



Debra OConnell
Chairman, Disney Entertainment Television
The Walt Disney Company

Debra OConnell is Chairman of Disney Entertainment Television, where she oversees the company's portfolio of iconic television brands, including ABC Entertainment, ABC News, ABC Owned Television Stations, Disney Branded Television, Hulu Originals, National Geographic Content and the creative strategy for 20th Television and 20th Television Animation. In this role, she is focused on fueling a world-class streaming library that drives growth and audience engagement on Disney+ and Hulu, while maximizing the cultural reach and profitability of linear television. OConnell reports to Dana Walden, President and Chief Creative Officer of The Walt Disney Company.

OConnell is a proven creative and business executive with nearly three decades at Disney, bringing deep experience across multiple segments. She has played a key role in shaping the company's television strategy, guiding high-impact decisions that have strengthened and evolved its content slate. Most recently, OConnell served as president of ABC News Group and Disney Entertainment Networks, where she oversaw all aspects of ABC News and the ABC Owned Television Stations, aligning the nation's No. 1 news network with the No. 1 station group in the country. She continues to have P&L oversight of the company's multiplatform linear entertainment networks — ABC broadcast network, Disney Channels, FX Networks, Freeform and National Geographic Channels.

In 2018, OConnell was named president and general manager of ABC7/WABC-TV New York, ensuring its winning streak as the most-watched station in the country, a distinction that it holds to this day. As part of her overall management responsibility for the station and its ancillary businesses, the long-running hit syndicated series "Live with Kelly and Mark" became the No. 1 daytime talk show for the first time in franchise history. Prior to taking the reins of WABC-TV, OConnell held a variety of senior leadership roles, including executive vice president, Sales and Marketing, for Disney|ABC's consolidated advertising sales group; president, National TV Sales, ABC Owned Television Stations; and vice president of Marketing at WABC-TV.

OConnell has been widely recognized for her vision and impact. She was named one of Variety's 120 Most Powerful Executives in Entertainment (2025), inducted into the Broadcasting & Cable Hall of Fame (2024), and named Broadcasting & Cable's Broadcaster of the Year (2022). She also received a 2022 Gracie Leadership Award from the Alliance of Women in Media and was named one of Multichannel News' Wonder Women (2018).

A respected industry thought leader, OConnell serves on the Television Academy Executive Committee and the boards of A&E Networks, National Geographic Partners and TVB, a nonprofit trade association representing America's local broadcast television industry, where she

served as chair from 2021 to 2022. She is also involved with the V Foundation and previously served on the boards of the New York State Broadcasters Association and The Broadway Association.

Additionally, OConnell serves on the board of the Alliance for Women in Media and is an ex officio member of the board of the International Radio & Television Society (IRTS), where she previously served as chairman. She is an IRTS Hall of Mentorship honoree (2021) and recipient of the organization's Gold Medal Award (2025). In 2022, she was recognized by New York Edge for her support of programs that expand opportunities for students from underserved communities across New York City.

This year, New York Women in Communications will honor OConnell with its Matrix Award for excellence in media.