

Insiders Reflect on PBS NewsHour's 50th Anniversary

This week marks PBS NewsHour's 50th anniversary, and TVNewser is getting an inside look at the program.

Over the last five decades, PBS NewsHour has gone through several changes. The evening newscast began its long, storied history as The **Robert MacNeil** Report in 1975, becoming The MacNeil/Lehrer Report a year later, with the addition of **Jim Lehrer**.

It changed to the MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour in 1983 and was known as the nation's first and only hour-long nightly national newscast. Among other notable changes, the broadcast was renamed the PBS NewsHour in 2009. After Lehrer stepped down in 2011, it returned to a two-anchor format, with **Judy Woodruff** and **Gwen Ifill** becoming anchors and managing editors of the program in 2013.

In recognition of this year's historic moment, the show's current co-hosts, **Amna Nawaz** and **Geoff Bennett**, as well as executive producer **Sara Just**, have each shared their reflections on the program's 50th anniversary with TVNewser.

Here's what they had to say:

Nawaz: I heard from viewers this week who've been watching since day one of this broadcast; others who started watching us because their parents did, and now watch with their young children; and even more who follow us on Instagram and TikTok today. NewsHour has stood the test of time. It's done that by making sure the same straightforward journalism on which it was built for the last 50 years guides it today. People have

always and will always need trusted, credible sources of information so they can make decisions about their lives. What a privilege it is to sit beside Geoff every night and work with this team every day to help people to do that.

Bennett: Marking 50 years of the PBS NewsHour is deeply meaningful for our entire team. This milestone reminds me what an extraordinary privilege it is to help steward—alongside Amna—a program that has embodied substance, civility, and depth in American journalism for half a century. The principles that inspired this broadcast in 1975 remain our guiding lights today—fairness, accuracy, and a steadfast belief that an informed public strengthens democracy. I’m profoundly proud to stand alongside such a dedicated, mission-driven team. The 50th anniversary is a celebration of where we’ve been and a reaffirmation of why we do this work.

Just: All of us at PBS News are aware that we are filling extraordinarily large shoes in keeping the journalistic standards and expectations set by our flagship program’s late co-founders, Robert MacNeil and Jim Lehrer. In preparing for this anniversary, we have been tracing the history of the broadcast and are reminded just how much our industry and news-consuming habits have changed and evolved in this time. But even as Jim and Robert probably never could have imagined that we would have 5 million subscribers on YouTube, they would be equally surprised to see federal funding for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting cut this year, the work of the free press threatened in various ways, and misinformation and disinformation spreading so dangerously. In light of all of that, all of us at PBS News are as committed as ever to providing factual, contextual, nuanced reporting and analysis to our audiences on broadcast and online, and anyone looking for news and information they can trust. What will PBS News look like in the next 50 years? It’s hard to say. But I have confidence that the kind of journalism that holds the powerful accountable without fear or favor will always be an essential

part of our democracy, and PBS News will be continuing to evolve, as we have over 50 years, to do just that.

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