

RowanAdvances

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\$1 million King gift funds TV graduate scholarships

The Rowan University Board of Trustees on Dec. 8 approved the naming of a new Master of Arts program for the late Diana King, a longtime friend and benefactor whose foundation pledged \$1 million to support student scholarships.

Launching in September 2022, the Diana King Master of Arts in Television Studies will prepare students for one of three career tracks in the expanding TV industry – screenwriting, critical writing about television, and an academic pathway towards terminal degrees in television studies. In addition, the Master's will be attractive to those teaching television and media studies at the K-12 or college level.

The Program

“At this time, ours is the only Television Studies master's degree program in the United States,” said Kim Akass, a professor in Rowan's Radio, Television & Film program through the Ric Edelman College of Communication & Creative Arts. “It is possible to study television at other institutions, but it's usually as part of a film or media MFA.”

For generations, Rowan's undergraduate RTF program has prepared students for exciting and rewarding careers, many of whom work or have worked at the highest levels in the business including on HBO's “Game of Thrones,” “Rizzoli & Isles” on TNT and on such films as “Iron Man 2” and “Transformers.”

Akass said there has long been demand for a master's level television studies program at Rowan, and the new M.A. has been in development for several years. She said a tremendous spike in TV watching during the ongoing pandemic, particularly while tens of millions of Americans were in lockdown or quarantined at home, made the need for such a program clearer.

She credited HBO with launching a trend in creating high quality, cable-based television original programming and they continue to do so today, along with such others as Amazon Prime Video, Netflix and Apple TV+.

All of which creates limitless opportunities for students with the right graduate degree.

“The medium is just getting bigger and bigger,” Akass said.

The Gift

Rowan named the new program to honor King, whose foundation is a longtime supporter of the University, especially of students and faculty in Edelman CCCA.

King, who passed away in 2019, established the Charles & Lucille King Family Foundation in 1988 to honor her parents, the late founders of King

World, a legendary TV distributor of such popular programs as “The Oprah Winfrey Show,” “Dr. Phil,” “Wheel of Fortune,” and “Rachel Ray.”

In its most recent gift to the University, the Foundation endowed the new Master’s degree program with \$1 million to support student scholarships. The Foundation also gifted \$1 million in 2002 to fund the Charles & Lucille King Family Foundation Professorial Chair in Radio, Television & Film, a seat currently held by Professor Keith Brand, and \$545,000 to support RTF scholarships, students impacted by Covid-19 and a new online tutoring program.

Edelman CCCA Dean Sanford Tweedie said the King Family Foundation’s generosity, which is endowed to support students and faculty in the college for generations, exemplifies their commitment to the future of the television industry and to public higher education.

“Naming the program for Diana King speaks to the promise of our new program. We are honored that an organization of such a high caliber is already committed to this endeavor,” Tweedie said.

The admissions committee will consider applications beginning February 15.