



2022 Alumni Professional Achievement Award Cecily Truett Lancit '71

The Alumni Professional Achievement Award recognizes significant contributions alumni have made to their fields while exemplifying high moral and professional ethics.

Cecily Truett Lancit '71 is being honored with the 2022 Alumni Professional Achievement Award for her outstanding accomplishments in television.

Lancit co-created and produced the PBS series *READING RAINBOW*, an American educational children's television series that encouraged school-age children to read. It originally aired on PBS and afterwards on PBS Kids and PBS Kids Go! from July 11, 1983 to Nov. 10, 2006; during this time, it was the number one used program in American elementary schools. Over 21 seasons, there were 155 30-minute episodes produced. *READING RAINBOW* won 16 National Daytime Emmy Awards, including seven Emmys for Best Children's Series. Reruns continue to air on Amazon Prime, iTunes, and Netflix.

Lancit also created and/or produced for PBS the award-winning series, *THE PUZZLE PLACE* in 1995, which received five Cindy Awards, five CINE Golden Eagle Awards, four Emmy nominations. She also produced the dramatic series *RAMONA*, based on the best-selling books by Beverly Cleary; and *BACKYARD SAFARI*.

Corporate funders for her work included: Fisher Price, Sony, Toys 'R' Us, Kellogg's, Barnes and Noble, B. Dalton and IBM. Foundation Funders include Arthur Vining Davis Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Science Foundation, Ford Foundation, Carnegie Corporation and Pew Charitable Trust.

Lancit's work includes hundreds of documentaries produced for major charity fundraising initiatives, corporate and hospitality clients. Of note are her projects with the Naples Children and Education Foundation (NCEF), which executes the Naples Winter Wine Festival, widely recognized as one of the nation's most significant charity events.

Lancit, along with her husband and business partner, Larry Lancit, own and operate the hotel channel for southwest Florida. She has aimed her camera down alligator gullets, captured dolphins leaping and surfing in boat wakes, shot video up in parasails and blimps, flown her drone over the stunning gulf coast beaches at sunset and captured newly hatched baby turtles as they run into the waves.

The Lancits have recently focused their work to support mental health and recovery institutions, pulling back the curtain to help resolve stigma from drug addiction and mental/emotional disorders.

Recently, she and Larry completed a feature documentary, *BLUES ON BEALE*, highlighting the 36th Annual International Blues Competition in Memphis. The documentary is being distributed on 25 on-demand platforms around the world, including Amazon and iTunes. They are also lead personalities in the feature documentary, *BUTTERFLY IN THE SKY*, a chronicle of the history and impact of *READING RAINBOW* over its 23-year presence on PBS. The documentary recently premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival in New York.

She has served on a variety of boards and professional and nonprofit organizations, including the Youth Advisory Committee of the YMCA of Greater New York and the Board of Directors of New Alternatives for Children, Inc., which helps children with disabilities leave hospital care for new lives in foster and adoptive homes.



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Lancit earned a Bachelor of Arts in English with a Spanish minor from Winthrop College in 1971. She credits her time at Winthrop as a student and an employee as seminal in helping focus her passions on creative media. She also holds a Master's Degree in Journalism and Media Arts from the University of South Carolina. She was honored by Winthrop in 1999 with a Doctor of Humane Letters in recognition of her work in quality family media.