

Outreach lauds Cagney & Lacey's social impact

BY RANDI SCHMELZER

LOS ANGELES: To mark the 25th anniversary of *Cagney & Lacey*, a new book and DVD set are being promoted with outreach to the groups that helped keep the pioneering detective series on TV.

When *Cagney & Lacey* first aired on CBS in 1982, its real-life story lines were a dramatic departure from the era's typical *Love Boat* fare, said Penny Sansevieri, principal of San Diego-based Author Marketing Experts (AME). The PR agency is handling *Cagney & Lacey ... and Me - An Inside Hollywood Story*, by Barney Rosenzweig, the series' executive producer (and husband of "Cagney," Sharon Gless).

The show featured intelligent, fully dressed female cops, and touched upon controversial topics such as breast cancer, date rape, job discrimination, and abortion.

"Ironically and sadly, the issues it addressed so many years ago are still relevant," Sansevieri said, adding that AME is "reaching out to women's groups with the mes-

sage of the book, and what the show did for TV and for women."

Corresponding with the book's pre-Mother's Day release on May 8, the effort includes e-mail and blog outreach to support groups dealing with cancer, rape, domestic violence, and other issues.

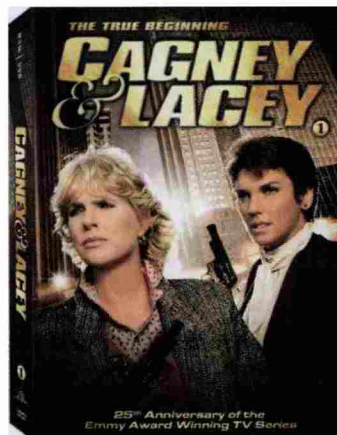
In addition to traditional media relations, efforts - some in conjunction with Fox/MGM Home Entertainment - include a Muse-

um of Television & Radio panel discussion on women in media and the show's legacy. The concurrently launching four-DVD set features the series' entire first season, as well as a documentary with commentary from Gloria Steinem.

Cagney & Lacey "really had a major impact at a critical time in the feminist movement," said Katherine Spillar, EVP of the Feminist Majority Foundation and executive editor of *Ms.* magazine. On-screen, the women "provided terrific role models," she said. "The fight goes on. I'm interested to see how the shows are going to stand up 25 years later."

The series had a history of inspiring action off-screen, as well. When the show was cancelled at the end of the 1982-83 season due to low ratings, a grassroots letter-writing campaign, aided by *Ms.*, helped bring it back through 1988.

Rosenzweig and his team "encouraged women to write in if they loved the show," Sansevieri said. "They literally flooded the local papers with mail." ■



The entire first season of the show will be featured in the four-DVD set

