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WSRE Public Square Speakers Series presents Sonia Manzano on Sept. 13
Emmy Award winner and author to speak about children's television and how kids learn



PENSACOLA, Fla., July 19, 2016—Sonia Manzano has affected millions of parents and children since 1971 when she joined the cast of “Sesame Street,” where 44 years as Maria—while also an Emmy Award-winning writer for the show—afforded her a unique look at how children’s television has evolved. The WSRE Public Square Speakers Series will host a free lecture by Manzano about educational children’s television on Tuesday, Sept. 13, 7 p.m. in WSRE’s Jean & Paul Amos Performance Studio. Admission is free.

Manzano retired from “Sesame Street” last year as one of its most recognizable faces and a role model for generations of young girls and women. She had won 15 Emmy Awards for her writing on the show and was nominated twice for her role as Maria. In May, the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences honored her with the Emmy for Lifetime Achievement.

Raised in the South Bronx, her acting career was inspired by teachers who encouraged her to audition for the High School of the Performing Arts. That’s where she got her start, and while a junior on scholarship to Carnegie Mellon University, she starred in the original off-Broadway production of “Godspell.” Within a year, she joined the production of “Sesame Street,” where she eventually became the first leading Latina woman on TV and began writing scripts.

She also has written for the Peabody Award-winning children’s series, “Little Bill,” and for Sesame Workshop with the online parenting column, “Talking Out Loud.” Her 2004 children’s book, “No Dogs Allowed!,” was turned into a children’s musical and followed by “A Box Full of Kittens” in 2007. Other books include her first young adult novel, “The Revolution of Evelyn Serrano,” in 2014 and both her memoir, “Becoming Maria: Love and Chaos in the South Bronx,” and picture book, “Miracle on 133rd Street,” released in 2015.

This Public Square Speakers Series presentation from one of the most knowledgeable people in children's television will include Manzano's thoughts on the way children are taught cognitive skills, the impact of how children are depicted on television and how 9/11 affected children's educational curriculum on "Sesame Street."

This event is sponsored in-part by Gulf Power Company and has been scheduled in conjunction with WSRE's participation in American Graduate—public media's long-term commitment to supporting community-based solutions to help keep youth on the track to a high school diploma and beyond.

Admission is free. Reservations are encouraged and can be made at wsre.org/speakers.

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About WSRE

WSRE is a Public Broadcasting Service member station, locally owned and licensed to the Pensacola State College Board of Trustees operating as a service of Pensacola State College. WSRE has served the needs of Gulf Coast communities through programming, educational services and outreach since 1967. WSRE produces, acquires and distributes programs that address local interests and reflect the diverse cultural, political, geographic and demographic characteristics of its audience. WSRE Educational Services connects teachers, parents, caregivers and children to PBS' rich educational resources. Learn more at wsre.org.

About PBS

The Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) is a private, nonprofit corporation, founded in 1969, whose members are America's public TV stations—noncommercial, educational licensees that operate 354 PBS member stations and serve all 50 states, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam and American Samoa. Of the 162 licensees, 85 are community organizations, 52 are colleges/universities, 20 are state authorities and five are local educational or municipal authorities. Teachers of children from pre-K through 12th grade turn to PBS for digital content and services that help bring classroom lessons to life. PBS' premier children's TV programming and its website, pbskids.org, help inspire nurturing curiosity and love of learning in children.

About CPB

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), a private, nonprofit corporation created by Congress in 1967, is the steward of the federal government's investment in public broadcasting. It helps support the operations of more than 1,400 locally-owned and -operated public television and radio stations nationwide and is the largest single source of funding for research, technology and program development for public radio, television and related online services.

