

NEWS RELEASE



Maryland Public Television

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Television veteran Donald Thoms inducted into National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences chapter's Gold Circle

***Former Maryland Public Television, PBS, and Discovery executive honored for more than
50 years of broadcast industry contributions***

OWINGS MILLS, MD – Donald Thoms, president of ThomsMediaGroup, was inducted into the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences National Capital Chesapeake Bay Chapter's (NATAS-NCCB) prestigious Gold Circle during ceremonies held on October 19 in Baltimore. Thoms was one of two television industry professionals who entered the NATAS-NCCB Gold Circle as members of the class of 2024. MPT's David A. Wainwright, audio supervisor, was inducted into the chapter's Silver Circle the same evening.

The Gold Circle recognizes individuals who have made significant contributions to the broadcast or cable industry for 50 years or more, while the Silver Circle recognizes those who have achieved the same for 25 years or more. The Gold and Silver Circles are often referred to as the Academy's "Hall of Fame."

Thoms is among just 28 individuals who have been inducted into the NATAS-NCCB Gold Circle since the award was established in 2005. This distinguished group includes five other industry contributors with MPT affiliation: Zvi Shoubin (2011); Rhea Feikin (2014); Lou Davis (2015); George Beneman (2019); and John Davis (2023).



Thoms began his career at WBAL-TV in 1967 as a floor director. That experience set the stage for five decades of broadcasting achievement. Following his WBAL tenure, in 1973 he moved to Maryland Public Television (MPT) where, after an initial stint as part of the network's master control operation, he directed and/or produced programs and series such as *Wall Street Week With Louis Rukeyser*, *Consumer Survival Kit*, and *The Critics' Place*.

As a producer at MPT, Thoms was able to create local programs that affected the diverse communities of Maryland. These programs included *Project Reach Out*, helping area teachers get much-needed volunteer help in the classroom; *Teacher of the Year*, spotlighting the state's best teachers; and *Jobs for Marylanders*, a program that highlighted open state jobs and connected viewers to them. Another

of his production credits was *Foster Care Stories: A Place to Be*, connecting kids without families with couples who wanted children. One of Thoms' most enduring productions, which he co-created, still airs on MPT nearly four decades later: *Outdoors Maryland*.

After MPT, Thoms went on to work on the national level at PBS and the Discovery Networks in 1993 and 1999, respectively. At PBS, he was responsible for connecting with minority organizations and independent filmmakers to increase their presence on the PBS schedule. He created the original *Independent Lens*, offering member stations 10-15 hours of curated and content-approved programs. At Discovery, he was head of production for the Health Channel, creating and producing programs for women.

During his second stint at PBS from 2011 to 2016, Thoms was the executive in charge of arts and performance programs and lifestyle programming. He also oversaw three long-running national series based on the works of independent filmmakers of color: *POV*, *Independent Lens*, and *Voces*.

At present, Thoms serves as a member of the Maryland Public Television DEI Advisory Council and of several local theater boards. He also maintains his own media consultancy, the ThomsMediaGroup. He resides in Baltimore County.

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About Maryland Public Television

Maryland Public Television (MPT) is a statewide, public-supported TV network and Public Broadcasting Service member offering entertaining, educational, and inspiring content delivered by traditional broadcasting and streaming on TVs, computers, and mobile devices. A state agency, it operates under the auspices of the Maryland Public Broadcasting Commission. MPT creates and distributes local, regional, and national content and is a frequent winner of regional Emmy® awards. MPT's commitment to educators, parents, caregivers, and learners of all ages is delivered through instructional events and Thinkport.org. MPT's year-round community engagement activities connect viewers with resources on a wide range of topics. For more information visit mpt.org.