



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Wilt J. Hildenbrand Jr. Memorial Award Recognizes Rama Assaf-Smith  
with Rising Leader Award**

*Award also contributes grant to Special Operations Warrior Foundation  
to support surviving children of military personnel*

**EXTON, Pa. — (September 30, 2021) —** The Society of Cable Telecommunications Engineers (SCTE) and SCTE Foundation today announced the winner of the Wilt J. Hildenbrand Jr. Rising Leader Award is Rama Assaf-Smith, Senior Director, Engineering Operations, for Comcast. The Hildenbrand scholarship will also support the Special Operations Warrior Foundation.

As winner of the Wilt J. Hildenbrand Jr. Rising Leader Award, Rama Assaf-Smith is recognized as a rising cable telecommunications star under the age of 40. As a part of the Comcast team for seven years, she leads a team of data scientists, analysts and engineers who are focused on improving Comcast's core residential product portfolio. Rama is highly regarded among her colleagues for her leadership skills, engineering strength, data knowledge, positive customer interactions and her role as an advocate for under-represented engineers.

"Leadership and courage are the hallmarks of those we recognize this year," said Mark Hess, president of the SCTE Foundation and senior vice president, business and industry affairs for Comcast Technology Solutions. "We're fortunate that we can recognize the commitment and expertise of such leaders as Rama Assaf-Smith and honored to be able to support such a worthy organization as the Special Operations Warrior Foundation. We are very appreciative to the YAS Foundation for paving the way to commemorate Wilt's legacy in this way."

"Wilt Hildenbrand was a true visionary who represented selflessness and commitment to an entire industry. It is fitting that as we build the workforce of the future, we recognize those individuals who are paving the way forward both through their sacrifices and through their skills and dedication," said Rouzbeh Yassini, PhD, of the YAS Foundation.

"We are truly thankful for the generosity of SCTE," said Major General (Retired) Clay Hutmacher, President and CEO of Special Operations Warrior Foundation. "Their impactful \$20,000 contribution will make a tangible difference in the lives of the surviving children, and families we serve. We also congratulate Rama for her fine achievements," said Clay.

The Hildenbrand award and scholarship fund was established in 2019 to honor the career and legacy of Wilt J. Hildenbrand, Jr., a technology pioneer and industry legend who passed away

unexpectedly in 2018. The \$200,000, five-year campaign was seeded by an initial donation of \$40,000 from the YAS Foundation. Hildenbrand's career included four decades with Cablevision. Wilt joined the company as chief engineer in 1976 and ultimately became executive vice president of technology and engineering. Among his innovations were Cablevision's rollouts of 100 Mbps residential broadband, downloadable security for digital video services, and cloud-based navigation for legacy set-top boxes.

Rama Assaf-Smith will be recognized as winner of the Wilt J. Hildenbrand Jr. Rising Leader Award at the SCTE Awards Ceremony, taking place during the SCTE® Cable-Tec Expo® Virtual Experience on October 13, 2021, 11:30 am – 1:00 pm EDT.

### **About the SCTE Foundation**

The SCTE Foundation is a non-profit organization that is dedicated to ensuring the continued ability of a diverse workforce to positively impact the community, including in times of crisis. Using funds contributed by individual and corporate donors, the Foundation supports programs that: increase technical workforce skills; attract women, minorities and members of the armed forces to cable engineering careers; promote STEM activities among young people; and underpin cable workforce support for essential communication links that benefit the community in the face of natural or manmade disasters. For more information about the SCTE Foundation, please visit <http://foundation.scte.org>.

### **About SCTE**

SCTE is envisioning the future of connectivity, today. Through technological leadership and innovation, SCTE has served as the applied science leader for the cable telecommunications industry for more than five decades. As a not for profit, member organization, SCTE moves member companies forward through continuous training for the workforce of tomorrow and by putting leaders into the conversations that matter. SCTE is the force behind the annual SCTE Cable-Tec Expo®, the largest cable telecommunications and technology tradeshow in the Americas. SCTE is a subsidiary of CableLabs®. More at [www.scte.org](http://www.scte.org).

### **About the YAS Foundation**

The YAS Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Dr. Rouzbeh Yassini, is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental, non-religious organization with a Board of Trustees. The foundation continues to focus on expanding and strengthening future generations of global leaders. <https://www.planetbroadband.com/foundation/>

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