

Buffalo•Toronto Public Media



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Media Contact: Heather Hare
Senior Director, Corporate Communications
(716) 845.7155 • hhare@wned.org

MEDIA NEWS

Public Broadcasting's Boswell to Retire in 2021 *President & CEO since 1998 brought national prominence to WNET*

Donald K. Boswell will retire as President and CEO of Western New York Public Broadcasting (WNET | WBFO) on June 30, 2021 and a national search has begun for his successor, Joseph D. McDonald, Chair of the WNET Board of Trustees, announced today.

Boswell has been at the helm of WNET since 1998, following the retirement of J. Michael Collins after 39 years with the organization. Boswell was recruited from KERA TV & FM in Dallas-Fort Worth, where he was Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer.

“Don Boswell is a powerful and charismatic leader who has been successful in strategically positioning WNET | WBFO as the region’s most trusted and valued public media enterprise,” McDonald said. “He is a wonderful man. We gratefully celebrate his contributions to the communities we serve in the Buffalo-Toronto area. The Board of Trustees knows that finding Don’s successor is no small task. Our goal is a smooth transition to our next great leader.”

“It is time to pass the baton,” said Boswell, who will be 70 next year. In retirement, he plans to pursue writing scripts for films and plays. He and his wife will remain in Buffalo where, he said, he will continue serving on community boards.

“I am blessed to have had the support of such a great staff, board, and community,” Boswell said. “I am most proud of building a talented team that understands the great privilege of telling the stories of Western New York and Southern Ontario. We embrace the role of ‘storyteller,’ highlighting our rich history, traditions and culture by educating and entertaining viewers here and nationally through PBS and American Public Television (APT).”

Among WNET productions seen across the nation are those featuring Chautauqua Institution, Shaw Festival, Frank Lloyd Wright’s Buffalo, Roycrofter Elbert Hubbard, Olmsted Parks, Ralph Wilson, and documentaries on the Marines, Underground Railroad, Dyslexia, Houses of Worship, Hockey, The Adirondacks, the Canadian Rockies, Klondike Gold Rush, the Warrior Tradition, and the War of 1812. During its 26-year run, WNET’s Reading Rainbow garnered more than 250 awards, including the prestigious George Foster Peabody Award and 26 Emmy Awards. Boswell created the Buffalo/Niagara Guitar Festival and co-created the JoAnn Falletta International Guitar Concerto Competition. Boswell said he is proud of WBFO, Buffalo’s NPR station, for being recognized as Outstanding News Operation for the last seven years by the New York State Associated Press (AP).

WNED Trustee Maureen Hurley is Chair of the Search Committee, which hired Washington, DC-based Sally M. Sterling Executive Search to conduct a national outreach.

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About Donald K. Boswell

Boswell began his public broadcasting career as a teen-aged volunteer for “Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood,” produced at WQED in his hometown of Pittsburgh, PA.

He earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Penn State University.

His first job, in 1977, was in community relations/production at WVIA-TV/FM in Pittston, PA. He was Vice President of Development for KCTS-TV in Seattle before heading to KERA in 1982. He joined WNED in 1998.

Boswell serves on the national Board of Directors for the Auto Club of America and is a past chair of AAA of Western and Central New York. Board memberships include Independent Health, Five Star Bank and John R. Oishei Foundation. He chairs the American Board of Directors for Art Gallery of Ontario and is on the board of Red Sky Performance in Toronto. He is a past president of The Buffalo Club, past chair of APT, past vice-chair of PBS and a past trustee of Chautauqua Institution.

A five-time Emmy Award winner, he is the recipient of honorary doctorates from Canisius College and D’Youville College and has been honored by the National Conference for Community and Justice, Penn State and Leadership Buffalo.

About Sally M. Sterling Executive Search

With 25 years of experience, Sally Sterling and her firm focus on recruiting top officers for not-for-profits. Among them are PBS, NPR, American Public Media, the Smithsonian, National Gallery of Art, Ford Foundation, Alfred P. Sloan Foundation and Rockefeller Foundation.

About Buffalo Toronto Public Media

The Buffalo Toronto Public Media family of stations, known as WNED | WBFO until it rebranded in February 2020, broadcasts television and radio programming throughout the Western New York and Southern Ontario regions. These high-quality programs and community outreach services inform, enlighten, entertain, and educate our local and regional communities. Our member-supported stations include WNED PBS, WBFO (NPR) broadcasting on 88.7 in Buffalo, 91.3 in Olean, and 88.1 in Jamestown, WNED Classical broadcasting on 94.5 in Buffalo and 89.7 WNJA in Jamestown, WBFO Jazzworks broadcasting on 88.7 HD2, WNED Create, and WNED PBS KIDS. WNED PBS is also a national producer of award-winning documentaries. Additional information about Buffalo Toronto Public Media can be found at wned.org.