



**THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF TELEVISION  
ARTS & SCIENCES TO HONOR  
PAULA S. APSELL  
SENIOR EXECUTIVE PRODUCER  
PBS' NOVA  
WITH LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**

*To be Awarded at the 39<sup>th</sup> Annual News & Documentary Emmy® Awards on Oct. 1st*

New York, N.Y. – July 24, 2018 – The National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences announced today that Paula S. Apsell, Senior Executive Producer of the multiple Emmy® Award winning series, NOVA, and Director of the WGBH Science Unit, will receive the Lifetime Achievement Emmy Award at the 39<sup>th</sup> Annual News & Documentary Emmy Awards. Apsell is being honored for her distinguished career of over four decades in science journalism, and for her 33 years at the helm of NOVA, PBS' premier science documentary series, produced at WGBH Boston. The award will be presented on Monday, October 1, 2018 at Frederick P. Rose Hall, Home of Jazz at Lincoln Center, located in the Time Warner Center in New York City.

“Paula Apsell’s leadership has driven NOVA to the heights of excellence, using cutting edge visuals and masterful storytelling to produce the most watched and respected science documentary series on television,” said Adam Sharp, Interim President and CEO of NATAS. “Like many fellow science ‘geeks,’ I eagerly await each new NOVA episode with anticipation for the program’s unique and acclaimed ability to inform, inspire, and entertain. I can’t think of a more deserving honoree, and look forward to shining a light on her many achievements at this year’s News & Documentary Emmy Awards ceremony on October 1st in New York City.”

“Under Paula Apsell’s leadership, NOVA has done more to enhance the public understanding of science than any show on American television,” said David Winn, Senior Vice President of the News & Documentary Emmy Awards. “This is an especially critical role in a period of persistent skepticism toward scientific consensus on issues like evolution, climate change, and the effectiveness of vaccines. We are proud to honor Ms. Apsell for her many accomplishments as a filmmaker, producer and science journalist, and for her role in increasing the scientific literacy of the American and global public.”

## PAULA S. APSELL

Paula S. Apsell got her start in broadcasting at WGBH Boston, where she was hired fresh out of Brandeis University to type the public broadcaster's daily television program logs—a job that Apsell notes is now, mercifully, automated. Within a year, she found her way to WGBH Radio, where she developed the award-winning children's drama series, *The Spider's Web*, and later became a radio news producer and Statehouse reporter. In 1975, she joined WGBH's NOVA, a science documentary series that has set the standard for science programming on television with weekly PBS documentaries on topics in science, technology, medicine, engineering and mathematics. Rising through the ranks from production assistant to associate producer to producer, Apsell first produced NOVA's *Death of a Disease*, which documented the worldwide eradication of smallpox. She went on to produce a dozen NOVA episodes on topics as varied as artificial intelligence, genetic engineering, and aviation safety.

Following her years as a NOVA producer, Apsell went to WCVB, the ABC affiliate in Boston known for quality content, as senior producer for medical programming, working with Dr. Timothy Johnson. During that time, she produced *Someone I Once Knew*, an award-winning documentary that broke the story on Alzheimer's disease, showing that dementia is a pathology, not an inevitable by-product of old age. Apsell then spent a year at MIT as a Vannevar Bush Fellow in what is now known as the Knight Science Journalism Program. She was then asked to take over the reins at NOVA where she is now Senior Executive Producer and Director of the WGBH Science Unit. As well as overseeing the production of NOVA documentaries and miniseries for television, she has directed the series' diversification into other media—most notably online, where NOVA is one of the most visited sites on PBS.org, with extensive offerings in short form video, breaking science news stories, and the popular YouTube series “Gross Science” and “What the Physics?!” NOVA can be found in classrooms nationwide, where it is a highly trusted video resource among high school and middle school science teachers, and has also been featured at hundreds of community screenings.

In 2018, the series presented a new and critically acclaimed miniseries called NOVA Wonders, focusing on the greatest mysteries in science. This followed a popular NOVA spinoff introduced in 2005 called NOVA *scienceNOW*, a science newsmagazine hosted in different seasons by Robert Krulwich, Dr. Neil deGrasse Tyson and former New York Times technology columnist David Pogue.

Other recent signature NOVA and Science Unit productions include *Making North America* hosted by Dr. Kirk Johnson, Sant Director of the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History; *The Elegant Universe* and *The Fabric of the Cosmos*, hosted by Dr. Brian Greene; *Origins* hosted by Dr. Neil deGrasse Tyson; *Einstein's Big Idea*; *Judgment Day: Intelligent Design on Trial*; *Making Stuff* hosted by David Pogue; *Decoding the Weather Machine*, and the large format feature *Shackleton's Antarctic Adventure*.

Today, NOVA is the most popular science series on American television and one of the top science sites online. Under Apsell's leadership, NOVA has won every major

broadcasting award, some many times over, including the Emmy; the George Foster Peabody award; the AAAS Kavli Science Journalism award; the Alfred I. duPont Columbia University Gold and Silver Batons; and an Academy Award® nomination for *Special Effects*. In 1998, the National Science Board of the National Science Foundation awarded NOVA its first-ever Public Service Award.

Apsell has been recognized with numerous individual awards for her work, including the Pro Bono Humanum Award presented by the Galien Foundation; the Bradford Washburn Award from the Museum of Science, Boston; the Carl Sagan Award given by the Council of Scientific Society Presidents; the American Institute of Physics Andrew Gemant Award; the Planetary Society's Cosmos Award; the International Documentary Association's Pioneer Award; the National Space Club of Huntsville Media Award; and the New York Hall of Science Distinguished Service Award for Public Understanding of Science. She has lectured extensively on the Art of Science Communication and has served on the board of the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History; the Brandeis University Sciences Advisory Committee; and the International Documentary Association. Apsell holds honorary doctorates from Southern Methodist University and Dickinson College.

She lives in Chestnut Hill, MA with her husband Sheldon, an inventor. The Apsells have two grown daughters, one a physician, the other a television news producer, and two grandchildren -- the stars around which their universe revolves.

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Yangaroo, Inc. is the official provider of the Digital Media Distribution System Awards Management Solution ("DMDS") for the submission, judging and voting of all programs in the 39th Annual News & Documentary Emmy Awards.

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### **About The National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences**

The National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences (NATAS) is a service organization dedicated to the advancement of the arts and sciences of television and the promotion of creative leadership for artistic, educational and technical achievements within the television industry. It recognizes excellence in television with the coveted Emmy® Award for News & Documentary, Sports, Daytime Entertainment, Daytime Creative Arts & Entertainment, Public & Community Service, and Technology & Engineering. NATAS membership consists of over 16,000 broadcast and media professionals represented in 19 regional chapters across the country. Beyond awards, NATAS has extensive educational programs including Regional Student Television and its Student Award for Excellence for outstanding journalistic work by high school students, as well as scholarships, publications, and major activities for both industry professionals and the viewing public. For more information, please visit the website at [www.emmyonline.tv](http://www.emmyonline.tv)

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