Public Broadcasting/WPSU A Brief History



• 1862

With the Morrill Act, Congress endows state universities with land grants, creating what some observers believe was a philosophical precedent for public broadcasting and its public funding.

• 1912

Iowa State College's station 9YI (named WOI since 1922) experiments with broadcasting in Morse code.

• 1917

The University of Wisconsin begins voice broadcasting with radio station 9XM, forerunner of WHA, under an experimental license.



• 1921

The federal government issues the first license to an educational institution, Latter-day Saints University in Salt Lake City.

• Nov. 12, 1925

A forerunner of PBS and NPR is formed: the Association of College and University Broadcasting Stations (ACUBS). It later becomes the National Association of Educational Broadcasters.

• 1930

The Carnegie Corporation of New York, with NBC, creates the National Advisory Council on Radio in Education (NACRE) to promote a "Cooperation Doctrine" — alliances between commercial radio and educators.



- July 1930 ACUBS asks Congress to reserve radio channels for education.
- September 1934
 ACUBS changes its constitution and renames itself the National Association of Educational Broadcasters (NAEB).
- Jan. 26, 1938
 The FCC establishes a new class of noncommercial educational radio stations in the high-frequency band.
- 1940
 The FCC reserves five of the 40 channels in the new high-frequency band for noncommercial educational stations. Though planned for AM, the stations go to FM as technology develops.





The FCC moves FM service to the VHF band and expands noncommercial FM reservation to 20 channels (88-92 MHz) of the total 100 FM channels.

• 1949

WNYC begins a "bicycle network," shipping taped radio programs from station to station.

·1952

The first national conference of educators and broadcasters was held at Penn State in 1952 and urged the Federal Communications Commission to set aside licenses for noncommercial TV use. The FCC responded favorably, thus providing the regulatory basis for today's system of public television stations.



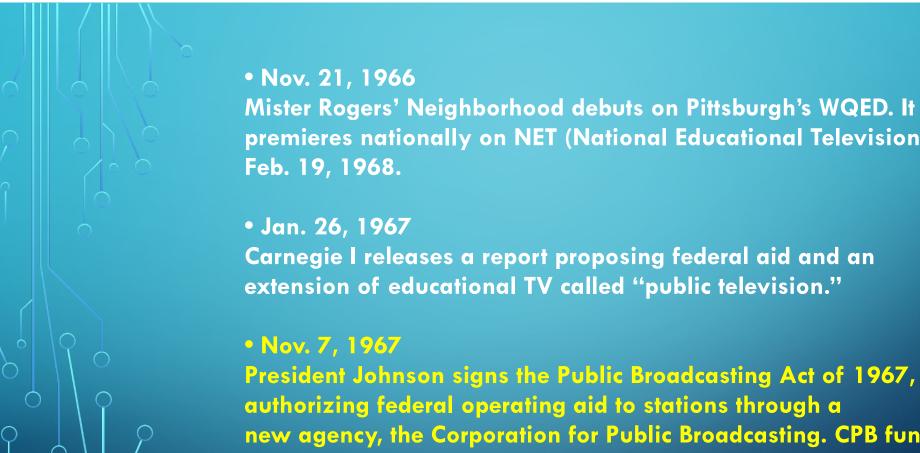
- May 25, 1953
 The University of Houston signs on the first noncommercial educational TV station, KUHT.
- December 6, 1953
 WDFM (predecessor to WPSU-FM) begins operation.
- May 1, 1962
 President Kennedy signs the Educational Television Facilities Act, bringing the first major federal aid to public broadcasting. The act was a predecessor of the Public Telecommunications Facilities Program, a program within the U.S. Department of Commerce that provided millions in matching grants for equipment purchases by non-commercial radio and TV stations.





- Jan. 25, 1963 WGBH begins airing Julia Child's first French Chef series, later distributed nationally.
- March 1, 1965
 WPSX-TV begins operations.
- Nov. 10, 1965
 The Carnegie Corporation of New York establishes the Carnegie Commission on Educational Television (Carnegie I).





Mister Rogers' Neighborhood debuts on Pittsburgh's WQED. It premieres nationally on NET (National Educational Television) on

Carnegie I releases a report proposing federal aid and an extension of educational TV called "public television."

authorizing federal operating aid to stations through a new agency, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. CPB funding decisions would be made year to year; Congress wouldn't consider endowing a long-term funding source.

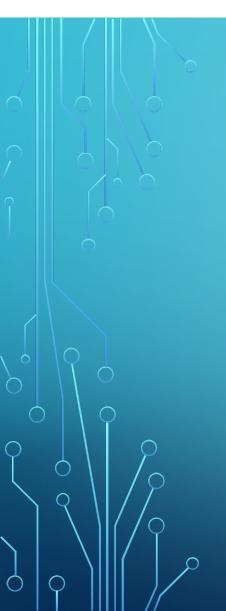




 1969
 CPB begins general support grants to stations, later called Community Service Grants.

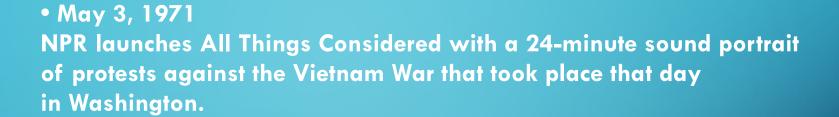
• May 1, 1969
Fred Rogers makes a successful appeal for CPB's first appropriation with a moving plea to Sen. John Pastore (D-RI), who says afterwards, "Looks like you just earned \$20 million."





- November 3, 1969
 The Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) is incorporated.
- November 10, 1969 Sesame Street debuts. An instant success, Sesame Street goes on to win to Peabody awards, dozens of Emmys, and many other honors.
- •February 26, 1970 National Public Radio incorporates.
- April 20, 1971

 NPR begins with a live broadcast of Senate hearings on ending the Vietnam War.



• June 30, 1972 President Nixon vetoes a two-year CPB authorizing law; a reduced one-year bill is enacted later.

October 1972

To shield program funding decisions from political interference following Nixon's veto of CPB's authorization, PBS President Hartford Gunn proposes the Station Program Cooperative, a marketplace for stations to choose which national programs they would support. PBS manages the co-op until 1989.



solidifies PBS leadership as it cuts parental ties with CPB.

March 3, 1974WGBH inaugurates NOVA.

April 1975
 PBS launches the first national pledge drive, Festival 75.

• Sept. 2, 1975
Terry Gross becomes host of Fresh Air, from WHYY-FM in Philadelphia.



• Oct. 20, 1975 WNET starts The Robert MacNeil Report, in 1976 renamed The MacNeil/Lehrer Report.

Dec. 31, 1975
 President Ford signs five-year funding with a new feature:
 advance appropriations. Congress follows up with appropriations through fiscal 1979.

March 1, 1978
 Public TV's satellite interconnection begins operation.

• July 3, 1978
The Supreme Court upholds an FCC indecency ruling against an afternoon broadcast of George Carlin's "filthy words" routine on Pacifica's WBAI in 1973.

• January 1979

In a reorganization that further separates PBS's role in national programming from stations interests in federal policy in Washington, public TV splits lobbying functions from PBS to create the National Association of Public Television Stations, later renamed America's Public Television Stations.

Nov. 5, 1979

NPR launches Morning Edition with Bob Edwards and Barbara Hoctor as co-hosts. Edwards becomes the sole host in April 1980.

• March 1980

Closed captioning, developed by PBS, premieres on three networks, including PBS (Masterpiece Theatre).





• June 20, 1980 NPR completes the first national satellite network for radio.

• Sept. 28, 1980 Carl Sagan's Cosmos, a groundbreaking science series from KCET, debuts.

• March 1981

President Reagan seeks a cut of \$88 million to CPB funding and achieves a \$35 million cut in fiscal year 1983.





- Aug. 2, 1983
 CPB agrees to loan NPR \$7 million to aid its recovery from the budget crisis.
- Sept. 5, 1983
 The first hour-long nightly news program debuts: MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour.

· Oct. 4, 1983

Vietnam: A Television History, a 13-part documentary series debuts on PBS. Nearly 9% of all TV households tuned into the premiere episode, and an average of 9.7 million Americans watched all programs in the series.

- August 1984
 Chicago's WTTW becomes the first station to air TV stereo sound full-time.
- June 30, 1985
 Public broadcasting revenues pass \$1 billion by the end of fiscal year 1985, according to CPB.





- July 15, 1986 WGBH introduces a Descriptive Video Service for vision-impaired viewers.
- Jan. 18, 1987

 NPR launches Weekend Edition Sunday with Susan Stamberg as host. The broadcast also marks the debut of auto mechanics Tom and Ray Magliozzi on public radio's national airwaves. Car Talk makes its national debut Oct. 3.





October 1989

In a restructuring of public TV's funding and decision-making about national programs, PBS names Jennifer Lawson as its first chief programming executive. CPB adds \$23 million to her budget. PBS ends the Station Program Cooperative (SPC).

• July 1990
Jose Carreras, Placido Domingo, and Luciano Pavarotti appear in the first of a series of hit "Three Tenors" concerts.



• Sept. 23-27, 1990 Ken Burns' The Civil War breaks PBS audience records.

• 1992

Congress requires digital broadcast satellite operators to set aside capacity for noncom educational use.

• October 1992

Congress authorizes the Ready to Learn Act, co-sponsored by Sens. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) and Thad Cochran (R-Miss.), supporting production and distribution of educational programs for preschool and elementary-school children.



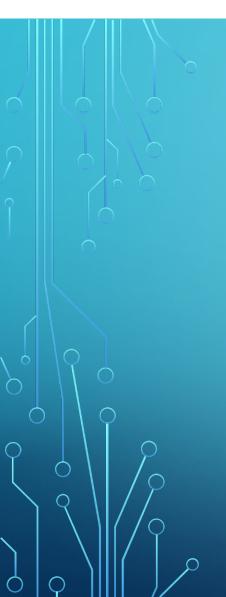


PBS launches a pilot of its Ready to Learn Service for preschoolers.

After Republicans win a majority in the House, new Speaker Newt Gingrich says he wants to "privatize" cultural institutions including CPB, the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Newt Gingrich announces that he plans to zero out CPB funding.





• May 15, 1995

A House and Senate committee agree on a budget-cutting bill that reduces CPB's advance-funded appropriations for fiscal years 1996 and 1997 to \$275 million and \$260 million, respectively. The rescissions trim 12% and 17% from amounts Congress had appropriated previously under the normal two-year forward funding process. CPB funding for 1998, to be set in the annual appropriations process, is yet to be determined.

September 1995
 PBS launches its website, PBS Online.



- June 30, 1997
 Public broadcasting's total revenues pass \$2 billion by the end of fiscal year 1997.
- May 18, 1998
 In Forbes v. Arkansas ETV, the Supreme Court rules that Arkansas' state public broadcasting network has journalistic discretion to exclude a minor candidate in on-air debate.
- Nov. 9–11, 1998
 Seven public TV stations are among the first DTV broadcasters; PBS premieres Chihuly Over Venice, the first national broadcast of a program produced and edited in HDTV. WPSU goes digital in 2003.





• Sept. 11, 2001
The attack on the World Trade Center knocks New York's WNET and seven other stations off the air.

• Dec. 13, 2002 PBS's biggest underwriter, ExxonMobil, announces it will stop funding Masterpiece Theatre in spring 2004.

• Feb. 27, 2003 Fred Rogers dies of cancer.



• October 2003 StoryCorps, developed by independent public radio producer David Isay, installs its first recording booth for what becomes a growing, nationwide oral-history project.

- Nov. 6, 2003
 NPR announces that McDonald's heiress Joan Kroc, who died Oct.
 12, had left the network more than \$200 million.
- Feb. 5, 2004
 The first PBS-commissioned Roper poll finds that the public ranks PBS among the most trustworthy national institutions and believes that it delivers "excellent value" for their tax dollars.





• June 23, 2005.

The House of Representatives votes overwhelmingly to restore cuts in CPB aid approved by its Appropriations Committee. Later the same day, the CPB Board elects Patricia Harrison as president. Major public broadcasting groups opposed the appointment because Harrison had been co-chair of the Republican National Committee.

• December 2005 Congress sets Feb. 17, 2009 as the shut-off date for analog TV.



- Jan. 22, 2006
 PBS hires WNET executive Paula Kerger to succeed Pat Mitchell as president.
- October 2007
 The Public Radio Satellite System completes its years-long move to the digital Content Depot distribution system. NPR had begun building the system in 2002.
- December 2008
 Stations and national producers layoff employees and cancel programs in response to funding losses triggered by the recession. Public broadcasters in Pennsylvania and Maine cite reduced state government funding, while others point to sharp declines in membership and underwriting. NPR cuts its workforce by 7% and cancels two shows, Day to Day and News & Notes.

December 2009

Congress allocates \$25 million in "fiscal stabilization" funding to public broadcasting in a federal budget that also commits to increase CPB's annual appropriation over three years.

December 2010

A coalition of public media advocates unveils "170 Million Americans for Public Broadcasting," a campaign to defend public broadcasting from federal funding cuts.

• Jan. 4, 2011

President Obama signs the Local Community Radio Act. Approved in the last days of the 111th Congress, the law clears the way for expansion of low-power FM stations.





Downton Abbey, debuts on PBS' Masterpiece. The debut season won an Emmy. The show became a break-out hit for PBS with the debut of the second season in January 2012.

• Feb. 19, 2012

Viewership of the Season 2 finale of Downton Abbey scores a 3.5 average household rating. The show becomes the highest-rated PBS prime-time program since September 2009.

• Oct. 1, 2012

The declining health of Car Talk co-host Tom Magliozzi prompts producers of the show to stop taping episodes. Magliozzi dies in 2014 at the age of 77 from complications from Alzheimer's disease.





• Sept. 7, 2013 PBS NewsHour Weekend, a 30-minute broadcast hosted by Hari Sreenivasan, debuts.

• Oct. 8, 2013
Robert MacNeil and Jim Lehrer, co-founders and former anchors of PBS NewsHour, announce plans to transfer the weeknight program to presenting station and partner WETA in Washington, D.C. The station assumes ownership July 1, 2014.





The podcast Serial debuts. A production of This American Life, the 12-episode series about the 1999 murder of a Baltimore highschool student, reaches record numbers of downloads and renews interest in the medium of podcasting.

- Aug. 13, 2015
 Sesame Workshop enters a five-year contract with HBO to produce and premiere new episodes of Sesame Street on HBO. After a nine-month window of HBO exclusivity, PBS and its stations will broadcast episodes.
- Dec. 15, 2015
 PBS begins national rollout of Passport, its member video-on-demand service.

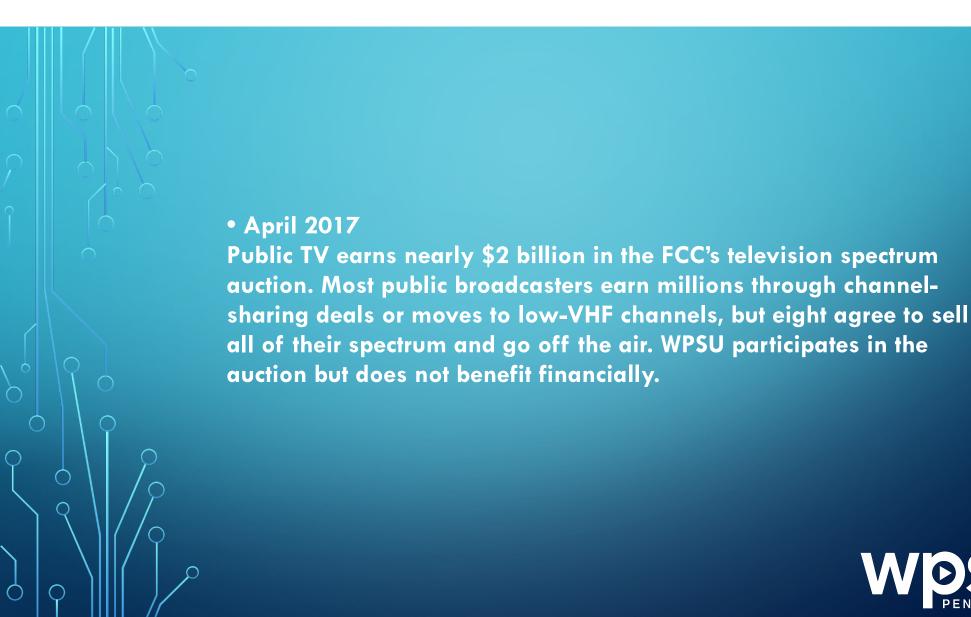




• Nov. 14, 2016
Gwen Ifill, a political journalist who helmed two of PBS's signature public-affairs series, dies of cancer at age 61. Ifill simultaneously served with Judy Woodruff as comanaging editor and co-anchor of PBS NewsHour and helmed Washington Week as managing editor and moderator.

Jan. 16, 2017
PBS Kids, a multicast channel and streaming service delivering
24 hours of daily educational children's programming, launches
on 73 public TV stations. WPSU launches channel on same day.







A flood of revelations about sexual harassment in the media world engulfs public media as NPR puts Senior VP of News Michael Oreskes on leave. A Washington Post article published the same day details accusations against Oreskes of incidents of sexual harassment that occurred in the 1990s.

November 2017

The Washington Post publishes an exposé Nov. 20 about multiple accounts of inappropriate behavior by PBS host Charlie Rose; the network drops Rose's show the next day. Citing "inappropriate behavior," Minnesota Public Radio cuts ties with former Prairie Home Companion host Garrison Keillor Nov. 29.





February 2018

NPR confirms that Daniel Zwerdling has left the network over news of harassment complaints against the longtime investigative reporter by NPR employees. An outside review of NPR's handling of harassment allegations, delivered to NPR's board Feb. 14, reveals that leaders at the network were told of concerns about former news VP Michael Oreskes' behavior before hiring him.







More to come. Stay tuned!

