

Pamela Jones, JD '86

# Guardian of Content

Technology advances transform entertainment law field

**B**efore she ever opened a law book, Pamela Jones, JD '86, knew what kind of law she'd practice.

Her best friend growing up in Westport, Conn., was Pamela Sue Martin, who starred as TV's "Nancy Drew" in the late 1970s and Fallon on the 1980s hit "Dynasty."

"I visited her in Hollywood one time and I asked her, 'Who runs the film business?' She replied, 'The lawyers do.' That's when I decided to focus on entertainment law," Jones said. Her grandmother was one of the first female lawyers in the U.S., graduating from New York Law School in 1894.

Jones has worked in many areas of entertainment law, mostly in the TV and music fields, where the law must keep up with technological advances, such as streaming media. She has contributed to several law books on the topic of counseling content providers in the digital age and is a founding member of the entertainment arts and sports law section of the New York State Bar Association.

Jones said her skills lie in drafting contracts that protect intellectual property. She is sharing those skills as an adjunct professor at the law school this spring, teaching entertainment law, a course she previously taught at New York Law School.

The solo practitioner serves as outside counsel to A&E Networks, where she negotiates complex music publishing agreements for audio content to complement A&E's shows. She also represents Al Roker Entertainment and Peacock Productions, a division of NBCUniversal.

Over the years, her roles have included reviewing commercials for deceptive or misleading content; helping to craft the legal definitions of new media "before we can see it, feel it and touch it"; and handling risk management agreements

for live specials, such as "The Raising of the Titanic."

Despite the popularity of time shifting and binge watching of programs, live TV has become a robust area that will remain at the core of TV's strength, according to Jones. She noted that ratings soar for live sporting events and programs featuring daredevils like aerialist Nik Wallenda.

Another area in which she works is talent and program negotiations. She represented the creator of the History Channel's "Chasing Tail" in his negotiations with Left Field Pictures, from his "sizzle reel" pitch to the sale of the show to the network.

Previously, she managed the business

and legal affairs departments for BBC Worldwide Americas, CBS Entertainment (East Coast), and MTV's Logo Channel. She also managed the music publishing business for the CBS Television Network and the Martha Stewart Living TV group before it was restructured.

"Martha is a pioneer with incredible instincts, and she will have her place in TV history," Jones said.

A new area in which she is immersed involves royalties and secondary copyright, specifically as they apply to cable or satellite providers. She noted that retransmission rights have become a major source of revenue for broadcast networks (ABC, CBS, Fox, NBC), which are seeking compensation from cable operators who carry them.

"This is important because their ratings are down as viewers turn to cable and alternate 'over-the-top' viewing choices, such as Netflix," she explained.

—Janet Waldman



Pam Jones, JD '86, specializes in entertainment law.