

Paige Kimble ends accomplished tenure as director of Scripps National Spelling Bee

Competition's profile, prestige grew under her guidance

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CINCINNATI – Paige P. Kimble, who helped guide the Scripps National Spelling Bee to national prominence and prestige, is stepping down from her role as executive director.

Kimble's departure caps a 40-year association with the Bee that began in 1980 when, as young Paige Pipkin, she placed second in the competition. The following year at the age of 13, she was crowned national champion when she correctly spelled the word "sarcophagus" to win the 54th Scripps National Spelling Bee.

"Paige Kimble leaves an indelible impression on the Scripps National Spelling Bee," said Adam Symson, president and chief executive officer of The E. W. Scripps Company. "She took competitive spelling to new heights and transformed a competition for school children into an American national treasure."

Kimble began her professional career with the Scripps National Spelling Bee in 1991, joining the program's two-person, full-time Bee staff not long after graduating from college.

Kimble soon rose to a leadership role and in 1998 was named director of the program. She guided all aspects of the competition, including development of educational and contest materials, licensing and promotional opportunities, cultivation of the program's network of local and regional sponsors, and coordination of production for the competition's national television broadcast. In 2013, Kimble was named executive director.

Under her leadership, the Bee rose in prominence and academic relevance for elementary school-aged children across the United States and abroad. Nearly 25,000 U.S. schools enroll each year, qualifying their students to compete in 250 local and regional spelling bees. Winners of the local regional bees, which are administered by participating sponsors, go on to compete in the national finals.

The Bee's profile as a nationally broadcast competition on ESPN, which has aired coverage of the competition since 1993, also grew on Kimble's watch. The Bee's full-time staff has grown to 15, and more than 50 part-time contributors work year-round to sustain the program's academic integrity and help administer the national competition during "Bee Week."

"It goes without saying that the Bee has been a huge part of my life for about as long as I can remember," Kimble said. "Stepping away from my leadership role is

one of the most important decisions I have ever made, but the time is right for me to explore new opportunities. The Bee will always have a special place in my heart, and I stand ready to help the program in any way I can.”

Scripps has begun a national search for Kimble’s successor.

About the Scripps National Spelling Bee

The Scripps National Spelling Bee is the nation’s largest and longest-running educational program. The purpose of the Scripps National Spelling Bee is to help students improve their spelling, increase their vocabularies, learn concepts and develop correct English usage that will help them all their lives.

Visit spellingbee.com for more information about the Scripps National Spelling Bee, which is administered on a not-for-profit basis by The E.W. Scripps Company.

About Scripps

[The E.W. Scripps Company](http://www.ewscripps.com) (NASDAQ: SSP) is one of the nation’s leading media companies, focused on creating a better-informed world through a portfolio of news, information and entertainment brands. Scripps will become the nation’s largest television broadcaster, reaching 73% of U.S. television households through 108 stations in 76 markets, pending regulatory approval of its acquisition of ION Media. Committed to serving local audiences through objective journalism, Scripps operates 60 local TV stations in 42 markets. It is creating a national TV networks business that will include ION Media’s entertainment programming, Newsy’s straightforward headline and documentary news content and the five popular Katz broadcast networks including Bounce and Court TV. Scripps runs an award-winning investigative reporting newsroom in Washington, D.C., and is the longtime steward of the Scripps National Spelling Bee. Founded in 1878, Scripps has held for decades to the motto, “Give light and the people will find their own way.”

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