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Entertainment Studios: Byron Allen

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The Incredible Work of Byron Allen

BY ANDREA HOWSE

Early Days

- Born in Detroit, Michigan in 1961
- Mother's internship at the NBC Network
- Stand-up at The Comedy Store
 - Comedy scout Wayne Klein found him
- Joined writing team for comedy show *Good Times* at age 14

Early Accomplishments

- 14-year-old comedy writer for *Good Times*
 - Worked alongside Jay Leno, David Letterman and Jimmie Walker
 - Still has first \$25 check framed in his office
- Appeared on *The Tonight Show starring Johnny Carson* at age 18
 - Youngest stand-up comedian on show
 - Made national debut
- *Real People* from 1979-1984
- Founded Entertainment Studios in 1993

Background of Entertainment Studios

- Started as *Entertainers with Byron Allen*
 - Called 1,300 stations
 - Interviewed celebrities
- Convinced Verizon to invest in him
 - Launched 6 channels in 2009
 - Learned how to sell ideas to people
- Strong relationships with interviewees
 - Free advertising for the studio and celebs
 - Asked for support

Management Philosophy

- Strong relationship with colleagues and employees
 - Relations with interviewees saved him
- Enduring Leadership behavior
 - Ethics, trust and integrity

Plans for Entertainment Studios

- In 2018, invested over \$310 million in The Weather Channel
- In 2015, sued Comcast and Charter Communications cable company for refusing his content
 - Racial discrimination
 - Took to court November 13th, 2019
 - Results have not been released
- Recently (in 2020) placed bid of nearly \$8.5 million on Tegna Inc. Broadcasting Co.
- Wants to keep growing media empire

Allen's Milestones

- 1975 – Allen began writing for *Good Times*
- 1979 – Allen appeared on *The Tonight Show*
- 1993 – Founded Entertainment Studios
- 2009 – Launched 6 channels through Verizon investment
- 2015 – Sued Comcast and Charter Communications for racial discrimination
- 2017 – Entertainment Studios produced highest grossing independent film of the year; *47 Meters Down*
- 2018 – Acquired the Weather Channel Network
- 2020 – Made bid for Tegna Inc.