being a great local broadcaster," Barr said.





"WHEN THE DOOR OPENS, DON'T ASK WHY...RUN THROUGH IT."

- EMILY BARR



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We are **delighted** to see Emily's extraordinary track record of industry achievement and leadership recognized.

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**on her induction into the Broadcasting and Cable Hall of Fame.**

We send our congratulations to *all* of the 2022 inductees; you represent the best and the brightest in broadcasting and cable, and we are proud to stand with you as colleagues and friends.





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*President & CEO, Graham Media Group*

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*On your induction into the  
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FROM YOUR FRIENDS





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to all 2022 Broadcasting+ Cable  
Hall of Fame inductees, especially

**Nomi Bergman &**

**our Board member Steve Miron**

with thanks for Advance/Newhouse's  
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# Nomi Bergman

President Advance/Newhouse  
Investment Partnership



By Cathy Applefeld Olson  
catholson331@gmail.com  
@Cathy\_A\_Olson

**A**nyone who still subscribes to the adage that nice people finish last hasn't met Nomi Bergman. Bergman has been shining her light and leadership on a family legacy that's seen her serve early executive stints at Advance/Newhouse (in publishing and cable) and Time Warner Cable; as president of Bright House Networks, the sixth-largest U.S. cable operator at the time of its 2016 merger with Charter Communications; and in her current role as an adviser on the evolution of the cable infrastructure she's been championing since day one.

"The continued innovation of our infrastructure has enabled us to deliver products and services to our customers that we might not have dreamed of during earlier days," she said.

A self-described "rational optimist," Bergman has "a lot of hope for the remarkable things a healthy team can create by working collaboratively together, staying close to customers, falling in love with our craft and aiming high."

It's a descriptor shared by Comcast chairman and CEO Brian Roberts, a decades-long ally and friend who counts Bergman as a Comcast board member.

"Nomi is a force in telecommunications — having been at the forefront of many trends in media and technology over the last several decades," Roberts said. "She is unique for her knowledge, passion and unwavering optimism. It has been a privilege to have her great insights on our board, and we are lucky that

**"Nomi has made a career out of 'saying yes' to customers, colleagues and partners who need her."**

**Peter Stern** VP, Apple

Nomi's leadership and vision are helping to shape our industry."

That vision began in the early '90s with Bergman joining her father Robert Miron in the cable business, initially consulting on back-end systems including the streamlining of disparate billing systems.

In 1998, she was on the ground in Charlotte, North Carolina, for the launch of Road Runner, TWC's initial cable-modem internet service.

"It really felt like a historical moment," said the mother of three daughters. "The fact that plants could be two-way... it was huge. People didn't believe it, and they didn't think they needed it because they thought dial-up was fine."

Bergman ascended to perhaps her most notable career highlight to date — helming, along with her father and brother, Steve Miron, Bright House Networks and its 8,500 employees serving 2.2 million customers.

"The opportunity to build a multibillion-dollar brand, and to build leadership teams and cultivate a culture of care by authentically engaging and listening to employees and customers and learning how to best show up to serve them was just incredible," she said.

Steve Miron, also a 2022 Hall of Fame honoree, said it's been a career highlight to work so closely with his sister: "She's the most

driven person I know; she's got a great strategic head. She always knows what I'm thinking, and I always know what she's thinking... and 90% of the time it's the same thing."

Among notable customer-first initiatives, Bergman launched a campaign called Just Say Yes, plastering signage in call centers and ensuring employees knew the company had their backs as they super-served customers. Then came the Friends Campaign, centered on the premise that Bright House would pull out all the stops to treat its customers like family and close friends, whether that meant bringing needed food to house calls or technicians working after hours to ensure a student could take an online test. "It was a magical time," she said.

"Nomi has made a career out of 'saying yes' to customers, colleagues and partners who need her," said Peter Stern, a VP at Apple who worked with Bergman at Time Warner Cable from 2006 to 2014. "She has enriched countless people's lives with her insight, integrity and boundless generosity."

## Sharing Industry Pride

Throughout her career, Bergman has led with a genuine love for the industry, and for the people who make it run. "I look at the infrastructure our industry provided during the pandemic, and I feel such humility and pride," she said.

What's on the mind of the avid adventure traveler these days? Regulation and opportunity.

Aside from Comcast, Bergman is on boards of Black & Veatch, Visteon and her alma mater, the University of Rochester. She is also on the FCC's Technological Advisory Council. For Advance, she's a board member of 1010data and Hawkeye360, which enables the observation of RF signals from space.

"I love the space industry," she said. "There are a lot of ties to the cable industry." ●







Advance celebrates

Nomi Bergman and Steve Miron

who are joining their father

Bob Miron

in the Broadcasting & Cable Hall of Fame

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# Congratulations Nomi Bergman!

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LEADERSHIP AND DEDICATION TO OUR INDUSTRY

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# Steve Miron

CEO Advance/Newhouse Partnership



By Cathy Applefeld Olson  
catholson331@gmail.com  
@Cathy\_A\_Olson

**F**undamentally, the cable business is really an infrastructure business. We need to think about how to evolve our infrastructure so it's flexible to not only offer and scale today's products but be prepared to offer the products our customers will want tomorrow."

Steve Miron is discussing one of his favorite topics — the future of the industry he quite literally grew up with. After decades in the trenches — including at the helm of Bright House Networks alongside his sister (and fellow honoree), Nomi Bergman — as CEO of Advance/Newhouse, he now advises some of cable's most senior executives, including those at Discovery and Charter Communications, on whose boards he sits.

"I've had a unique opportunity to be involved on the distribution side and on the content side with a variety of companies, whether Time Warner Cable or Bright House or Charter and Discovery, and to watch the way those companies think," he said. "It's been really fascinating. It's been a great journey."

Miron's journey began back in high school, selling cable services door-to-door and via telemarketing. After college, he had stints at Newhouse cable properties MetroVision in Chicago, Vision Cable in Charlotte, North Carolina, and NewChannels in upstate New York. When the Newhouse family combined operations with Time Warner Cable in 1994-95, Miron stopped working directly for the family business and went to work for

**“Steve Miron built the best service organization as CEO of Bright House, and it became a model for the industry.”**

**Tom Rutledge** Chairman and CEO, Charter

TWC for the better part of a decade.

He stepped into the spotlight in 2003 with the launch of Bright House, in conjunction with TWC. "Steve Miron built the best service organization as CEO of Bright House, and it became a model for the industry," Charter chairman and CEO Tom Rutledge said. "Today he continues to lead through his board positions at Charter and Discovery with the same great values he used as CEO."

Some of those values Miron is proud to say he gleaned from the family patriarch, Robert Miron. "I definitely learned from my father about being a good listener," he said. "Listening is hugely important and underrated, and I still work at that all the time."

In fact, the opportunity to work with his family was one of Miron's favorite parts of the Bright House experience. "We were partnered with Time Warner Cable at the time but we had [free rein] of how we wanted to put Bright House together, how we wanted to organize it, even what we wanted to call it," he said.

The feeling was mutual. "I have the deepest respect for my brother, and it's a really wonderful feeling knowing he'll always be here for me and I'll always be here for him," said Bergman. "And I also really enjoy my time with him. He makes me laugh so hard."

The naming process was a journey unto itself, with the team landing on the Bright House moniker that made it stand out from the pack from day one. "It was definitely a little bit different for the industry," Miron said.

The team had rights to some of the legacy Newhouse brands but decided to take a different route. "We put together a group and a process, and we talked about what we wanted to be as a company. We wanted to be a customer-focused company, and we wanted to have a name that was customer-focused. Bright House emerged as the leading contender, and it was a name that was what we aspired to be," Miron said.

## Super-Serving the Customer

That customer focus enabled the company to super-serve subscribers and gave Bright House an edge in an increasingly competitive landscape. "We had one of the first Verizon Fios overbuilds in the country in our markets, in Texas and Florida, and we had a strong brand in those markets and we were a good competitor," he said. "As time wore on and we saw more competition in video and broadband from overbuilders, having that customer focus was something that was important to our competitive stance."

Former Cox Communications CEO Patrick Esser said Miron offers a unique mix of skills for a cable executive. "I appreciate Steve for his thoughtful leadership and ability to build strong industry relationships," he said. "I'm very excited to see him recognized."

As the industry keeps evolving, Miron looks to its roots to serve as a bellwether. "I have a real appreciation for just how wonderfully flexible our architecture is, how powerful it is, and how the business has been made with a great entrepreneurial spirit, and great engineering as well," he said. "The industry has done a really nice job building and scaling flexible architecture to offer an amazing array of products that really changed people's lives." ●





Congratulations  
to Steve Miron and  
Nomi Bergman on  
your induction into  
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# NOMI BERGMAN STEVE MIRON

AND ALL OF THE 2022  
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MOELIS & COMPANY

*Congratulations to*

*Brandon Burgess  
and all of tonight's honorees*

*We applaud your exceptional careers  
and contributions*

NAVID MAHMOODZADEGAN  
AND JOHN MOMTAZEE



# Brandon Burgess

Former Chairman and CEO  
ION Media Networks



By Robert Edelstein  
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**T**he enduringly popular CBS procedural series *Blue Bloods* is known for its family drama. Tom Selleck stars as New York City Police Commissioner Frank Reagan, who also heads the Sunday dinner table every episode. Frank often delivers clear-eyed wisdom in the face of long odds. “Doing the right thing may be hard,” he once said, “but it sure as hell isn’t complicated.”

That may be how Brandon Burgess felt when he offered up one of the most successful and prescient ideas in modern media. After moving to head up Paxson Communications in 2005 from his spot running business development and global strategy for NBCUniversal, Burgess looked through the numbers. With over 70 stations, the knee-jerk option for the company — renamed ION Media Networks — was to spend big and build a roster of originals programmed for a younger demo. But ION’s hobbling debt and a fervent study of ratings suggested a different plan: license off-network hits, particularly crime dramas, for a song and aim them at an underserved TV market: older adults, especially women.

The strategy was crazy, counter-intuitive, vastly unpopular and brilliant. In time, ION found a home for popular procedural fare (including *Blue Bloods*) and turned a red ledger black with a smooth efficiency that matched the company’s chairman/CEO.

“A lot of people would have blown their brains out trying to program originals, but Brandon didn’t fall for it,”

“He licensed the biggest shows when there was no other audience for them. It was really a visionary move.”

**Jeff Sagansky** Co-founder,  
Flying Eagle Acquisition Corp.

said Jeff Sagansky, former Paxson CEO and co-founder of media ventures company Flying Eagle Acquisition Corp. “He licensed the biggest shows when there was no other audience for them. It was really a visionary move.”

Added Guggenheim Partners executive chairman Alan Schwartz: “In media and in business, there are some people who are really good at seeing the big picture, and others who really drill down and work on all the details. Brandon’s one of the few I’ve come across in my career that did both.”

None of this was accidental for Burgess. He grew up in Germany “with a healthy work ethic” and, after coming to the U.S., graduating from Wharton and doing stints at PepsiCo and Goldman Sachs, he set his sights on New York and a job at NBC. “Over time, we all have to figure out what we’re good at,” Burgess said. “I wasn’t going to direct episodes of *Friends*. The question is looking for the angles where you can apply yourself in the environment you want to succeed, and for me, that’s always been analyzing things, and if need be, playing the long ball.”

Toward that end, he understood early the eventual reach of digital and, at NBC, worked to create nbcolumpics.com; he was also part of the purchase of Telemundo

and instrumental in NBC’s first entertainment network acquisition, Bravo, and of buying Universal Entertainment.

“Universal was the big cherry on top,” he said now of the deal that led to NBCUniversal. “The industry was consolidating around us. [NBC was] left with a 90% advertising business and declining ratings; it was the early 2000s and all the shows were expiring, and the content creators had all the leverage. We needed to diversify ... and needed, basically, a transforming deal.”

## Playing ‘Moneyball’ in TV

The same need explains the much more organic licensing move Burgess implemented in fall 2008, after coming to ION in late 2005. Burgess, a fan of the book *Moneyball*, about the Oakland A’s statistics-based strategic rise to success starting in 2002, used a similar tactic to explain the move to his people, who were dumbfounded. “Boy, did we have boardroom arguments,” he said.

Burgess has never shied away from such challenges, and his enviable record of reading trends and producing results speaks for itself. Favoring national over-the-air networks in 2007 sparked ION’s multi-network portfolio, and the U.S. multicast category. And he’s long been a leader on topics such as broadcast spectrum and wireless.

With ION’s \$2.7 billion sale to E.W. Scripps in 2021, Burgess has pivoted away from the boardroom to enjoy family and leisure time — for now. “It’s hard not to be intrigued by all the technologies that are coming out,” he said, looking down the road. “I think there are organizing principles out there that would require a whole new learning curve.”

Perhaps, but one expects he’d join a company, crunch the numbers and, true to form, make visionary moves, leaving other execs shocked, even dismayed. One gets the sense that, for Brandon Burgess, it sure as hell isn’t complicated. ●





# *Hats Off*

*to the*

## NBC BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT TEAM

for "Imagining the Possibilities" of  
the NBC-Universal merger

*and to the*

## ION MEDIA TEAM

for playing "Moneyball in Broadcasting," delivering  
one of the most successful turn-arounds in television

*and to the*

## COMCAST and E.W. SCRIPPS TEAMS

for valuing those great resulting businesses  
and building upon them.

*Congratulations to all of tonight's honorees.*

*Sincerely,*

*The Burgess Family*



# Susanne Daniels

Media Consultant & Lecturer;  
Former Global Head,  
YouTube Originals



By Paige Albinia  
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@PaigeA

**S**usanne Daniels has held executive positions at many networks and platforms in her time in the entertainment industry — ABC, Fox, The WB, Lifetime, MTV and YouTube — but her mission has remained the same: Find programming that resonates with young people.

That job has only gotten harder as those young audiences have migrated to digital platforms and social media.

Still, Daniels managed to find a big hit for YouTube — and later for Netflix — with *Cobra Kai*, a sequel to the popular *Karate Kid* movies of the 1980s. Who knew that the kids of Gen X, who first fell in love with Daniel-san and his teacher, Mr. Miyagi, would grow up and want to see more? Well, Daniels, for one.

Backing up a few years, when Daniels was overseeing programming for MTV, she developed a drama for the cable network called *Finding Carter*.

"It was so good, I just loved it," she said. "But it wasn't getting a lot of traction even though we were marketing it well. One day, out of complete frustration, I turned to our head of research and said, 'Where are they? Why aren't they watching this show?' And she said, 'They're all on YouTube.' I then started educating myself on YouTube creators."

Daniels started reaching out to those creators to see if they could work together. When Robert Kyncl, YouTube's chief business officer, discovered what she was doing, he invited her to lunch and then to work at YouTube. "He told me, 'You'll have better success reaching

"Nobody else was willing to say to us, 'we're going to make an entire season,' but she had that passion, understanding and trust in us."

**Jon Hurwitz** Executive producer, *'Cobra Kai'*

the audience where these YouTubers live," she said. "I decided he was right."

Back to *Cobra Kai*. "I knew from YouTube's data that *Karate Kid* was a highly searched term with our heavy users in a positive way. The pitch was one of the best pitches I have ever heard — they even brought in Ralph Macchio and William Zabka. There was no way I was letting them walk out the door without begging them to bring their show to YouTube."

Daniels and her team pitched the benefits of YouTube to *Cobra Kai*'s creative team: Josh Heald, Jon Hurwitz and Hayden Schlossberg. When they heard Daniels's enthusiasm, they were in.

"She saw the vision before anyone else did," Hurwitz said. "Nobody else was willing to say to us, 'we're going to make an entire season,' but she had that passion, understanding and trust in us."

She's always been able to see the business from a producer's point of view, and that's helped her lure talent to any platform she's leading. "There's so much risk assessment in our business, but Susanne was willing to take a bet on who we were and what we could bring," said B17 Entertainment's Rhett Bachner, who launched *Broke-Ass Game Show* on MTV under Daniels's watch.

Part of that understanding comes from a very personal place: her marriage to Greg Daniels, creator and EP of such shows as NBC's *The Office* and *Parks and Recreation*. They met when she was assistant to *Saturday Night Live*'s Lorne Michaels and he was a writer there.

After three years at SNL, Daniels moved to Los Angeles to join ABC as a director of reality and variety programming. She then served as VP of comedy at Fox. Her next move was to startup The WB, where founder Jamie Kellner first offered her a job as head of comedy.

## Rolling the Dice at The WB

"What I said to Jamie Kellner was, 'I'm going to take a chance on your startup network, but I'm only going to take this job if I can oversee all development.' He didn't get back to me for a couple of weeks because I think he was desperately trying to find someone else during that time. But he came back and offered me the job I wanted," she said. "I don't think it was bravery to ask for more. I just think it was me wanting to maximize my potential."

At The WB, she helped develop some of the most generationally defining hits of the late '90s and early 2000s, including *Dawson's Creek*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Charmed*, *Felicity* and *Gilmore Girls*.

By the time The WB merged with UPN to become The CW in 2006, Daniels and most of the original executives had left. She went on to oversee programming at Lifetime, MTV and YouTube.

As YouTube's global head of original content, Daniels also worked with pop superstar Katy Perry on *Katy Perry Witness Worldwide* and with Barack and Michelle Obama, Lady Gaga and Lizzo on *The Class of 2020 Graduation Special*.

With YouTube exiting originals, Daniels left in early March. As she considers what to do next, young audiences are always on her mind.

"I would like to build something for young audiences again and I'm giving some thought as to what that is," she said. "I truly love the medium of TV." ●





A large graphic featuring a collage of various YouTube Originals posters arranged in a diamond pattern around a central red circle. The posters include titles like "RAISE THE BAR", "KATY PERRY", "STONEWALL OUTLOUD", "GROOM", "LIZA", "MUSEO", "WHEN THEY SAY WHEN THEY FIT", "KID CUDI", "THE CRACKS IN CHRISTMAS", "BOOK TUBE!", "ICE COLD", "TERMS & CONDITIONS", "XOXO ACT ALL-ACCESS", "MIKKIE TUTORIALS", "THE SCHOOL OF ROCK", "#MoveWithMe", "BEST SHOT", "CROWN KISS", "WORLD DEBUT", "ARRIVED", "SCIENCE", "BURN STATE", "CUPCAKE", "WITH A BROOK", "SLAY HOME VIBES", "SEATTLE LIGHT", "STONED", "THE GOLDEN GAME", "SWITCH", "THE FIVE CARBONS", "DARK CELL", "THE BEST SHOT", "ICE COLD", "BOOK TUBE!", "TERMS & CONDITIONS", "LIZA", "MUSEO", "WHEN THEY SAY WHEN THEY FIT", "KID CUDI", "THE CRACKS IN CHRISTMAS", "DREDDIN", "KID CUDI", "THE CRACKS IN CHRISTMAS".

**Congratulations Susanne Daniels on your  
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Thank you for your leadership, direction,  
and creativity building YouTube Originals from  
the ground up. Your extraordinary slate of  
innovative and award-winning content has  
engaged our creators and thrilled our  
audiences all over the world. I'm incredibly  
grateful for all that you have done.

Robert Kyncl and your family at YouTube

**YouTube**



Thank you  
and creativity  
the ground  
innovative a  
engaged  
audiences o  
grateful

Robert Ky





# Savannah Guthrie

Co-Anchor of *Today* and Chief Legal Correspondent **NBC News** **30<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY** **BCHALLOfFAME**



By Michael Malone  
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@BCMikMalone

**S**avannah Guthrie, co-anchor on *Today*, marks 10 years in the role this summer. Guthrie has had an eventful decade, interviewing presidents, corporate CEOs and global newsmakers on a regular basis.

It's a busy time in news to say the least, and Guthrie feels the *Today* team has never been stronger. "I feel the best I've ever felt, the most comfortable I've ever felt in this job," she said. "I'm just grateful every day to be able to do it."

The pandemic has, of course, been a front-page story for two years, and the war in Ukraine gives news gatherers another colossus to tackle. That's just the pace of the game in 2022. "The news cycle just seems to get shorter and shorter, to the point where I don't know that there is even such a thing as a news cycle anymore," said Guthrie, also NBC News chief legal correspondent. "We used to talk when I was starting out about the 24-hour news cycle. Now it's like the 24-second news cycle."

## Starting in Stations

Guthrie was born in Australia and raised in Tucson. She studied journalism at the University of Arizona, and learned about television while working part-time at local PBS station KUAT Tucson. Her roles included grip, camera operator and director, and she got on-air, hosting a fundraising slot one Sunday morning.

Guthrie parlayed that into a

“There's not a detail she misses and there's not an interview she shirks away from.”

**Hoda Kotb** Co-anchor, NBC's *Today*

weekend anchor/weekday reporter job in Butte, Montana (DMA No. 185, if you're scoring at home). Ten days after she arrived, the staff was brought in for an emergency meeting. The station, they were told, was shutting down.

"I'd spent all my money to get there," Guthrie said. "It was crushing. My career was over before it began."

Guthrie was able to land at a station in Columbia, Missouri, then another in Tucson, before she began law school at Georgetown.

"I was done with TV," said Guthrie. "Or so I thought."

She sought freelance work at the D.C. stations, and got a call from NBC-owned WRC about an assignment.

Practicing law at the time, Guthrie was about to become a law clerk for a federal judge, but had an "epiphany," she said, about getting into network news. She told the judge she would not be taking the job. "He was flummoxed," she said. "Nobody does that."

Guthrie continued freelancing in local TV, then landed a job at Court TV. Based in New York, she became a legal analyst at various networks, including at NBC's *Today*, and NBC offered her a position in 2007. "To be walking the halls of 30 Rock and meeting these

people was beyond my wildest dreams," Guthrie said.

She became NBC News's White House correspondent late in 2008, and landed on *Today* in June 2011, becoming co-anchor in 2012.

Noah Oppenheim, NBC News president, said *Today* "sets the tone" for NBC News each morning. "No one is smarter, no one works harder or does more preparation, and no one is more adept on their feet, in the moment, when doing live interviews," he said of Guthrie. Oppenheim also mentioned Guthrie's "exceptionally high emotional intelligence," a vital asset for interviews.

"She is the full package," he added.

Co-anchor and fellow Hall of Fame inductee Hoda Kotb sings a similar tune, calling Guthrie "incredibly well-prepared" each morning. "There's not a detail she misses and there's not an interview she shirks away from," Kotb added.

Guthrie, who is 50, has children who are 7 and 5. With the kids in mind, she authored the 2017 children's book *Princesses Wear Pants* with Allison Oppenheim, wife of Noah.


Waking up well before dawn is challenging, but Guthrie said being part of the *Today* team, all of whom get up early, work their butts off and make a compelling show each day, gives her inspiration. "How fun is it to be in a joint enterprise, doing something you think has purpose and meaning, that's fun and creative and exciting?" she said.

The show offers viewers the right mix of hard news and hope, said Guthrie, and the can-do attitude on both sides of the camera is "contagious."

"How could you not feel like you want to pour everything you have into it," she said, "when everyone is pouring everything they have into it?" ●





A portrait of Savannah Guthrie, a woman with blonde hair, smiling. She is wearing a light-colored top and a necklace. The background of the entire image is a geometric pattern of blue and white triangles.

Congratulations To Our Client and Friend

# SAVANNAH GUTHRIE

A Hall Of Famer In Every Way!

And Congratulations to Hoda Kotb  
And All of Tonight's Honorees

**ICM**  
P A R T N E R S



# Hoda Kotb

Co-Anchor, *Today* and Co-Host,  
*Today with Hoda & Jenna*  
NBC News



By Michael Malone  
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@BCMikMalone

It can be hard enough to digest the news of the world, be it COVID-19 or the war in Ukraine, when a news consumer wakes up in the morning. It is a heckuva lot harder to process it all and deliver it to morning TV viewers as they sip coffee and get the kids off to school.

Speaking just before Russia invaded Ukraine, Hoda Kotb discussed witnessing world history from the front row. "It's been horrifying and saddening and awe-inspiring at the same time," she said. "This is a moment in history like no other. Sometimes you just can't believe this is the part of history you're witnessing in your lifetime."

The *Today* co-anchor is precisely where she wants to be at 7 a.m. each weekday, even if she never quite let herself dream about that scenario. "I get to do a job that was so far out of my mind, it wasn't even in the dream," Kotb said.

Kotb grew up in Morgantown, West Virginia, her parents coming to America from Egypt to attend college. She described "a kind of idyllic childhood" in a neighborhood where everyone looked out for each other. She played high school basketball, getting by on grit. "I played with heart and I loved it," Kotb said.

## Took to TV Journalism

Her parents were "newsies," Kotb said, always with the news on TV, and that was a factor in her studying broadcast journalism at Virginia Tech.

"I fell in love with storytelling," Kotb said. "I covered city council meetings,

"She's so funny and loving and warm, which everyone knows from the fourth hour, but may have missed the fact that she's an incredibly smart and astute journalist."

**Savannah Guthrie** Co-anchor, *Today*

and it was, 'Oh my god, this is amazing!'"

When it came time to find a job in local TV, Kotb drove her mother's car all over Virginia, getting a no in each market, but also coming away with a suggestion about someone in a smaller market who might be looking for an entry-level reporter. "I never left a station without another one to go to," Kotb said.

She finally interviewed in Greenville, Mississippi. The WXVT news director was promoted from sport director the day before, and hired the woman he called "Hilda" after watching her "horrible" tape, she said.

"He said, 'We'll pay you nothing and you'll work all the time,'" she said. "I have never been more grateful in my life for a job."

Kotb moved on to WQAD Moline, Illinois; then WINK Fort Myers, Florida; then WWL New Orleans. Kotb adored that city and job, and NBC called about a position at *Dateline* NBC in 1998. Neal Shapiro, CEO of The WNET Group, was a *Dateline* executive producer. He met Kotb in New Orleans. Some

talent pops on camera more so than in person, he said. Kotb popped on camera — and was even warmer in person.

"Delightful, charming, curious," he said. "She had a lot of great qualities."

Kotb started at *Dateline*, and when Shapiro was promoted to NBC News president in 2001, he put her on a range of NBC News programs. "Everywhere she went, Hoda impressed," he said. "People saw in her what I saw."

Kotb joined Kathie Lee Gifford as the co-host of *Today's* fourth hour in 2008, and moved up to *Today* co-anchor in 2018.

Co-anchor and fellow 2022 Hall of Famer Savannah Guthrie said Kotb brings "intense smarts" and a lot of warmth. "She's so funny and loving and warm, which everyone knows from the fourth hour, but may have missed the fact that she's an incredibly smart and astute journalist," she said. "She's also a great writer and great communicator."

## Empathy Lessons

Being the child of immigrants has helped Kotb as a journalist. Her friends growing up would visit their grandmother in a neighboring state, while she hopped on a plane to Egypt to do so. "It made the world small," she said. "You realize, people here are like us, and people there are like us. People all around are human beings."

Kotb is up at 3:15 each weekday. To unwind, she plays with her kids, who are 5 and 3. She enjoys strumming the guitar — "Take Me Home, Country Roads" is a favorite — walking through Central Park and shooting hoops, never leaving the playground on a missed shot.

The news can feel a bit overwhelming, but Kotb anticipates things eventually getting back to a more sedate state.

"Nothing is a hurricane 24 hours a day, seven days a week," she said.

"Hurricanes come and go. We'll hopefully get to a point where we get back to life, and we get back to other stories that lead our newscast." ●





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# Pearlena Igbokwe

Chairman  
Universal Studio Group



By Cathy Applefeld Olson  
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@Cathy\_A\_Olson

**W**hen Pearlana Igbokwe was a sophomore in college, she landed a job as a summer associate with NBC. "It was my first taste of the entertainment business, and I was hooked," she said.

Thirty-five years later, and Igbokwe now sits atop NBCU's Universal Studio Group empire — which comprises Universal Television, Universal Content Productions, Universal Television Alternative Studios and Universal International Studios — leading a team of more than 450 people and a content roster that spans more than 30 platforms.

It's a full circle whose significance is not lost on the Lagos, Nigeria-born executive, the first woman of African descent to lead a U.S. television studio, who spent much of her childhood glued to the small screen when she didn't have her head in a book studying. "I'm Nigerian," she said. "It's a culture of achievement."

Igbokwe's career hit the fast lane at Showtime, where she helped launch shows including *Linc's*, *Soul Food* and flagship drama *Dexter*. After 20 years there, in 2012 she headed to NBC, where she reunited with her Showtime boss Bob Greenblatt. As executive VP of drama programming, she guided a string of hits including *The Blacklist* that elevated the network from fourth to first place. She rose to president of Universal Television in 2016, and took the helm of USG in September 2020.

"If someone walked into my office tomorrow and told me, 'Sorry, it's over,

“She cares about story and quality. Also, she gets the jokes. It's so much easier to make comedy for people who get the jokes.”

**Tina Fey**

you're out,' I would not have one regret," she said. That scenario, of course, is highly unlikely. Igbokwe is heralded as an executive who leads with business acumen, vision and humanity.

"Pearlena is a unique leader; she is an outstanding manager as well as a creative inspiration," said Jeff Shell, NBCU's CEO, to whom Igbokwe reports. "She has an amazing ability to find compelling stories, nurture new voices and create award-winning TV shows."

Universal Studio Group's portfolio includes Dick Wolf's entire NBC roster, Netflix's *The Umbrella Academy*, HBO Max's *Hacks* and Apple TV Plus's *Little America*. The Kate McKinnon-starring *Joe vs. Carole* debuted on Peacock in early March; Hulu's Elle Fanning true crime series *The Girl From Plainville* is up next.

"Pearlena is the best partner I've had in my 30-plus years at Universal," Wolf said. "She has impeccable taste and we work together seamlessly."

Tina Fey, whose production company *Little Stranger* is based at Universal Television and is behind hits including *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt* and *Girls5eva*, said Igbokwe offers a unique perspective for a studio chief. "Pearlena's very smart," she said. "She cares about story and quality. Also, she gets the jokes. It's so much easier to make

comedy for people who get the jokes.

"Pearlena is also great at staying calm during chaotic times," Fey added. "And I think she has a deep sense of fairness."

Igbokwe's penchant for keeping calm was handy when the pandemic altered the trajectory of the content business.

"When the lockdown started, we were selling to everyone, and now in two short years it's all become about streaming," she said. "What I think about now is how quickly the environment can change, and how we constantly have to think ahead because some of the rights and deals we might not have anticipated are important now. ... It's an interesting tug of war between studio and the streamers now around who's owning rights."

## Telling Hopeful Stories

What hasn't changed is her knack for bringing forth a good story. She waxes philosophical about the kind of content she's most excited to deliver these days.

"Maybe it's corny, but we as a species don't have a reason to get up in the morning if we don't believe something good's going to happen," she said. "I want to make all kinds of stories, but if we can lean toward those things that bring more hope into the world, I think we're better off."

Igbokwe has always been generous in sharing her time and knowledge, especially with young people. Lately, she's grown more comfortable stepping into the spotlight.

"I remember looking around to see 'are there other people that looked like me in the entertainment business?' And there weren't a lot," she said. "So I'm realizing it's important to be visible, that me having visibility means other people who never thought they could be in this business and rise to the level I have now know it's possible."

"I have to leave some kind of legacy that's different from if someone else had this job. Otherwise, that would make me having this job pointless. And I never want it to be pointless." ●





TO PEARLENA AND ALL OTHER 2022 INDUCTEES

*Congratulations!*



**PEARLENA IGBOKWE**

CHAIRMAN, UNIVERSAL STUDIO GROUP

BROADCASTING AND CABLE HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE

**NBCUniversal**



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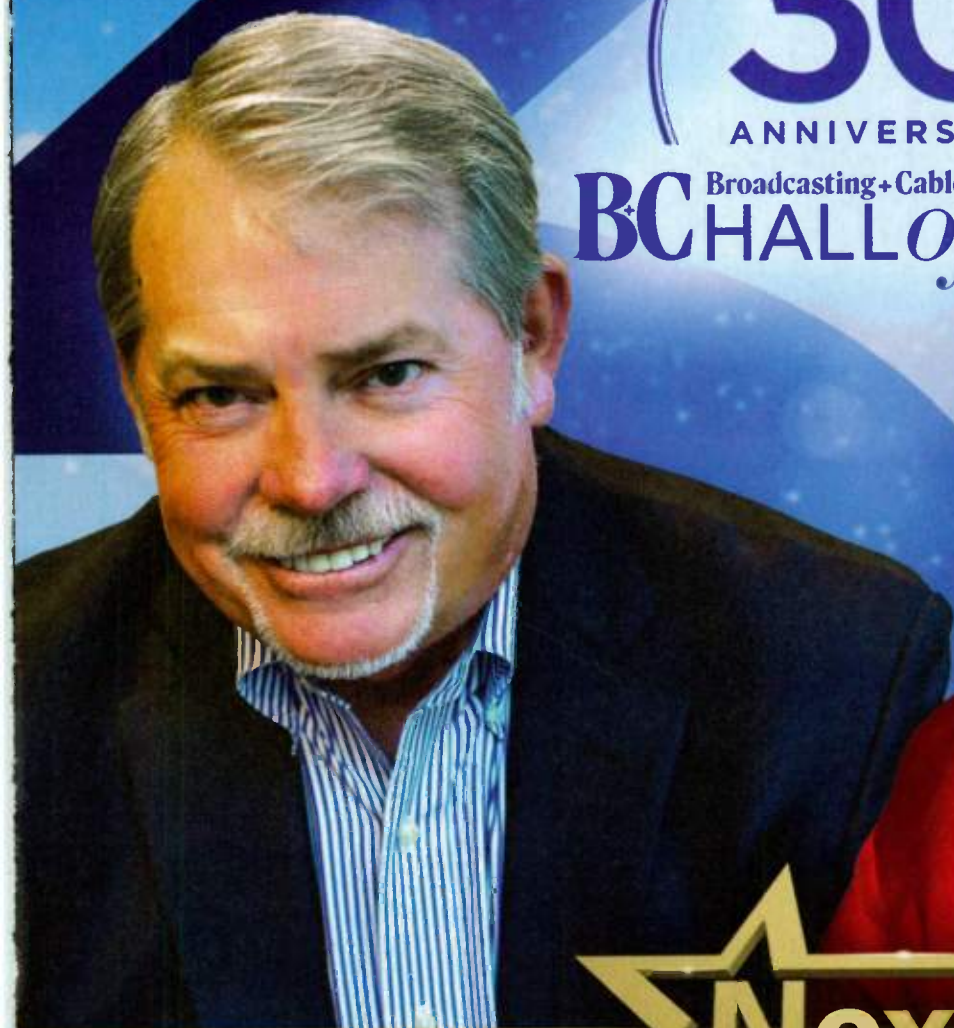
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We salute the entire 30th Anniversary Class for the outstanding contributions each of you has made to our industry.



BESTREVIEWS





# Leo MacCourtney

President  
Katz Television Group



By Jerry Barmash  
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@JerryBarmash

**A**s president of Katz Television Group, Leo MacCourtney oversees sales growth for more than 800 stations in nearly 200 markets. About 80 broadcast groups are served by Katz and MacCourtney.

MacCourtney joined Katz, the largest media representation company for TV and radio in the country, in 2007 and was appointed to his current position five years later.

In his role, the longtime sales executive works with local television stations as the conduit between advertisers and ad agencies on the national representative side.

Those connections with clients are "tremendous," his boss, Katz Media Group CEO Mark Gray, said. "He is extremely well-known and well-liked. He has the highest amount of integrity."

Brian Lawlor, president of local media at E.W. Scripps, has known MacCourtney for more than two decades.

"He's somebody that on a regular basis, more than annually, we're talking about strategy [and] competitive positioning," Lawlor said.

MacCourtney previously was in charge of Eagle Television Sales and Blair Television.

Using technology, Katz can access data and strategic insights for product research for their clients. They oversee all retail ad campaigns and book political spots across the country on behalf of those stations.

After more than 40 years, MacCourtney, 66, has honed his craft in TV sales

**“**He's somebody that on a regular basis, more than annually, we're talking about strategy [and] competitive positioning.”

**Brian Lawlor** President of Local Media, E.W. Scripps

and humbly considers himself an expert in the field.

A senior leadership team of 10 reports directly to MacCourtney.

With 10 offices across the country, he will often leave his Manhattan headquarters to meet employees or his dozens of clients.

"He attracts great talent and people are very loyal to him," Gray said.

However, MacCourtney said: "It's not about me. It's about giving people great opportunities to knock it out of the park."

Experience was only part of MacCourtney's skill set. He got a front-row seat to broadcasting, thanks to his father, Leo MacCourtney Sr., who owned TV stations.

Although the junior MacCourtney didn't have the same drive, he was introduced to the national scene when his father connected him to Blair TV head Harry Smart in the 1970s.

He started in Cleveland for Blair and within two years was transferred to New York, where he's been based ever since.

Growing up in Pennsylvania, MacCourtney was already thinking about his future.

"When I spent the summers at home, I liked hanging out with the sales guys at [dad's] TV station," he recalled.

Getting a glimpse into his career, MacCourtney was hooked when he attended the University of Notre Dame in 1973. He earned a bachelor's degree in business administration but didn't rely on his degree for work.

"The job was to get a job," he said.

After a slew of interviews, MacCourtney landed a sales job at Johnson & Johnson. However, his path would be altered forever upon listening to the radio one day. A commercial came on the air seeking sales personnel at radio station WERE Cleveland.

With a love of sales and the culture at Katz, MacCourtney keeps the passion alive. "There's never been a day that I've gone to work that I didn't like," he said. "I've always thought broadcasting is the most fun job because it's all people. It's very outward."

MacCourtney, a strong advocate for local TV, regularly gives back to the industry that has meant so much to him.

## Giving Back to Broadcasting

His involvement in the Broadcasters Foundation of America, as VP and treasurer, makes sure that those in need are not forgotten. Katz Media has gone to bat for that worthy cause, raising more than \$400,000 from employee and seller donations.

"He devotes a lot of time and energy in doing that," Gray said.

The veteran exec also is on the board of the Washington Media Scholars Foundation, which "gives young people the opportunity to learn what's going on in the business," MacCourtney said.

MacCourtney is also chairman of the International Radio and Television Society and previously held that title for the Television Bureau of Advertising.

"I do believe there is a huge mission here for people like myself to give back to the industry and I work very hard to make sure that I'm helping," he said.

MacCourtney's passion for his job is as strong as ever. "My motto in the business is, 'There is no finish line,'" he said. ●





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Proudly Congratulates

# Leo MacCourtney

On His Induction into the  
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# Dan Mason

Former President and CEO  
CBS Radio



By Larry Jaffee  
nyitadjunct@gmail.com  
@lsjaffee

**D**an Mason compares his 20-year CBS Radio tenure that ended in 2015 with the career of Tom Landry, the Dallas Cowboys' iconic coach.

"So many assistant coaches underneath Tom Landry became head coaches in their own right," noted Mason, who similarly aimed to influence the next generation of broadcasting leadership. "A lot of people went on to run or lead companies."

Currently venture partner and strategic adviser at SeventySix Capital, Mason climbed the corporate ladder to the C-suite after humble disc jockey beginnings.

"I grew up in Louisville," Mason remembered, citing Cawood Ledford, the voice of University of Kentucky sports for decades. "All I wanted to do was be on the radio. He was a great role model to study. I read every word of his book three times."

Mason's background reads like a modern-day Horatio Alger Jr. novel.

"I had no intention of ever being an executive," he reflected. "When I became an on-air announcer, somebody once told me I'll never get off the all-night show." That revelation led Mason to soon realizing, "I'd like to be the boss of the disc jockeys."

## Named a GM at 27

Atlanta's WZGC-FM in 1977 kick-started Mason's radio programming trajectory. Two years later, Mason became program director of WPGC-FM

**"I don't think I ever worked with anyone in my career who has loved the medium of radio more than Dan."**

**Scott Herman** Chairman, Broadcasters Foundation of America

Washington, then served as national program director for First Media, the station's parent company. In 1979, the 27-year-old Mason became one of the youngest general managers in the country at KTSA and KTFM of San Antonio, Texas. He returned to First Media, which was sold in 1988 to Cook Inlet Radio Partners, marking the first time Mason held the president title.

Group W acquired Cook in 1993, then two years later merged with CBS Radio which two years later merged with Infinity Broadcasting.

"I worked with Mel Karmazin until about 2002," said Mason, who took a five-year break from running the company, albeit remaining a consultant. "Les Moonves in late 2006 asked me to come back as president and CEO of CBS Radio," Mason said. He oversaw 117 stations across 26 markets, establishing the 24-hour CBS Sports Radio Network and resurrecting the classic hits radio station WCBS-FM New York.

In 2015, Mason "retired" from CBS at 64, leaving to call women's basketball games for the CBS Sports Network and thoroughbred racing for the Horse Racing Radio Network.

"You don't retire," Mason explained matter-of-factly. "Who knows what's next?"

Indeed, this was not typical early

retirement. Whereas most executives would spend more time on golf courses than in front of a camera, on a mic or in a boardroom, Mason's post-CBS entrepreneurial itch led him to buy several radio stations, consulting with iHeart Radio and VSiN.

"I was going to do on-air talent for horse racing," Mason said of the latter. After a dinner with VSiN CEO Brian Musburger, a sports agent and nephew of company founder (and legendary sportscaster) Brent Musburger, "it was pretty obvious they really needed me to advise in an executive role."

A few months later, Mason went from just being an announcer to owning part of VSiN, which was sold to DraftKings four years after its launch in 2017.

Under his CBS watch, executives "flourished," whether they stayed with the network or went elsewhere (i.e., the Landry "coaching tree"). Weezie Kramer, who retired in 2020 as chief operating officer of Entercom after nearly 20 years, and Ezra Kucharz, DraftKings' chief business officer, were among his successful colleagues.

## True Radio Lover

Mason recruited Scott Herman as general manager of New York's all-news WINS after being news director at Group W's TV station KYW Philadelphia.

Himself retired after 39 years at CBS, Herman last year followed Mason as chair of the Broadcasters Foundation of America. Herman praised his mentor's ability of securing multiyear financial gifts for the organization. "I don't think I ever worked with anyone in my career who has loved the medium of radio more than Dan," Herman said.

Chris Oliviero, currently Audacy's senior vice president/New York market manager, spent eight years reporting directly to Mason at CBS with his office right next to Mason's. He said he learned two important things from his former boss. The first was that stations need to create "community and companionship" for listeners. The other is "integrity." ●





# Congratulations **Dan Mason** on this special evening!



Thank you for your years of  
leadership and generosity as our Chairman!

With sincere appreciation,

The Board of Directors  
of the Broadcasters Foundation of America



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on his induction into the  
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*A heartfelt congratulations to all of this year's inductees for their outstanding achievements and contributions to our industry.*





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**HEARST**  
television



# Steven R. Swartz

President and CEO  
Hearst



By Robert Edelstein  
robedelstein22@gmail.com  
@robedelstein

**N**early everybody reads *The Bulletin* was the popular slogan for what was once the top evening newspaper in the nation. In the summer of 1974, one of those readers was Steven Swartz, who would splay the broadsheet on the floor in his suburban Philadelphia home. It seemed a heady time for news and Swartz knew it. On TV, Sen. Sam Ervin prosecuted President Richard Nixon during the Watergate hearings; at 6 p.m., *The CBS Evening News* with Walter Cronkite became required viewing. Swartz recalls being captivated. He was also “around 11 or 12 years old,” he said. “I became a news junkie at a very early age. I loved the role it played in society.”

Years later, attending Harvard, he'd watch the local news on WCVB Boston, now a flagship station for Hearst, the corporation Swartz has run as president and CEO since 2013. By the time he arrived at college, the die was cast. “I had decided before I got to campus that my ambition was to become a journalist,” he said. But the dream didn't end there. “My long-term ambition was to be able to lead a media company that at least in part did journalism.”

That Swartz has risen to such corporate heights, with Hearst thriving during seismic shifts that have buckled many competitors, speaks to a remarkable mix of determination, talent and opportunity for the executive. (“I would throw a lot of luck in there,” he also insists.) His colleagues would add other qualities to the formula. “Steve is widely

“Hearst might be, in my mind, the finest broadcaster in America. They just do everything right. And that's no small tribute to Steve.”

**Leo MacCourtney** President, Katz Media Group

respected, forward-thinking, has tremendous energy and big insight, and he's got an important voice in the marketplace,” said Leo MacCourtney, president of Katz Television Group and a fellow B+C Hall of Fame honoree this year. “Hearst might be, in my mind, the finest broadcaster in America. They just do everything right. And that's no small tribute to Steve.”

Swartz's prosperous run atop a 135-year-old company speaks to his eagerness to partner with great predecessors: “I've been really fortunate on the mentor side,” he said. He cited among them seventh grade English teacher John DeGregorio (“He just radiated enthusiasm and I learned a lot from him”) and Norman Pearlstine, then-managing editor at *The Wall Street Journal*, where Swartz was recruited out of college and where he eventually worked on the Page One desk. “That was my most enjoyable time there,” Swartz said.

The movement toward combining journalism with business came when Hearst and Dow Jones agreed to partner on a personal finance magazine that became *SmartMoney*, with Swartz named founding editor in 1991. Four years of award-winning copy later, Swartz was tapped as president and CEO.

*SmartMoney* introduced him to

Hearst, with its corporate culture fixed and strong on legacy, thanks to leaders such as William Randolph Hearst and Frank Bennack, who ran the corporation from 1979-2002. Toward the end of Bennack's run, Swartz became executive VP, rising to chief operating officer in 2011.

## Helping Hearst Grow

In his current tenure, Swartz has either continued or orchestrated growth measures that have well insulated Hearst's vaunted place in the market. Along with the newspapers on which the company built its foundation, Hearst's empire currently includes holdings among cable networks (A&E, History, Lifetime and ESPN); 33 television stations that in total reach 19% of U.S. viewers; 250 magazine editions worldwide; and a successful roster on the B2B side, including global financial services (Fitch Group) and medical information and transportation assets.

The diversification is an asset that helps Swartz's Hearst in these times of technological change where, as he said, “everybody is fighting to establish a sustainable growth business model. It's a challenge but I think we're up to it.”

Swartz's colleagues agree because they see in him a leader bent toward inspiration, and a man whose understanding of what matters most at any given moment was bred back in his early newspaper-reading days. Hearst Television president and B+C Hall of Famer Jordan Wertlieb recalled that, at the start of the pandemic when other companies were cutting back, “Steve announced we were bonusing all employees. He wanted people to not only feel secure in their jobs, but to share in the success of the prior year. The timing of that was extraordinary.”

Unusual, but certainly in character. “I was not surprised at all that that was the way Hearst, through Steve's leadership, acted,” MacCourtney said. “His legacy is the way that company operates.” ●





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Hearst is proud to celebrate our President & CEO **Steven R. Swartz**, the Iconic Network ESPN and all the changemakers, innovators and groundbreakers inducted tonight into the *Broadcasting & Cable* Hall of Fame.

**HEARST**



Congratulations to  
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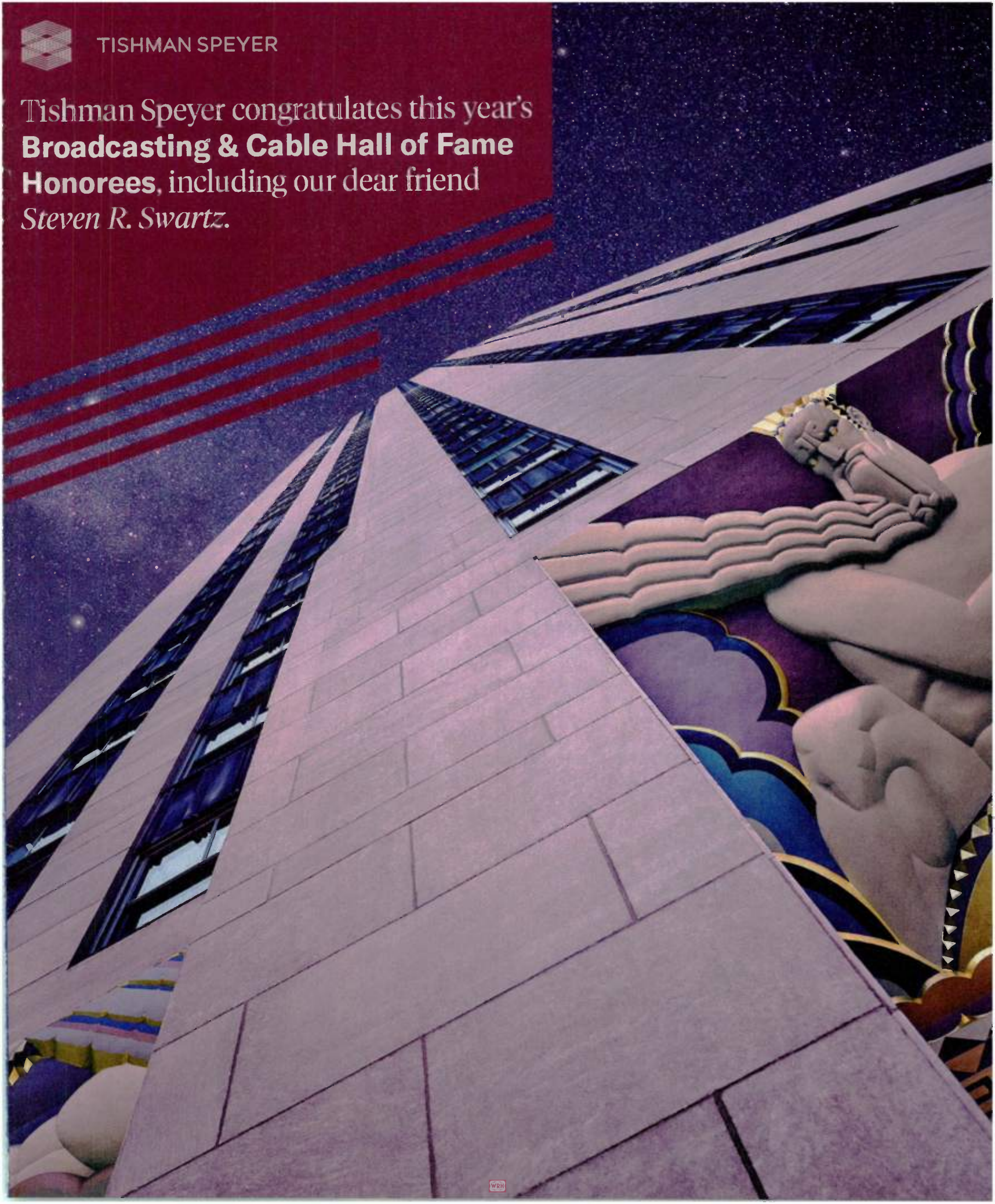
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Tishman Speyer congratulates this year's  
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# Curtis Symonds

President HBCU GO TV/  
Allen Media Group



By R. Thomas Umstead  
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@rtumstead30

**F**ew television executives can say they had a hand in building two legendary cable brands while at the forefront of working to diversify the cable industry's C-suites before launching a successful streaming business. Curtis Symonds can certainly lay claim to that fame, as well as many other TV-industry accomplishments.

From the 1980s through the 2000s, Symonds was instrumental in steering ad sales and marketing fortunes of ESPN and BET. He also worked behind the scenes to foster greater employment of people of color as an active and influential board member of the National Association for Multi-Ethnicity in Communications (NAMIC) and as president of the T. Howard Foundation.

Later, as an entrepreneur, he launched HBCUGO.TV, one of the first national cable networks or digital services targeted specifically to Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

"Curtis Symonds is one of the great pioneers of the cable industry and a visionary in the new digital era," said Byron Allen, founder, chairman and CEO of Allen Media Group, which last year purchased HBCUGO.TV. "Curtis has an impeccable reputation and is also an outstanding media executive."

High praise for the Bermuda, West Indies, native who grew up in Wilberforce, Ohio, wanting to follow in the footsteps of his mother, who taught at Central State University. Symonds would earn a bachelor of science degree at the historically Black college.

**"Curtis Symonds is one of the great pioneers of the cable industry and a visionary in the new digital era."**

**Byron Allen** Founder, Chairman and CEO, Allen Media Group

"I believed my goal was teaching because I watched my mother for so many years," he said. "I just loved the way she handled herself and what she did for students."

A part-time job laying underground coaxial cable for a local Continental Cable system launched his TV career. Symonds eventually became manager of the system in 1979. He relocated to Chicago in 1983 to work at ESPN's regional office as a local advertising sales consultant. "At the time ESPN wasn't the monster that it is now, so I had the opportunity to come on when they were beginning to grow," Symonds said.

As ESPN grew, so did Symonds's profile, as he rose to director of affiliate marketing for ESPN's Midwest region.

His influence transcended ESPN. He became one of the chief architects in building NAMIC, which sought to encourage African-American participation and employment in the cable industry. Symonds served on its board for a decade beginning in 1983.

"That was a critical time because there weren't a lot of minorities in the business, and I liked the direction that NAMIC was going in because we were making noise about what we deserved from the business," he said. "I think to this day, the group of individuals who were part of NAMIC's national board

did a masterful job of convincing MSOs and programmers that there was another group of folks who deserved a chance to be in this business and function at a higher level."

His next big turn came in 1988 with a call from BET chairman Robert Johnson about coming to work at the African-American targeted channel. "I saw the vision Bob had for the network so I took a chance," Symonds said.

Symonds became executive VP of affiliate distribution and marketing for BET Holdings, helping transform the entertainment network into one of the industry's most recognized and celebrated brands. Symonds was able to help increase the network's annual sales revenue growth to 57% by 2001 by building a brand that had broad appeal.

In 1998, NCTA recognized Symonds's marketing prowess with a Vanguard Award.

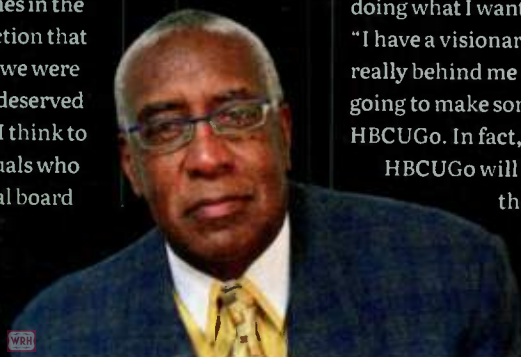
## Entrepreneur and Advocate

After leaving BET in 2001 — the year the network was sold to Viacom for more than \$2 billion — Symonds sharpened his entrepreneurial skills in the Washington, D.C., and Virginia area. He continued his advocacy as president of the T. Howard Foundation, a nonprofit organization devoted to promoting women and people of color in the satellite and telecommunications industry, from 2003 to 2006.

He also had a stint as chief operating officer for the WNBA's Washington Mystics before launching HBCUGO.TV as a cable network in 2011. The network pivoted to digital, operating independently until Allen acquired it and its 5,000 hours of original content.

"It couldn't have been a better dream for me because I'm now doing what I want to do," said Symonds. "I have a visionary [in Allen] who is really behind me and I believe we're going to make some big noise with HBCUGO. In fact, I predict that

HBCUGO will be bigger than BET in the next five years."





All of us at **ALLEN MEDIA GROUP**  
are proud to congratulate



**Curtis Symonds**  
from our HBCUGO Family on his induction into  
the 2022 Broadcasting & Cable Hall of Fame.

It's a legendary milestone, Curtis, you deserve it!



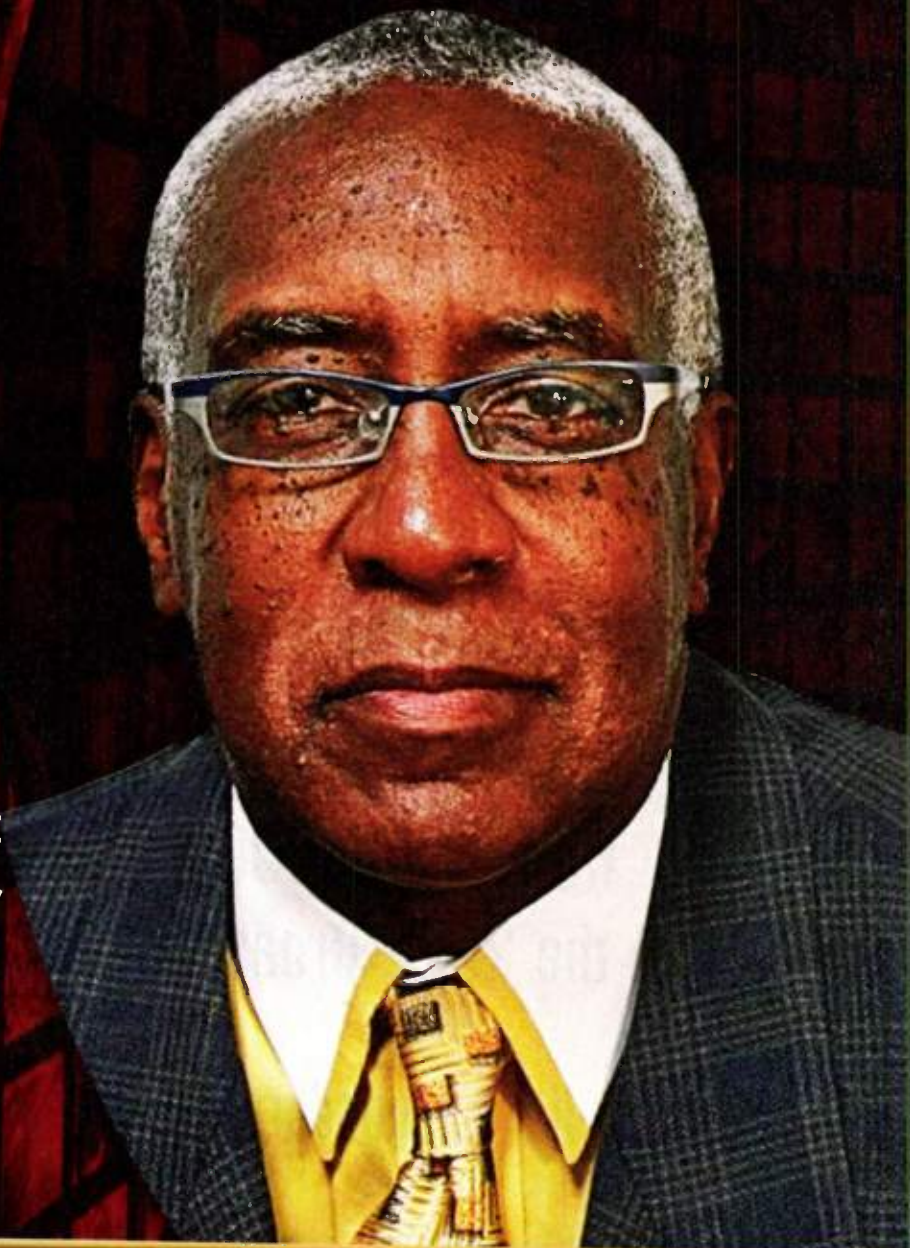


# Congratulations to our Chairman, Curtis Symonds, on your Broadcast and Cable Hall of Fame Award

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It's a tremendous honor for the team at ESPN to receive the first Iconic Network Award from the Broadcasting+Cable Hall of Fame. For over 40 years we have been guided by a simple yet clear mission to serve sports fans. That mission has enabled us to focus, innovate and create the finest sports content. We have and always will be there for fans anytime, anywhere.

---

The ESPN logo is displayed in its characteristic gold, italicized, sans-serif font.



# ESPN

## Iconic Network Award



By Jon Lafayette  
jon.lafayette@futurenet.com  
@jlafayette

In the year 2000, ESPN Curiel was born in Corpus Christi, Texas, and ESPN-Blondeel was born in Michigan. At the time, ESPN Blondeel's father, Chad, told the Associated Press he watched SportsCenter at least three times a day.

Soon, there was a rash of kids named after the cable network, which goes to show how deeply fans were being touched, how legendary ESPN quickly became — and why it is the first Iconic Network to be inducted into the B+C Hall of Fame.

Such glory was not assured when founder Bill Rasmussen struggled to find financial backing for his crazy idea of a 24-hour cable network. When Getty Oil put up \$10 million to get the Entertainment and Sports Programming Network off the ground in 1979, programmers filled its schedule with college basketball, slow-pitch softball, full-contact karate, America's Cup sailing, boxing and a lineup of even more obscure sports.

SportsCenter was one of ESPN's original shows and a 24-year-old sportscaster with only a few months of television experience named Chris Berman was one of its first anchors. "Had they been two years old, they never would have hired me," Berman recalled. "They couldn't pick and choose." Berman was already in Connecticut, where ESPN was headquartered, so the network didn't have to pay his moving expenses, which made him an attractive candidate.

There were seven original SportsCenter anchors. "I called us the Mercury

astronauts," Berman said. "We went up in a rocket and we weren't sure where the hell we were going to come down."

### TV's Sports Section

Berman said one reason for ESPN's early success was because it became a hometown sportscast for people who'd left their hometown, whether they'd moved or were just traveling. "If you're from Chicago and you're in a hotel in Seattle, it's the same show," he said. "We became your station."

That was true of athletes as well. When ESPN was just starting, players would readily agree to be interviewed. Why? One told Berman he liked the channel but, more importantly, "My mom in Mississippi will have a chance to see this. I never thought of that and I'll never forget that."

George Bodenheimer, who would become president of ESPN in 1998, joined the network in 1981, 15 months

after it went on the air. In his early days at the network, Bodenheimer played a key role in getting cable operators to pay a fee for the channel. They did that because of the strong support ESPN got from fans. Fan support was harder to gauge in those days, before the internet and social media. "We were using newspaper clips and the reactions we got on-site when we were producing events," he said.

An early staple on ESPN was Australian Rules Football. Few Americans knew the sport, so ESPN put a graphic on its screen during a game that told viewers they could get a rule book by sending in a postcard. ESPN got thousands of postcards, Bodenheimer said. The network also would get calls from fraternities, firehouses and police stations asking where they could get ESPN so they could follow the NFL draft, he added. "People wanted hats. They stole our banners. These things anecdotally told us people liked what we're doing."

One of those people was the late ABC World News Tonight anchor Peter Jennings, who called Bodenheimer one day to tell him everything had stopped in the newsroom because everyone was

Early SportsCenter anchors George Grande (l.) and Bob Ley in 1979.





watching the National Spelling Bee on ESPN. Another was the late Sen. John McCain. Bodenheimer was in Washington to lobby legislators on telecommunications regulations, but McCain was a devotee of the sweet science. "We talked boxing for 50 minutes and spent 10 minutes on the issues of the day," he said. "All the politicians had favorite teams from their states and wanted to know when they were coming up on our schedule. It was fascinating."

### NFL Milestone

ESPN hit the big time when NFL commissioner Pete Rozelle let ESPN buy a package of Sunday-night games in 1986, meaning viewers needed a subscription to watch (except in local markets where stations simulcast the games).

"That was obviously a game-changer," Bodenheimer said. "Cable operators said they needed 'punch-through programming' and it didn't get any bigger or better to deliver punch-through programming than when ESPN secured its first NFL contract."

With the NFL on its roster, ESPN grew quickly. "We established a financial model that was going to work, and we began getting a fair fee from the cable operators and the business really took off," Bodenheimer said.

ESPN was the country's most distributed cable network by 1983 and its total number of subscribers topped out in 2011 at 100.1 million. According to S&P Global Market Intelligence's Kagan, ESPN received \$3.48 per month per sub from cable operators in 2007. That grew to \$5 per sub by 2012, \$6.91 per sub in 2017 and hit \$8.81 a sub in 2022, by far the highest in the industry. Kagan said cash flow peaked in 2014 when ESPN brought in \$3.5 billion for The Walt Disney Co., which had taken control of ESPN when it bought Capital Cities/ABC in 1996.

ESPN's influence grew beyond sports. SportsCenter anchors became household names and their catchphrases resonated from arenas to schoolyards.



“ESPN was a Little Engine That Could and 43 years later there's a lot of us that still have that attitude. Viewers count on us to be there and deliver the sports news, the big plays. I hope that never changes. That's a hell of a responsibility, but it's a pleasure to deliver it.”

**Chris Berman** NFL and SportsCenter anchor

Berman's "back-back-back" call as a home run neared the wall became well known, as did the nicknames he gave players like Bert "Be Home" Blyleven, Lance "You Sunk My" Blankenship and Oddibe "Young Again" McDowell.

In 1998 *The New York Times* acknowledged SportsCenter catchphrases, such as Dan Patrick's "He's en fuego;" Kenny

**Anchors such as Keith Olbermann (l.) and Dan Patrick made SportsCenter hip in the 1990s.**

Mayne's "Your puny ballparks are too small to contain my gargantuan blasts! Bring me the finest meats and cheese for all my teammates;" Keith Olbermann's "He puts the biscuit in the basket;" Stuart Scott's "He must be butta 'cause he's on a roll;" and Rich Eisen's "You want me on that wall. You need me on that wall."

"SportsCenter went to a different level in the early '90s," said author James Andrew Miller. "You had an unbelievable cavalcade of terrific anchors. Dan Patrick, Keith Olbermann, Robin Roberts, Bob Ley, Charlie Steiner, Craig Kilborn, Stuart Scott, Rich Eisen. This was an all-star lineup and there wasn't anything else like it. It became real appointment television for people."

Miller said it took a while for the anchors, sitting in remote Bristol, Connecticut, to become aware of their popularity.

The Walt Disney Co.'s acquisition of ESPN worked out great for Disney, Miller noted. ESPN crushed what little competition cable channels from Fox or NBC offered and ESPN's profits





helped Disney buy Pixar, Marvel and Star Wars.

Miller's 2011 book on ESPN, co-written by Tom Shales, was called *Those Guys Have All the Fun: Inside the World of ESPN*. Miller said if he were writing a sequel, it might be called *Those Guys Don't Have All the Fun*.

In 2015, Disney chairman and CEO Bob Iger acknowledged that cord-cutting was eating into ESPN's subscriber count. Disney's stock plunged. The company went through a series of layoffs that stunned network veterans after its irrepressible success. The departures included many of its best-known faces. ESPN's subscriber numbers would drop to 76 million at the end of 2021.

In 2018, Jimmy Pitaro was named president of ESPN. Growing up, ESPN was on all the time at home and when he was in charge of Yahoo! Sports, "I woke up every day trying to beat ESPN," he said. When he was interviewed by Iger to become head of Disney's interactive unit, "I conveyed to him at some point, I would love to end up over at ESPN," Pitaro said. "Being a passionate sports fan, it was my dream."

But cord-cutting had reached nightmare proportions at ESPN when Pitaro took over. "By the way, that is still a challenge today," he noted. The company was also preparing to launch ESPN Plus, its streaming direct-to-consumer

business, which would grow to have 21.3 million subscribers by the end of 2021.

### Sports Mission Continues

Pitaro said ESPN's mission to serve sports fans anywhere, anytime hasn't changed. "It is just as relevant, if not more relevant today than it ever was." ESPN's current strategy is to follow consumers, particularly young ones, which has meant being on Snapchat, TikTok, Instagram, Twitter, video games as well as streaming. That connects with the brand and gets them watching SportsCenter and other ESPN properties.

ESPN research found that viewers expect a direct-to-consumer platform to give them access to live events plus shoulder programming and original films like ESPN's 30 for 30 franchise. ESPN Plus has what Pitaro called infinite real estate and the technology to help fans find what they want to watch.

"The beautiful thing about ESPN Plus is you can put everything up and through personalization you can serve what you think is going to resonate based on a user's consumption patterns," Pitaro said. "The future is going to bring a more personalized, more interactive experience starting with the game. You're going to have many choices. You'll be able to watch a

"If you look at all the assets that we have and what we bring to the table in terms of our brand, our credibility, our trust, our reach, our production capabilities and the synergy opportunities with The Walt Disney Co., I feel like we're in a really good place. I like our hand."

**Jimmy Pitaro** President, ESPN

betting-themed broadcast, or a broadcast with different camera angles, or a broadcast that is a little bit lighter, more fun and entertaining like the Manning brothers [alternate NFL broadcast] currently on ESPN2."

But Miller said ESPN still has to figure out how to manage in a streaming world where nonviewers don't have to pony up through their cable operators whether or not they watch the channel. There's also ongoing talk about ESPN being spun off from Disney. "I know it's a big topic of conversation in Burbank and Bristol," Miller said.

Whether or not that happens, ESPN will remain iconic. "Those four initials are a brand that is recognized around the world," Miller said. ●

Above, Chris Berman has been an ESPN mainstay since the network's start. Below, ESPN president Jimmy Pitaro is positioning the programmer for the digital age.







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