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WCTE Premieres *Stories from the Stage*

COOKEVILLE, TN – WCTE Upper Cumberland PBS in partnership with the Cumberland County Playhouse are proud to announce that Tennessee storytellers will be in the spotlight this June as ***Stories from the Stage***, the **WORLD Channel** original series that features ordinary people telling extraordinary stories, airs a national 24-hour binge-a-thon of episodes this month. The public television series features masterful storytellers from every walk of life, highlighting both our differences and our shared sense of humanity. Two episodes during the marathon, *Tennessee Backroads* and a new episode ***Rocky Top Remembers***, will feature storytellers from the Volunteer State. The *Stories from the Stage* marathon begins on WORLD Channel on Saturday, June 22, at 6 p.m. and runs through Sunday, June 23, at 6 pm CST. ***Rocky Top Remembers*** will premiere on the first night of the marathon event at 9 p.m. CST.

New episode ***Rocky Top Remembers*** brings *Stories from the Stage* to Tennessee where, with a mix of Southern charm and candor, storytellers will reflect on topics ranging from breaking social barriers (as Morris Irby Jr., of Cookeville, recounts being the first Black baseball player at Tennessee Tech University and the cost of being a trailblazer) to family matters (as Harrison Young, also of Cookeville, details his decision to follow a parent's passion for carnival games and Sparta's Sandra Lewis remembers when she got an important lesson on the pecking order in her family). This episode will air on WCTE channel 22.1 Thursday, June 27 at 7 p.m. CST

On Sunday, June 23 at 6 a.m. CST the marathon returns to Tennessee with *Tennessee Backroads* which features 90-year-old Ruth Phipps, of Maryville, recounting how she and her mentally-challenged daughter helped change their neighbors' ideas on love, inclusion and humanity in 1960s Tennessee; Crossville barber James Everitt's details how he searched for love and got a surprise; and Cookeville's Cynthia Putnam remembers how daily viewings of *Mr. Rogers* helped her through childhood growing pains.

In addition to the broadcast marathon, viewers can also catch a 24-hour livestream of the binge event on WORLD Channel [and](#) *Stories from the Stage* Facebook pages; on both sites, users can connect with series hosts, humorists and storytellers **Theresa Okokon** and **Wes Hazard**, as they comment *live* during primetime episodes.

With more than 40 episodes, the *Stories from the Stage* binge-a-thon will give viewers a chance to catch up on the series dedicated to bringing real stories — whether humorous or poignant, commonplace or astonishing — to American homes. Each 30-minute episode spotlights a trio of raconteurs — some experienced, some novices — sharing short anecdotes related to the episode’s unifying theme. Love, loss, family, food, immigration and celebrations are among the topics explored in episodes including “Lost & Found,” “Welcome to the Neighborhood,” “It’s All Relative” and “Holidays: The Good, The Bad.” Although each story is unique, audiences everywhere will be able to connect and relate with storytellers from a mosaic of backgrounds, ages, cultures and abilities.

Stories from the Stage is a collaboration of WORLD Channel, WGBH Events and Massmouth. Showcasing the communal art form of storytelling, the series reflects WORLD Channel’s commitment to bringing fresh and compelling voices to public media audiences on all platforms, while reflecting the diversity of modern America and the global community.

WCTE has served the Upper Cumberland for more than 40 years as the regions premier storyteller and is the only television station in a 75-mile radius of Cookeville, TN., making it a strategic partner in education, health services, government, arts and music. WCTE is a 501(c) 3, and is owned and operated by the Upper Cumberland Broadcast Council. WCTE is one of only 350 PBS member stations nationwide.

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