



For immediate release:
November 9, 2023

Rudy Mancke, celebrated naturalist and host of SCETV's "NatureScene" and SC Public Radio's "NatureNotes," passes away

COLUMBIA, S.C. – South Carolina ETV and SC Public Radio (SCETV) mourn the loss of Rudy Mancke. The renowned naturalist, teacher and television personality, known for his iconic role as the host of **NatureScene** and **NatureNotes**, passed away Nov. 7 at the age of 78.

Rudy Mancke brought the wonders of the natural world into South Carolina homes with the debut of **NatureScene** on SCETV in 1978, along with co-creator Beryl Dakers and later, Jim Welch. The show captivated audiences for 25 years, concluding in 2003. It later gained national recognition, making it one of the first television programs to take viewers on expeditions to learn about a diverse range of plants and animals. **NatureScene** became an invaluable educational tool, serving people of all ages, both inside and outside the classroom. Rudy's unconventional field trips and enthusiasm for nature shaped the ecological perspective of countless enthusiasts.

Throughout his career, Mancke dedicated himself to serving the citizens of South Carolina. His contributions extended to roles at the South Carolina State Museum, SCETV and the University of South Carolina. As an educator, Mancke's impact was immeasurable as he helped develop programming for K-12 students and professional development courses for hundreds of South Carolina educators.

In recent years, Mancke continued to share his knowledge and passion for the natural world with daily **NatureNotes** segments on SC Public Radio. These one-minute snippets touched on a wide array of topics related to the natural world, from the intricate workings of ecosystems to South Carolina's unique flora and fauna, and beautiful sites worth exploring. His field trips, broadcast nationally, earned him a legion of dedicated viewers who were inspired by his insights and reverence for the natural world.

Before gracing television screens, Mancke served as the natural history curator at the South Carolina State Museum. He was also a dedicated high school biology and geology teacher. Mancke's academic journey led him to a degree from Wofford College, graduate studies at the University of South Carolina and honorary doctorate degrees from the College of Charleston, Winthrop College and Wofford College.

Mancke's commitment to resource conservation has been recognized with special awards from the National Wildlife Federation and the Garden Club of America. Earlier this year, he was honored at the SC Public Radio 50th Anniversary Luncheon for his remarkable work. His legacy will continue to shine as he is posthumously inducted into the 2024 South Carolina Hall of Fame in January 2024.

Mancke's love for the natural world, his educational contributions and his presence on SCETV have left an indelible mark on South Carolina and beyond. His memory will live on through the continued exploration and appreciation of the natural world he held so dear.

QUOTES

"Our hearts are heavy as we mourn the loss of Rudy Mancke, a beloved figure whose passion for the natural world touched the lives of countless individuals. Rudy's boundless enthusiasm, deep knowledge and dedication to environmental education have left an enduring legacy that will continue to inspire future generations. His impact on our organization and the people of South Carolina is immeasurable. We are profoundly grateful for his contributions and honored to have been part of his remarkable journey. Rudy's



memory will forever remind us of the beauty and wonder of the world around us. He leaves us to cherish his beautiful memory and will forever be missed." **–SCETV President and CEO Adrienne Fairwell**

"Rudy Mancke was not just a host, not just a teacher, but a true steward of our natural world. His work on **NatureScene** and **NatureNotes** epitomized his dedication to sharing the wonders of South Carolina's diverse ecosystems. His legacy extends beyond the screen, airwaves and classrooms, as he instilled a deep love and respect for our environment in all who had the privilege of learning from him. Rudy will be remembered not only as a great educator but as a force for conservation, reminding us of the importance of protecting and cherishing the beauty that surrounds us." **–ETV Endowment of South Carolina Executive Director Coby Cartrette Hennecy**

"Rudy Mancke's indomitable spirit and boundless curiosity have left an indelible mark on the hearts of our team and our viewers. His enduring presence on **NatureScene** and **NatureNotes** served as a beacon of inspiration, reminding us of the incredible wonders of the natural world right outside our doors. Rudy was more than a host; he was our guide and teacher, a storyteller who brought ecosystems to life and made them accessible to all. He was also a lover of books and a student of literature who had the soul of a poet. The world is a better place because he was in it." **–SCETV Producer Beryl Dakers**

"Rudy Mancke was a cherished voice on our airwaves and an educator whose passion for the environment resonated with our radio audience. His daily **NatureNotes** segments provided a captivating window into the natural world, fostering a deep connection between our listeners and the beauty of South Carolina's landscapes. Rudy's storytelling and insights were unparalleled, and his contributions enriched our radio content in immeasurable ways. We will continue to honor his memory by carrying forward his commitment to spreading the wonder of the natural world through soundwaves." **–Director of SC Public Radio Sean Birch**

About South Carolina ETV and Public Radio

South Carolina ETV and Public Radio (SCETV) is the state's public educational broadcasting network. SCETV amplifies South Carolina voices, provides educational experiences and strengthens communities, while working toward creating a stronger, more connected and informed South Carolina. In addition to airing local programs, such as *Carolina Classrooms*, *Making It Grow*, and *This Week in South Carolina*, SCETV also presents multiple programs to regional and national audiences, including *By The River*, *After Action*, *Reconnecting Roots*, *Reel South*, *Somewhere South*, *Yoga in Practice* and *How She Rolls*. In addition, SC Public Radio produces the national radio production, *Chamber Music from Spoleto Festival USA*.

Media Contact:

Landon Masters
media@scetv.org
803-737-3337