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***I LOVE LUCY*, TRAILBLAZING 1950S SHOW THAT SET THE STANDARD FOR TV COMEDIES, TO RECEIVE TELEVISION ACADEMY'S INAUGURAL LEGACY AWARD**

Tribute to Landmark Comedy Series that Continues to Influence Generations 75 Years After Its Premiere Set for Sept. 6



Photos courtesy of CBS Broadcasting Inc.

(LOS ANGELES – Aug. 25, 2026) — The Television Academy today announced *I Love Lucy* will be the first series honored with its newly created Legacy Award, presented to a television program that's made a profound and generational impact on audiences and remains relevant to society, culture and the industry today.

A special Emmys® tribute to the remarkably still-popular comedy series is scheduled for the second night of the 78th Emmy Awards on Sunday, Sept. 6.



Photos courtesy of CBS Broadcasting Inc.

Premiering on CBS in 1951, *I Love Lucy* became an unprecedented ratings juggernaut and the first sitcom to top the Nielsen charts. Its extraordinary popularity helped revolutionize television through its modernization of the sitcom format, groundbreaking technical innovations and enormous cultural influence. The show also transformed Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz into one of Hollywood's most powerful couples, giving them unprecedented creative and

business control over their work through their company, Desilu Productions.

Arnaz and the *I Love Lucy* production team pioneered the use of the three-camera filming format before a live studio audience, setting a production standard that continues to influence television comedies today. It featured the first dual ethnicity couple on network TV and broke barriers by showing the first pregnant woman on screen. The famous 1953 episode "Lucy Goes to the Hospital," in which Lucy gives birth, drew 44 million viewers — more than the television audience for President Dwight D. Eisenhower's inauguration the following day.

To maintain creative control, Ball and Arnaz took a substantial pay cut in exchange for full ownership of the show's negatives. This decision allowed them to replay episodes, singlehandedly inventing television syndication and the blueprint for residuals. The show's sharp writing, physical comedy, and authentic portrayal of marriage and family helped redefine the sitcom genre, while Ball's groundbreaking success as a female television star and producer paved the way for generations of performers and creators.

During its original run, *I Love Lucy* was nominated for a total of 20 Emmy Awards winning two Emmys for Best Situation Comedy Series with Arnaz accepting the honors as executive producer. Ball won two Emmy Awards for Best Actress in a Comedy Series for the show (and two Emmys in the late 1960s for her work on *The Lucy Show*). Ball was inducted into the Television Academy Hall of Fame in 1984 and received the Governors Award in 1989. Arnaz was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 1991.

More than seven decades after its debut, *I Love Lucy* remains one of the most beloved and influential series in television history and is available to viewers today on Paramount+ and Pluto.

"*I Love Lucy* truly helped define what television could be," said Cris Abrego, chair of the Television Academy. "Beyond its place in television and cultural history as one of the medium's most beloved shows, its creative ambition, technical innovation and groundbreaking approach to the business of television established a blueprint that continues to influence our industry 75 years later. We are proud to celebrate a series whose impact is so enduring as the first recipient of the Television Academy's Legacy Award."

The Academy's Board of Governors selected the Legacy Award honoree from candidates recommended by its Special Awards Committee.

The 78th Emmy Awards will be held over three nights, Sept. 5, 6 and 14.

The Sept. 14 ceremony, hosted by Emmy-winner Mariska Hargitay, will be

broadcast live on NBC from the Peacock Theater at L.A. LIVE at 8 p.m. ET/5 p.m. PT and will stream live and on demand on Peacock. Nights one and two will be edited into a single broadcast, the 78th Emmy Awards (Creative Arts), airing Saturday, Sept. 12, on FXX at 8 p.m. ET/PT, available to stream on Hulu the next day.

The 78th Emmy Awards are made possible by Television Academy corporate partners: Decoy Wines, FIJI Water, Franciacorta, Ketel One Vodka, LG, People, Raising Cane's, The Ritz-Carlton and United Airlines.



About the Television Academy

The Television Academy strives to shape and advance the dynamic television landscape; cultivate a diverse, inclusive and accessible professional community; and advocate for the television industry while capturing the spirit of a new generation of content creators and industry professionals. Through innovative programs, publications and events, the Academy and its Foundation foster and empower storytellers. The Academy also celebrates those who excel in the industry recognizing their achievements through awards and accolades, including the renowned Emmy® Award. Membership in the Academy is open to working professionals in the television industry. For more information, please visit [TelevisionAcademy.com](https://www.televisionacademy.com).

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