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CBS News: Susan Zirinsky

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Susan Zirinsky

Keralynne Frederick

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Background

- Grew up in Queens, New York.
- Graduated from American University, in Washington, D.C., with a degree in journalism.
- She jumped into journalism at 20 years old, while still a student.
- Her husband is Joseph Peyronnin, who is a journalism professor at New York University.

Difficulties and Risks

- Charlie Rose and Jeff Fager
 - Rose and Fager were fired from CBS News in 2018, for sexually harassing CBS News team members from as far back as 1976.
 - Zirinsky had to do what was best for CBS, and help create a new face for the news network.
 - Zirinsky was interviewed about the #MeToo movement, stating that “it will never be over”. This was powerful for a lot of people because it showed the audience how serious Zirinsky took this situation.
- COVID-19
 - COVID-19 brought a lot of challenges. The broadcasting building was shut down, but programs still had to run. So editing and filming was being done out of people’s houses, from their kitchens and living rooms.

Philosophy and Achievements

- Susan Zirinsky is a transformational leader.
- After gaining 46 years of journalism experience under her belt and holding the title of senior executive and president of CBS News, she has turned CBS News Around.
 - Zirinsky said that, “I learned this year that journalism is not a job, it’s a public service.”
- When Zirinsky stepped in, she wanted to create an environment that showed her co-workers and her audience that CBS News cared about them. She helped to create new teams through HR and management. She also helped to bring in new anchors, producers, and executives to create a team of people that is committed to making the best of broadcasts.

Philosophy and Achievements

- More awareness for systematic racism and biases have been recognized by CBS.
 - Zirinsky has helped to push for an Executive Task Force and a Race and Culture Unit in order to stop these instances from happening in the CBS workplace. Workshops and facilitated conversations have also been formed to let everyone know, inside and outside of the workplace, that diverse voices are an importance to the workplace.

Business

- Zirinsky believes in listening to her team and her audience. She wants a team that see's compassion, honesty, and transparency in her as a leader.
- She believes in free press, and producing news that is factual, rather than fictional.
- Zirinsky is an advocate for women in media, and she wants to bring more women into leadership roles in media. It took her 46 years to get the position that she now holds, not because that is how long it took her to gain that credibility, but because

CBS News

- CBS News creates revenue through many different ways.
 - Entertainment: Films, streaming, media.
 - Cable: Premium programs.
 - Local Media: Serves local audiences with local news, sports, and other broadcasts.
 - Others: Published books.

- Published books from CBS bring in the lowest revenue, at about \$800 million. Entertainment brings in the most revenue, at about \$11 billion.

Milestones

- (1972): Zirinsky started her work career as a journalist, starting out at CBS News Washington, to cover the Watergate break-in.
- (1972-present): Zirinsky has covered other huge events, such as the Gulf War, 9/11, and the Parkland Shooting.
- (2002-present): Zirinsky has held roles such as producing the shows “48 Hours: NCIS”, “Three Days in September”, and “9/11”, as well as numerous other documentaries and shows.
- (2019): As years went on in her CBS News career, Zirinsky’s career began to take off. She became the first female president and senior executive of CBS News.
- (2002, 2014, 2015): Zirinsky received many awards, including three Emmy awards for shows that she produced.

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