

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

November 5, 2015



**MEDIA CONTACT:** Allison Alvarez Hedrick  
Vice President of Communications  
P: 800.354.9338 ext. 2240  
E: [ahedrick@wedu.org](mailto:ahedrick@wedu.org)

## **WEDU PBS Receives \$4 Million Bequest**

**Bequest from the late Phyllis L. Ensign Marks Largest Gift in Station's 57 Year History**



**Tampa, FL** — **WEDU PBS** is honored to announce the receipt of a \$4 million bequest from the estate of Phyllis L. Ensign.

According to friends of Mrs. Ensign, Phyllis almost exclusively watched WEDU. The only exception would be if she was watching one of the channels with the stock market ticker running across the bottom of the screen.

In the mid 1940's, Phyllis began work as a secretary at the Washington, D.C. law firm of Covington, Burling, Rublee, Acheson & Shorb. This was where Phyllis began to learn about stocks and investing from her bosses. She was an avid learner and spent free time at the library reading about investing and volunteering to read to children.

Throughout her career, she continued to climb the ladder and pursued her passion of investing, in some cases investing her entire paycheck. She became extremely knowledgeable and smart about her own investments. One of the first stocks Phyllis purchased was Standard Oil Company of New Jersey, which eventually became Mobil.

Phyllis eventually settled in Clearwater and began watching *Wall Street Week* with Louis Rukeyser on WEDU PBS. She joined WEDU's Travel Club and took five *Financial Seminars at Sea with Louis Rukeyser*.

The \$4 million bequest is the largest gift to WEDU, West Central Florida's primary PBS station, in its 57 year history. Donors who make a planned gift to the station through a will are designated as Visionaries.

"This generous gift will help WEDU expand services on-air and in the community to the more than 5 million people we serve," said **Susan Howarth**, WEDU President and CEO during an announcement event honoring Phyllis Ensign.

"We are deeply honored by Mrs. Ensign's gift and hope that it will encourage other donors to remember WEDU in their wills. Visionaries, and all of our charitable donors, help ensure that WEDU's quality programming, educational outreach and community events continue to educate, enlighten, and inspire for many generations to come."

During a bequest presentation event held at the **WEDU Berkman Family Broadcast Center** on November 5<sup>th</sup>, **Cathy Unruh**, WEDU's Board Chair, outlined how funds from the bequest will be used.

Phyllis often talked about the cruises she took through WEDU and spoke of an incident during dinner one evening in which Louis Rukeyser called her "the smartest woman at the table."

Rukeyser had asked around the table what each person intended to do with their investments at that particular time, which was during a market downturn. While everyone else said they were going to sell off certain stocks, Phyllis said she was going to leave everything where it was and do nothing.

“Clearly, Phyllis was a smart lady,” stated Cathy Unruh. “WEDU plans to place this generous gift into WEDU’s Endowment, which will provide long-term support for WEDU’s operating budget. Those funds will then support projects that we believe will honor Mrs. Ensign’s gift.”

During this first year, those funds will support projects including the creation of a paid internship initiative for WEDU’s local series *Suncoast Business Forum* and the production of WEDU’s newest series, *That’s All I’m Saying with Ernest Hooper*.

WEDU also plans to honor Mrs. Ensign’s love of reading to children by donating a multimedia library corner to at least 16 libraries throughout WEDU’s 16 county viewing area. “That means *Phyllis L. Ensign WEDU PBS Library Corners* will be inspiring and educating thousands of children throughout West Central Florida,” said Susan Howarth.

If you would like more information about WEDU and becoming a Visionary or charitable donor, please visit: [www.wedu.org](http://www.wedu.org).

#### **ABOUT WEDU PBS**

WEDU is West Central Florida’s leading PBS station reaching 16 counties through media platforms including on-air programming and online experiences that broaden horizons, transport and transform and open gateways to new ideas and new worlds. Financially supported by the community, the organization offers a wealth of award-winning inspirational, educational and enlightening content over a variety of multi-media platforms including: television programming, station website, [www.wedu.org](http://www.wedu.org) and various social media platforms, monthly member magazine *Premiere*, educational outreach activities and a myriad of special events. WEDU’s focus on the local community has resulted in the station being regarded as a beacon of trust for men, women and children of every walk of life no matter their age, ethnicity or socio-economic status. WEDU is a treasured community resource; a window to the world for the homebound and a vital educational source for the youngest members of society. WEDU prides itself on its position in the Tampa Bay community as a leader, partner, informed citizen and a member of PBS, the most trusted institution in America (ORC International’s DualFrame CARAVAN, January 2015). For more information, program schedules or to support WEDU visit [www.wedu.org](http://www.wedu.org); WEDU Public Media on Facebook and Twitter (@wedupbs) or call (813) 254-9338.

-WEDU-