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South Carolina ETV's Renee Layson wins Gracie Award for Director of "SCETV Safe Space"

*Alliance For Women in Media Foundation Announces
Winners of the 48th Annual Gracie Awards*

COLUMBIA, S.C. – The [Alliance for Women in Media Foundation](#) (AWMF) has announced the winners of the [48th Annual Gracie Awards](#), including the recognition of South Carolina ETV and Public Radio's (SCETV) Renee Layson as winner of the Local Television Director category for [SCETV Safe Space](#).

The Gracies recognize outstanding programming and individual achievement created by women, for women and about women in all facets of media in news and entertainment. This year's theme, "Storytelling," highlights and celebrates the narratives shared by the winners, which not only inform, inspire and captivate audiences, but also enrich the collective comprehension of the world. The AWMF is committed to shining a spotlight on women directors and the crucial role that women play in molding the stories seen on screen.

SCETV's Renee Layson was named as the winner of the of the Local Television Director category for her role in directing [SCETV Safe Space](#). *SCETV Safe Space* aired in Fall 2022 to highlight mental health and suicide prevention strategies. With additional efforts from Producer Aimee Crouch, the conversational style program brought together teens and professionals to discuss issues facing South Carolina's youth during a live broadcast on ETV. Guest host Whitney Sullivan of WLTX News 19 facilitated a conversation with teens and professionals, including a representative from NAMI Mid-Carolina, NAMI Piedmont, the South Carolina Department of Mental Health and a local school psychologist.

SCETV Safe Space is part of a larger agency-led initiative to increase conversations around difficult topics for teenage audiences. SCETV Social Media Manager Raven Favor and Brand Development Manager Desiree Cheeks were both integral members of the initiative, leading the effort to bring *SCETV Safe Space* to audiences on-air and online. The initiative included the live broadcast, community town halls and a social media campaign aimed at highlighting resources for teens around mental health and suicide prevention strategies. For more information on the SCETV Safe Space Initiative, visit scetv.org/safespace.

Layson has worked in television production for 37 years, beginning her career in public media as an intern for SCETV. She received her BA in Journalism from the University of South Carolina and continues to support her alma mater through work with Gamecock Live productions to present college sports for SEC+, the SEC Network, ESPN+ and ESPN. Layson has received numerous award nominations and wins including: seven Southeast Regional EMMY nominations and four Southeast Regional EMMY wins, an award from the National Educational Telecommunications Association for Instructional Media, numerous Telly awards and an honor from the Palmetto Center for Women.

National Gracie Awards winners will be honored at a gala event on May 23 at the Beverly Wilshire, A Four Seasons Hotel in LA. The [local and student award-winners will be recognized](#) at the Gracie Awards Luncheon on June 20 at Cipriani in NYC.

The Gracies are named after the late Gracie Allen. Gracie Allen was an important figure for women in media as she challenged the gender norms of her time by being a successful comedian and businesswoman. Her humor and wit paved the way for other women in the entertainment industry and she remains an inspiration to this day. For more information on a complete list of award recipients and honorable mentions, visit allwomeninmedia.org.

QUOTES

“Renee receiving this Gracie Award is a special acknowledgment of her contributions to *SCETV Safe Space* and to SCETV as an agency. I am proud of her and the entire team that worked to deliver this important message about South Carolina’s youth and their mental health to audiences across the state. It is a well-deserved recognition. **-SCETV Interim President and CEO Dr. Stephanie Cook**

“It is an honor to be recognized with a Gracie Award especially in the Director category. Of all the roles we play in television production, by far directing live television is my favorite. The challenge of live television is never knowing what might happen and I find that exhilarating. Working with young women in the production business give me great optimism for the future of the industry.” **-SCETV Safe Space Director Renee Layson**

“I am extremely proud of the impact *SCETV Safe Space* has made on the state of South Carolina and surrounding communities. I am even more proud of the recognition the *SCETV Safe Space* team has achieved and this special acknowledgment of Renee as Director. We are committed to continue with the initiative to create more safe spaces to magnify youth mental health awareness throughout South Carolina.” **-SCETV Social Media Manager and SCETV Safe Space Producer Raven Favor**

“Our team is honored to receive recognition for *SCETV Safe Space* and proud Renee is receiving this Gracie Award. The discussions and information shared about mental health are vital for the growth of our communities and our abilities to support one another. We are excited to continue with the initiative around the state and look forward to creating more spaces to amplify the voices of the youth towards mental health.” **-Brand Development Manager and SCETV Safe Space Producer Desiree Cheeks**

FAST FACTS

- AWMF has announced the winners of the [48th Annual Gracie Awards](#), including the recognition of SCETV’s Renee Layson as winner of the Local Television Director category for [SCETV Safe Space](#).
- The Gracies recognize outstanding programming and individual achievement created by women, for women and about women in all facets of media in news and entertainment.
- *SCETV Safe Space* aired in Fall 2023 to highlight mental health and suicide prevention strategies, and is part of a larger agency-led initiative to increase conversations around difficult topics for teenage audiences.
- Layson has worked in television production for 37 years, beginning her career in public media as an intern for SCETV.
- The [local and student award-winners will be recognized](#) at the Gracie Awards Luncheon on June 20 at Cipriani in NYC.

About South Carolina ETV and Public Radio

South Carolina ETV and Public Radio (SCETV) is the state's public educational broadcasting network. SCETV amplifies South Carolina voices, provides educational experiences and strengthens communities, while working toward creating a stronger, more connected and informed South Carolina. In addition to airing local programs, such as *Carolina Classrooms*, *Making It Grow*, and *This Week in South Carolina*, SCETV also presents multiple programs to regional and national audiences, including *By The River*, *After Action*, *Reconnecting Roots*, *Reel South*, *Somewhere South*, *Yoga in Practice* and *How She Rolls*. In addition, SC Public Radio produces the national radio production, *Chamber Music from Spoleto Festival USA*.

About The Gracie Awards

The Gracie Awards is the largest fundraiser of the Alliance for Women in Media Foundation which advances women in media through educational programs and scholarships. The Gracie Awards honors exemplary programming and individual talent created by, for and about women. The Alliance for Women in Media Foundation has created partnerships and joint initiatives with the Emma Bowen Foundation, the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB), NCTA – The Internet & Television Association and other organizations that are philosophically aligned with the mission of the Foundation. For more information about The Alliance for Women in Media Foundation and the Gracie Awards please visit allwomeninmedia.org and follow on Twitter (@AllWomeninMedia), (#TheGracies), Instagram (@allwomeninmedia), [Facebook](#), and [LinkedIn](#).



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