



Laurie Jennings: 2020 Silver Circle Honoree for Broadcasting Achievements (Video)

Laurie Jennings is a six-time Emmy award-winning TV newscaster who South Floridians trust and turn to. We were excited to learn that Laurie is one of this year's recipients for the prestigious Silver Circle award given out by the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, this year's award ceremony will be quite different.

And now a word from Laurie Jennings.....

You don't realize how far you've come until you look back - way back. We're talking late 80's big hair, big shoulder pads, big jewelry — why was everything so big back then? Oh, and my first weather reporting in Youngstown from a wall with no graphics - what in the world?

I've laughed, cried, and gasped at the TV news gems I've uncovered recently on nearly 400 VHS, Beta, SX and even 3/4 tapes filled with live shots, promos, reporting, anchoring, show opens and bloopers (gotta love those!).

Of course, I should have digitized all of these years ago, but like any good reporter, I work best on deadline. So I now have 1 week left to squeeze a 30-year news career into a 5-minute video, and yes, I'm completely overwhelmed.

✖ It was early February 2020 when I got the call from the local NATAS (National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences) office that I was one of their five 2020 Silver Circle honorees. I was thrilled (and I should have started sorting tapes right away!).

Little did anyone know that the story of the century was about to occur and change life as we know it.

The COVID-19 pandemic pushed the award show from May to August and ultimately forced it to go virtual for the first time in NATAS history. There have been mixed emotions, of course, but virtual was the final decision since the other honorees would have to drive in with family and co-workers from Alabama, Georgia and across Florida and all gather in a Fort Lauderdale ballroom with more than 100 guests – not happening in this new, socially-distanced reality.

When the decision to go virtual was finally confirmed, I have to admit, it took away some of the excitement. But then the other day, a huge box arrived at the front door. I had no idea what it could be. As I unraveled each layer of filler and pulled out a large, flat, gold-colored box, I still couldn't imagine what it was. Then I opened the lid, and it took my breath away. There was this spectacular cherry wood plaque with a big Emmy emblem at the top, and the words "Silver Circle".

They had told me they would be mailing out the awards ahead of the actual ceremony so we could hold them while accepting virtually, but it completely caught me off guard.

The presentation was stunning, and it brought back a flood of memories I share in this video of the first Silver Circle I ever attended in 1998 at The Biltmore Hotel with some television legends.

All these years later, the 2020 National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, Suncoast Chapter, will present its Silver Circle Awards Sunday, August 30th streaming live on YouTube starting at 5 pm.

Congratulations to my fellow honorees who've all devoted at least 25 years to the TV news business.

I hope many South Floridians will tune in and help celebrate some phenomenal TV news careers – both in front of the camera and behind. A huge thank you to my co-anchor of nine years, Calvin Hughes, who will be my presenter. Let's see if Calvin can remember each and every major news story we covered together in nearly a decade – the list is pretty intense.

He's sure to bring a few laughs, some behind-the-scenes scoop, and maybe a few tears, as he did on my final night on the anchor desk at Local 10. Pour a glass of wine, get ready to reminisce, and we'll hope to see all of you news junkies on August 30th.

✖ **Laurie Jennings:** For the past 15 years, Laurie has led the highly-rated WPLG Local 10 News (ABC) reporting live from major world events, including the 1st U.S. Tour of Pope Francis; the passing of Nelson Mandela in South Africa; the earthquake in Haiti; and the death of Pope John Paul II in Vatican City.

After five years leading WSVN, Ch.7 in South Florida and reporting live from the first anniversary of the 9-11 attacks and the funeral of JFK, Jr. in NYC, Laurie followed her dream of anchoring at the network level when she joined MSNBC in 2003. She hosted several hours of breaking news daily and served as a substitute anchor on "CNBC with Brian Williams," "The Lester Holt Show," and presented the news on "The Weekend Today Show."

Laurie stepped away from the evening anchor desk a year ago to make time for her husband, her twin 14-year-old boys and her aging parents. She recently launched her own broadcast media company, "Laurie Jennings LIVE" as a venue for her continued on-camera work as a TV personality and commercial spokesperson. In this new Zoom-reality, Laurie is also providing 1-on-1 image consulting to help executives

enhance their on-camera presence. www.LaurieJenningsLive.com

Silver Circle

The Silver Circle recognizes individuals who have worked with distinction in the television industry within the Suncoast Region of the State of Florida, the State of Louisiana, the Mobile, Alabama-Pensacola, Florida television market as well as Puerto Rico for a quarter of a century or more, a significant part of which was done in the Suncoast Region. Silver Circle members are honored for more than their longevity — they are honored for making an enduring contribution to the vitality of the television industry and for setting standards of achievement we can all hope to emulate. These honorees also give back to the community as mentors, educators, and volunteers.

<https://suncoastchapter.org/>

All pictures and video courtesy of Laurie Jennings