

TELEVISION



The final season of "The Oprah Winfrey Show" begins Monday.

Viewers are Oprah's focus during 25th, last season

By Caryn Rousseau
The Associated Press

CHICAGO - The 25th and final season of "The Oprah Winfrey Show" starts airing Monday and the talk show host says she plans to focus on the people she thinks are responsible for the show's success: the viewers.

"This year you will see lots of surprises for other people, dreams coming true for other people, really honoring the essence of what has made this show work for the past 25 years, and that's the viewer," Winfrey said in an interview with the Associated Press.

"The last season is a celebration of the past 24 years. For me, it is about holding a place of reverence and honor for the people who made this possible for me: That would be the viewers."

Harpo Productions has released a schedule highlighting the first week of new shows, but Monday's season premiere remains "top secret" with only hints of celebrity guests and a surprise musical performance.

During the remainder of that first week, Winfrey will host country music stars The Judds and revisit the city of Williamson, W.Va., where she filmed a town hall episode about AIDS in 1987. During a live Friday show, she will announce her first book club selection in nearly a year.

So what else can fans and long-time watchers expect over this season? A-list celebrities? More makeovers? An outdoor extravaganza similar to Winfrey's show that shut down Chicago's Michigan Avenue last season?

"I would anticipate that they're going to pull out all the stops," said Bill Carroll, an expert on the daytime television market for Katz Television in New York. "If any

production team has that ability ... certainly the Oprah folks, the folks at Harpo, have proved that over the years."

Winfrey's departure from a daily talk show on broadcast television is akin to host Johnny Carson's departure from "The Tonight Show," Carroll said.

But this farewell isn't a final goodbye. Winfrey is set to start her Oprah Winfrey Network, or OWN, on cable Jan. 1. The end of "The Oprah Winfrey Show" will be featured on that network with "Behind the Scenes: Oprah's 25th Season," a one-hour series giving viewers a look at the making of the last season of Winfrey's talk show.

Winfrey describes her show, which is syndicated to 145 countries, as having a cultural influence on her viewers around the world.

"I'm learning more about that and being more accepting of what that has been as I look over these 25 years and prepare to go into the last season — hearing stories about how the show has affected people's lives over the years," Winfrey said.

Last November, when Winfrey made a live emotional statement announcing she would end her show after a quarter-century, she touched on her final season, too, saying, "We are going to knock your socks off."

Kathleen Rooney, author of "Reading With Oprah: The Book Club that Changed America," said for many Winfrey fans, come Monday, it won't be the beginning of the end.

"It's not 'goodbye.' It's 'see you over here in a minute,'" Rooney said. "There's a generation of people who don't know what it's like to live in a world without Oprah — and they're not going to find out anytime soon."

Book a holistic approach to living to century mark

By Joana Suleiman
Special to The Washington Examiner

Our population is growing older at the fastest pace in history. These demographics, combined with increasing life span, make it necessary to re-evaluate how society thinks about and plans for old age. Based on groundbreaking scientific research of the longest-living people on Earth, a new book, "Happy to 102," lays out all the factors that affect not only how long we live, but how well we live.

Kathy N. Johnson, a certified geriatric care manager, James H. Johnson, a licensed clinical psychologist and author, and Lily Sarafan, a corporate executive and advocate in the senior care industry, wrote this book, which looks well beyond caregivers and emphasizes not only proper nutrition and exercise, but also sociability, independence, mental challenge and sense of purpose.

"The mental side is absolutely key," Sarafan said. "Maintaining healthy cognitive function will help you focus your lifestyle on longevity, not just life span."

"Happy to 102" is very accessible to people of all ages.



Sarafan

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"In fact, the earlier you start taking control of your health, the less time your immune system will have to spend fighting disease in your later years," Sarafan said. She added that even though there is a lot of push to eat right and exercise, many people still don't fully understand the link between waist size and quality of life.

The book also does a great job of pointing out the benefits of in-home senior care as opposed to facility-based care.

"Nine out of 10 seniors would rather live at home than anywhere else," Sarafan said. "However, it all starts with the individual. Seniors need to learn and accept the best options out there."

Forrest Scogin, chairman of the American Psychology Association's Committee on Aging, said in the book

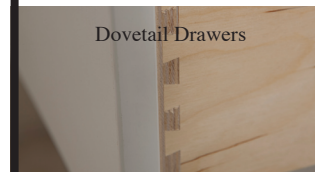


there is a need to incorporate content on aging into all levels of schools' curricula. A 2005 study by the School of Family and Consumer Sciences at Illinois State University reveals students' negative attitudes toward older adults significantly decreased and their positive attitudes increased after taking a course on aging and family.

The book goes on to explain that empathy for seniors includes understanding that even simple daily tasks can become extremely difficult if you become frail. The consequences of a fall can be disastrous.

"This is why we urge everyone (young and old) to incorporate walking and stretching into their daily life so they can help the body maintain circulation, balance and bone density," Sarafan said. Exercise not only helps the heart, bones and muscle, but it alleviates depression and can slow Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia by improving blood flow to the brain.

"Happy to 102" reminds readers that independent living does not necessarily mean doing everything yourself. It means being in control of how and when things are done. From birth to old age, we live and thrive in interdependent communities; there is no justifiable reason for modifying our lifestyle drastically just because we require some personal assistance in our later years.



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