

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**EIGHTY EDUCATORS FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY
CONVERGE IN HOLLYWOOD AT TELEVISION ACADEMY
FOUNDATION'S MEDIA EDUCATORS CONFERENCE**

**'The State of the Media Industry' and 'AI in Entertainment' Among
Timely Topics Covered by Television Professionals at Annual Event**

(**LOS ANGELES** – Oct. 15, 2024) — The Television Academy Foundation today announced that 80 educators from colleges and universities nationwide attended its annual Media Educators Conference held Oct. 9-11 at its North Hollywood campus in California.

The conference, chaired by Jamila Hunter, president of Macro Television Studios, connects academia and the television industry to provide educators with curriculum-enhancing information to better serve students. Attending professors gained valuable insight and knowledge from top-tier professionals in the industry on the current state-of-the-art, science and business of television. Faculty mingled with creatives from such hit shows as *Grey's Anatomy*, *The Handmaid's Tale*, *The Voice* and *The Umbrella Academy* in addition to network executives from ABC, CBS, NBCU and FOX.

The conference commenced with opening remarks from Anne Vasquez, executive director of the Foundation, and featured informative industry panels on a variety of topics including: "Demystifying the Unions and Guilds," "A Masterclass in Directing for TV," "Must See TV: An Interactive Model for Media Education," "Storytelling to Accelerate Climate Solutions," "From Concept to Screen: A Warner Bros. Television Group Showrunners Playbook," "Scheduling the Networks," "Breaking Into the Business," and "The Power of TV: Democracy in Focus." In addition, attendees received a behind-the-scenes tour of the Warner Bros. Studio lot in Burbank.

Highlights from the event included a lively panel discussion on "The State of the Industry" moderated by Vasquez, with journalists Clayton Davis, Variety's senior awards editor; Meg James, senior entertainment writer for The Los Angeles Times; and Sarah Krouse, Los Angeles bureau chief for The Wall Street Journal. The panelists offered keen insights on the seismic shifts shaping the media industry today.

“Since 2017, the traditional Hollywood ecosystem has been under a lot of turmoil, which was accelerated by the pandemic and the shift in viewing patterns,” said James. “I think we probably have another two years of unsettling and more consolidation before the environment settles to see what the world looks like post-streaming wars.”

“I think what you will find, especially as you train the next generation of executives who are going to work in [the industry],” said Krouse, “is the people who can figure out how to blend their creativity with the use of [AI] tools are the ones that are going to be part of the next generation — especially if they can do it in a way that saves studios money.”



(From left) Journalists Meg James, Sarah Krouse and Clayton Davis with Television Academy Foundation Executive Director and moderator Anne Vasquez discussed “The State of the Industry” during the 2024 Media Educators Conference, Oct. 9, 2024, in Los Angeles, California. (Photo by Dan Steinberg/Invision for the Television Academy/AP Content Services)

In addition, a state-of-the-art panel discussion on “AI and the Future of Entertainment” focused on how artificial intelligence is transforming the industry and what students need to know about this rapidly evolving field. Featured panelists were Anatola Araba, founder, creative director at Reimagine Story Lab; Renard Jenkins, SMPTE president HPA and MovieLabs board member; and Shelby Ward, co-founder, Curious Refuge. The discussion, moderated by Christina Lee Storm, co-founder of PLAYBOOK and Television Academy Governor for the Emerging Media Programming Peer Group, revealed how AI tools can aid aspiring content creators.

“Using these [AI] tools in preproduction is appropriate right now because preproduction is not going to be out there for everyone to consume,” said Ward of Curious Refuge. “I think using these tools to create your story makes a lot of sense. A lot of students don't have budgets to work with storyboard artists to visualize their projects. These tools allow them to bring vision to their story in a way that helps their project move forward quickly.”



(From left) Panelists Shelby Ward, Renard Jenkins and Anatola Araba with moderator Christina Lee Storm discussed “AI and the Future of Entertainment” during the conference, Wednesday, Oct. 9, 2024, in Los Angeles, California.

Since 2021, the Foundation has offered select professors the opportunity to attend the conference as recipients of its Alex Trebek Legacy Fellowship Program. Established by the Harry & Judy Friedman Family Foundation in honor of the late *Jeopardy!* host, the fellowship provides financial assistance for educators at minority-serving institutions who are interested in attending the annual event. This year, 18 educators were awarded fellowships.

All faculty attendees also received a one-year complimentary academic membership to the Television Academy.

“This conference brings passionate educators and industry professionals together to help reshape media curriculums based on current trends in the ever-evolving entertainment landscape,” said Tina Perry, chair of the Television Academy Foundation. “We’ve seen firsthand the power of collaboration and shared knowledge

in equipping educators with the tools they need to inspire the next generation of storytellers and impact classrooms across the country.”

Sponsors for the 2024 Media Educators Conference include Sony Pictures Entertainment, Warner Bros. Discovery and The Los Angeles Times.

About the Television Academy Foundation

Established in 1959 as the charitable arm of the Television Academy, the Television Academy Foundation is dedicated to preserving the legacy of television while educating and inspiring those who will shape its future. Through renowned educational and outreach programs, such as [The Interviews: An Oral History of Television Project](#), [College Television Awards and Summit](#), [Student Internship Program](#), and the [Media Educators Conference](#), the Foundation seeks to widen the circle of voices our industry represents and to create more opportunity for television to reflect all of society. For more information on the Foundation, please visit TelevisionAcademy.com/Foundation.

#

Media Contact:

Jane Sparango

breakwhitelight (for the Television Academy Foundation)

jane@breakwhitelight.com

310-339-1214