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The WNET Group's *Pomp Under the Circumstances: A Virtual Commencement* Brings Graduation Ceremonies Home to Class of 2020 This Month on Public Television (check local listings)

Star-Studded lineup features Tom Hanks, Al Gore, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Christiane Amanpour, Tim Cook, Lester Holt, Jeb Bush, Norman Lear, Ben Platt, Brené Brown, Nicholas Kristof, Bryan Stevenson and others

Now streaming at thirteen.org/graduation

(New York, NY – June 16, 2020) Across the country, thousands of high school and college graduation ceremonies have been cancelled as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This has deprived the Class of 2020 of a rite of passage and experiencing a traditional commencement address. To help inspire students and provide hope for the future, The WNET Group presents ***Pomp Under the Circumstances: A Virtual Commencement***, premiering nationwide June 2020 on public television (check local listings). In the New York metro area, the special premieres Wednesday, June 24 at 8 p.m. on NJTV and WLIW21 and Saturday, June 27 at 1 p.m. on THIRTEEN. The program is also streaming now at thirteen.org/graduation.

Combining the familiar sights of graduations past with video conferencing, our new collective reality, ***Pomp Under the Circumstances: A Virtual Commencement*** features inspirational messages from celebrities, journalists and sports figures, offering graduates insight and wisdom about how to navigate their lives in these next few crucial years. Greetings and commencement addresses include **Henry Louis Gates, Jr.**, Harvard professor and host of PBS's *Finding Your Roots*; **Nicholas Kristof**, The New York Times columnist and author of "Tightrope;" **Christiane Amanpour**, CNN chief international anchor and host of PBS's *Amanpour and Company*; **Tim Cook**, CEO of Apple; **Brené Brown**, research professor and author of "Dare to Lead;" **Lee C. Bollinger**, president of Columbia University; **Ben Platt**, Tony Award-winning actor and singer; **Bryan Stevenson**, lawyer and executive director of Equal Justice Initiative; **Norman Lear**, legendary TV writer and producer; Governor **Mike DeWine** of Ohio; **Paula Boggs**, musician, lawyer and Army Airborne Veteran; **Tom Hanks**, Academy Award-winning actor; **John Rocco**, children's book author and illustrator; **Margaret Hoover**, host of PBS's *Firing Line with Margaret Hoover*; **Jeb Bush**, former Governor of Florida; **Lester Holt**, anchor of *NBC Nightly News* and

Dateline; **Al Gore**, former Vice President of the United States; **Jill Ellis**, former head coach of the U.S. Women's National Soccer Team; **Steve Gleason**, former NFL player and ALS awareness advocate; and **Damian Woetzel**, president of The Juilliard School.

The one-hour special features remarks from valedictorians, class presidents and other student leaders from high schools and colleges across the country, among them American University, Rice University, Barnard College, Ohio State University, University of Texas at Austin, Columbia University, Emory University, Miami University, Princeton University, and Wright State University.

Pomp Under the Circumstances: A Virtual Commencement also includes documentary shorts capturing high school seniors' reflections about graduation and their future and concludes with a performance of Bolero Juilliard by students working in their homes and finding a creative response to the challenges of the coronavirus, comprised of hundreds of video and audio clips.

Pomp Under the Circumstances: A Virtual Commencement is a production of THIRTEEN PRODUCTIONS LLC for WNET. The program is distributed nationally by WNET. David Horn is executive producer. John Walker is senior producer. Maureen Coyle and Julie Leonard are producers.

Funding for ***Pomp Under the Circumstances: A Virtual Commencement*** is provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

About WNET

WNET is America's flagship PBS station: parent company of New York's [THIRTEEN](#) and [WLIW21](#) and operator of [NJTV](#), the statewide public media network in New Jersey. Through its new [ALL ARTS](#) multi-platform initiative, its broadcast channels, three cable services (THIRTEEN PBSKids, Create and World) and online streaming sites, WNET brings quality arts, education and public affairs programming to more than five million viewers each month. WNET produces and presents a wide range of acclaimed PBS series, including **Nature**, **Great Performances**, **American Masters**, **PBS NewsHour Weekend**, and the nightly interview program **Amanpour and Company**. In addition, WNET produces numerous documentaries, children's programs, and local news and cultural offerings, as well as multi-platform initiatives addressing poverty and climate. Through THIRTEEN Passport and WLIW Passport, station members can stream new and archival THIRTEEN, WLIW and PBS programming anytime, anywhere.

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