



Bonnie Hammer, Nina Tassler, and Nancy Dubuc were included in the Power 100 list based on factors such as the revenue they generate for their companies, the number of employees they oversee, and their ability to green-light projects.

Alums Named to Power 100 List

A CFA and two COM
grads chosen by
Hollywood Reporter

THEY ARE BU alumnae, they work in the television industry, and, according to the *Hollywood Reporter*, they are more powerful than Oprah Winfrey and Lady Gaga.

The three ranked in the top 10 in the publication's 2011 Women in Entertainment Power 100 list, released last December, beating the likes of Winfrey (number 20) and Gaga (number 30).

BONNIE HAMMER (COM'71, SED'75), chair of NBCUniversal Cable Entertainment, led the trio, tying for second with Amy Pascal, cochair of Sony Pictures Entertainment. **NINA TASSLER** (CFA'79), president of CBS Entertainment, took seventh. And **NANCY DUBUC** (COM'91), general manager and president of the History Channel and Lifetime Network, followed closely, in ninth place.

Editors used a number of criteria in selecting the women, including revenue generated by candidates for their companies, number of employees they oversee, and their influence within the industry, which encompasses their ability to green-light projects.

While flattered by her second-place slot on the list, Hammer takes the recognition with a grain of salt.

"You can't actually take any of these seriously, because it can come and go in a heartbeat," she says.

CABLE EMPIRE Hammer was in the right place at the right time when she landed her first job in television production. The photography major happened to be taking pictures on the set of *Infinity Factory*, a show produced by Boston public television station WGBH, the same day several production assistants were fired. A producer asked if she wanted a job. "I walked on set and fell in love and knew from that day that television was it," she says.

Today, Hammer oversees a cable empire at NBCUniversal that includes USA Network, Syfy, the E! Entertainment channel, and the G4 network.

From *Infinity Factory*, Hammer went on to produce PBS shows such as *This Old House* and the children's program *ZOOM*. She moved to Lifetime and then to USA, where she famously transformed the World Wrestling Entertainment franchise from a quasi-sporting event into appointment TV, where characters and storylines rule the ring.

Hammer next served as president of Syfy, and then USA; she revamped each with envy-inducing results. USA has topped all cable channels for 22 consecutive quarters, and Syfy is now among the top 10 cable channels. She attained her current title last year.

Thomas Fiedler (COM'71), dean of the College of Communication, says Hammer and Dubuc have been "great ambassadors," for BU, noting that Hammer serves on COM's dean's advisory board and was the college's 2009 convocation speaker. She brands each of her networks with a distinctive personality that draws loyal audiences, he says, and most important for business, a big advertising base.

Hammer says that working her way up through the ranks, she didn't dwell on whether her colleagues were women. "I've been fortunate to work for some amazing people," she says. "That said, it's still in many ways a man's world." She thinks boardrooms could benefit from more equal representation of men and women—of all ethnic backgrounds—and would like to see more women and minorities in executive positions.

"There are chinks in that glass ceiling waiting for smart, open-minded, and strong women and minorities to get through," says Hammer, "but they don't always make it easy."



Bonnie Hammer (COM'71, SED'75)

MOST-WATCHED NETWORK After graduating with a theater degree, Tassler envisioned herself on stage, not as a television executive. She started her career in New York City, working at the nonprofit Roundabout Theatre Company while auditioning for parts. Despite several callbacks, she never landed that breakout role that might have launched her acting career. Tassler says the idea that "perhaps I was destined to follow a different creative path" eventually struck her.

That path led her first to talent agency Irv Schechter Company and later to Triad Artists Group, where she worked as an agent, representing stars like Tony Curtis, Victoria Principal, and Meredith Baxter. She then joined current boss Leslie Moonves (Hon.'06) at Lorimar Television, now part of Warner Bros., before following him to CBS.

Since joining the network in 1997, Tassler has helped transform CBS into the most-watched network for eight of the last nine seasons, with hits like *CSI*, *Survivor*, and *Two and a Half Men*. She was named president of entertainment in 2007.

Like Hammer, Tassler is honored to have made the *Hollywood Reporter* list, but says she doesn't put much stock in lists and rankings.

"Years ago, I was given the advice: keep your head down and do your job," she says. "That is pretty much how I operate. Success and failure are both imposters, and what really matters most is the work itself—not how I rank."

Walt Meissner (CFA'81), BU associate vice president for operations, met Tassler

Nina Tassler (CFA'79)



when she was an undergraduate and he was a grad student and remembers her as a talented actor. Her CFA education, he says, gave her an acute sense of what makes a good story.

"To be a great actor, you need to really identify and sense the character and how the character fits into that story—that's what she's talented at," says the former CFA dean ad interim, who named Tassler to his dean's advisory board. She currently serves as a University trustee. "She has great organizational and motivational skills and knows how to manage people and get everyone on the right path."

Tassler says her industry is becoming more gender-balanced. She credits Moonves for actively hiring women and cites the work of her close friend Geena Davis (CFA'79, Hon.'99), an Oscar-winning actor whose Institute on Gender in Media monitors gender issues in film and television.

"Women in leadership roles help create an environment where TV content reflects what impacts people's regular lives," Tassler says. "It also says that our

HISTORY CHANNEL GROWTH

Three things about Dubuc's BU experience stick out in her mind: crew, COM, and the *Daily Free Press*. The first two helped make "a really large community feel small." And one COM assistant professor in particular, Christopher Cakebread (COM'82, SED'00), made a lasting impression.

"He very early on saw a fire in me that I didn't see in myself," Dubuc recalls. "I think that's something that's invaluable for a student and is often something you probably don't realize until there's some hindsight and years behind you." They still keep in touch.

Dubuc says the independent student-run *Freep* gave her a sense of independence and an entrepreneurial spirit that prepared her for the working world well before graduation.

WGBH also proved a training ground. Dubuc first worked on male-dominated shows like *This Old House* before becoming a series producer on the Discovery Channel's *Discover Magazine*. It was only after meeting Abbe Raven (number four on the *Hollywood Reporter* list), president and CEO of A&E Television Networks and her current boss, that she began wondering what it would be like to work for a woman.

"Part of the reason I took the job was because I was curious about that," Dubuc says. "I'd always, from my internship days, gotten the advice: pick your boss, not the job." She started working for Raven's network in 1999 and became president of the History Channel and Lifetime Network in 2007. Since then, she has overseen the History Channel's growth from a top-20 cable network to number 5. The popularity of reality shows like *Pawn Stars* and *Swamp People* has added hundreds of thousands of viewers to the network in just the last year.

"She breathed new life into programming that was in search of some kind of identity and edge," Fiedler says.

So far, working for a woman hasn't been so bad, says Dubuc, joking that "we're not divorced yet."

In fact, she thinks more women should be running companies. Does that mean there will be a CEO Dubuc in the future? That fire is still burning. *Leslie Friday*



Nancy Dubuc (COM'91)

industry values what women bring to the table—in every aspect of the business—strength, leadership, multitasking, in many cases motherhood, complicated lives, and a strong sense of community."

Still, Tassler says, network television could benefit from more strong female characters, more women-directed films, and more shows run and written by women.

memoir, with Bennet Mermel, a concentration camp survivor.

SUSAN HEIDEMAN (CFA'72) of Boston, Mass., recently displayed her artwork in the solo exhibition *Animalmineralvegetable* at the Smith College Museum of Art in Northampton, Mass. Classmates can contact Susan at sheidema@smith.edu.

1973

LORRIE FINK (COM'73, SED'73) of Oakland, Calif., showed her paintings and drawings in the solo exhibition *WILD THINGS: The Unintended Landscape* last fall at El Cerrito City Hall in California. Her series depicted native and exotic plants she has encountered in wilderness areas, in vacant lots, and on the edges of cultivated gardens. See more of her work at www.lorriefink.com, or email Lorrie at lorrie@lorriefink.com.

TERRY SCHUMAKER (LAW'73) of Concord, N.H., was named to the New Hampshire Ballot Law Commission for a four-year term. Terry is an employment law attorney and mediator at the law firm Bernstein Shur in Manchester, N.H.

JAN TRAMONTANO (CAS'73) of Albany, N.Y., published her first novel, *Standing on the Corner of Lost and Found* (JMT Writing Services, 2011). "I have been a secret writer for most of my life," she writes. "I finally came out of the closet about 10 years ago. Through serendipity and the support of a writing group called WomanWords, everything changed. Sitting around my kitchen table with this group of talented writers, I began the writing life I always wanted and am working hard to make up for lost time." Email Jan at jan@jantramontano.com, or visit www.jantramontano.com.

1974

PHILIP BROWN (CFA'74) of Saint Johnsbury, Vt., was awarded the first Margaret H. Shurecliff Leadership Award by Area I of the Handbell Musicians of America for his efforts to promote the art of handbell musicianship. Philip is chair of the planning committee for the United Church of Christ Musicians Association national conference, which will take place in Vermont this summer. Learn more at www.uccma.org, or email Philip at stjjazz@sover.net.

ARTHUR CARAKATSANE (CAS'74) of Lynnfield, Mass., has been a member of the Mock Trial Committee of the Massachusetts Bar Association for more than 10 years. The committee administers the annual high school mock trial competition for 120 Bay State teams. This year's case focused on high school bullying;