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PBS: Paula Kerger

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Paula Kerger

President & CEO of PBS

Presentation by: Kyle Weimer

Paula Kerger Background



- Born in 1957 and grew up in Baltimore, Maryland.
- Her grandfather was one of the founding figures behind Baltimore's public radio station
- Earned a degree in business administration

She told the 2006 National Press Club Gathering, "sitting close to my grandfather at night, listening to radio programs transmitted from far away. To a little girl, it felt like magic...so I've always had a deep appreciation for public media and the valuable role it plays in our culture."

Paula Kerger Career



1979-1984: Program Development Officer for UNICEF

1984-1989: Director of Development for International House

1989-1993: Director of Principal Gifts for the Metropolitan Opera Association

1993-2000: Vice President and Director of Development for WNET-TV (PBS Station)

2000-2004: Vice President and Station Manager for WNET-TV

2004-2006: Vice President and CEO for WNET-TV

2006-Present: President and CEO of PBS

Kerger and the FCC (Federal Communications Commission)

Kerger took a firm stance on regulations the FCC was issuing a while back regarding harsher fines against stations that violated its restrictions on profanity during certain times of the day.

Kerger argued for more concise and defined rules.

A California public station was fined for airing a documentary on blues musicians by Martin Scorsese which happened to contain an unacceptable term in the FCC's eyes.

Kerger spoke out and said, "When you have stations whose operating budgets in some cases are only a couple million dollars, even, frankly, the old fines ... were daunting. The fines now would put stations out of business."

“Those of us who work in this business do so because it is good. It is necessary. And our country is better for it... We may no longer be public television—at least not in the conventional sense. Now it may be better for us to think of ourselves as public media. But whatever we call ourselves, the public will continue to come first in our name, and in all that we do.”

-Paula Kerger

Company Overview



PBS is a membership organization that, in partnership with its member stations, serves the American public with programming and services of the highest quality, using media to educate, inspire, entertain and express a diversity of perspectives.

PBS prides themselves on being:

- America's Largest Classroom
- America's Largest Stage
- A Trusted Window to the World

Established on November 3, 1969 by Hartford N. Gunn Jr., John Macy, James Day, and Kenneth A. Christiansen.

Company Overview



- PBS is technically not a network
- Provides TV content and services to their member stations
- Each member station is responsible for original local content
 - News, interviews, cultural, and public affairs programming

Company Footprint



- Over 109 million people watch their local PBS stations each month
- Americans watch an average of 298 million videos across PBS' digital platforms
- PBS reaches 89% of non-internet homes, 82% of lower-income homes, and 78% of rural homes
- Over 66% of all kids (ages 2-8) watch PBS each year

Paula's Accomplishments at PBS

- Helped grow PBS' audiences across genres and platforms
- Aided in making PBS the 7th most watched network in America
- Some of her content accomplishments include shows like *Downton Abbey*
- Led the historic launch of the PBS KIDS 24/7 broadcast and streaming channel
- PBS has been honored with 7 Peabody Awards, 6 Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Awards and 9 News & Documentary Emmy Awards