

*Cable Center Hall of Fame 2017 Inductees*

# Cablefax Daily™

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What the Industry Reads First

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The Cable Center holds its 20th Hall of Fame celebration this year, inducting six trailblazers to its 2017 class. This year's class includes Cox Communications COO Jill Campbell, Liberty Global CEO Mike Fries, Scripps Networks Interactive pres/CEO Ken Lowe, Discovery Communications pres/CEO David Zaslav, NBCU CEO Steve Burke and, for the first time, a television show—HBO's "Sopranos." Here we interview the new honorees.

## Jill Campbell EVP and COO, Cox Communications



**It's becoming pretty rare these days to find someone who has been at a company for 35 years. Why has Cox been such a good fit for you?**

Cox consistently provided opportunities for me to grow and people to encourage me to embrace them, even when I didn't know if I was ready. It's also a place where I felt like I could always be myself. The company truly values employees, I've felt that from leaders and I like being a leader in a company culture where that's the norm.

**We've seen the launch of Sling TV and DirecTV Now, but cable MSOs haven't really stepped up in a similar, big way on OTT. Do you see that changing?**

We'll continue to watch the competitive landscape and provide choice for customers. We have a product called Contour Flex that allows customers to access our interface and content without a set top box via a home broadband connection; our 2<sup>nd</sup> screen app provides content viewing on personal devices and TV Everywhere gives customers access to cable content when traveling. We are also working to integrate existing OTT services into our Contour interface.

**What's the biggest challenge with customer service today?**

With more products to sell and more broadband-supported devices and applications, every customer configuration is unique. And each customer has different preferences for sales, installation, ongoing communication. Providing a consistently excellent experience, while meeting customized requirements and expectations across millions of customers is an ongoing challenge.

**What have you learned from your role as a board member**

**of Girl Talk, an organization focused on empowering young women?**

There is an unbelievably large pool of talent. The success differentiator is often a positive role model, mentor or peer. It was true for me and Girl Talk is a reminder of the power of encouragement and the confidence and performance it breeds.

**What can the industry do to bring more women to the operations side of the business?**

The industry needs to be open to non-traditional roles, but rising women leaders also need to be willing to take risks in areas outside their comfort zone. They both may find it is a great fit. For the women in operations, they should openly share their experience with others and encourage the next generation.

**What does being inducted into the Hall of Fame mean to you?**

It's an honor, especially when I look around at my fellow inductees this year and in past years. These are people that I've been inspired by and look up to. I'm also very thankful for an industry that has given me and others opportunities to lead, grow and influence during careers that span decades.

## Michael T. Fries CEO Liberty Global



**What lessons do you think other parts of the world could teach the US cable industry?**

This is a global business today and we've learned from each other. Fundamentally, consumers want the same things everywhere. But outside the US we've accelerated superfast broadband deployments and mobile quad play bundles to stay competitive. On the other hand, in video we're big fans of X1 and have rolled out a similar box and UI using the RDK platform pioneered by Comcast.

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If John Malone has taught me anything it's that this industry thrives on scale and collaboration. There's more to come.

### M&A is such an important part of Liberty Global. What are some of the most important things to consider when evaluating an acquisition?

We're looking at the same things US operators evaluate, focusing first on cost and revenue synergies, as well as the opportunity to build national scale. You can actually own 100% of the cable systems in most countries in Europe. It makes a huge difference. In typical Liberty fashion we run a levered-equity balance sheet and given low rates have completed about 250 deals worth \$85 billion in the last 10 years, including two mobile acquisitions.

### What advice would you give someone rising through the ranks in the cable industry?

This is an incredible industry that has reinvented itself many times over the last 60+ years. I've been lucky to work with some legends who paved the way. Find great mentors!

### What does being inducted into the Cable Hall of Fame mean to you?

After 30+ years in this business, it's a terrific honor to be recognized by your peers. In the early days, nobody really knew or cared about cable outside the US. We've quietly built something very special at Liberty Global and this award will be shared with my colleagues across 30 countries.

## Ken Lowe President and CEO, Scripps Networks Interactive



### Why has live viewing remained so strong for SNI when we live in an increasingly on demand world?

In this changing consumer environment, consistency is absolutely key for successful content companies. Viewers know exactly what they are going to get when they turn our networks on, and they can turn it on at any time of the day and enjoy what they see. Our commitment to high quality family friendly content has really paid dividends for viewers, advertisers and distribution platforms, and our live viewing levels are a real demonstration of that.

### With so many sources needing content these days, how competitive is it to find those hit shows?

We view competition as a good thing. It keeps us on our toes, and ensures that we remain committed at all times to delivering the best possible content to our viewers. We've seen competition throughout our history, and we always will. Fortunately, we've got a pretty strong track record of delivering the high quality lifestyle content that viewers crave, and that's evidenced in our ratings success over the last few years.

### You've said you'll stay in this role until 2019 or until a new CEO is named. Have you thought much about what you'll do after you leave?

I'm really focused on making Scripps Networks Interactive the best it can possibly be, and I'm still enjoying that very much. I'm fortunate that I get to work with the best senior management team in the business, and employees that are the envy of the industry. It's been an incredible 22 year journey so far, and I couldn't be happier.

### Who is/was your mentor and why?

I've been fortunate to have a number of mentors over the course of my career, all of whom have helped me learn and grow. Certainly Frank Gardner would be one of those people, having encouraged me to bring to life my vision of a TV network about homes and gardens. In the end though, I really believe that leaders should be learning from people at all levels of an organization. That's been very important to me throughout my career.

### When someone comes to visit Knoxville, what do you show off to them?

Knoxville has changed greatly since we first established our headquarters here twenty-two years ago. It's a vibrant creative city that we are proud to call home. A short walk around Market Square would show people the amazing energy of the city today, as well as the range of really excellent restaurants that have moved into Knoxville recently. The University of Tennessee is a phenomenal institution, and nothing beats Neyland Stadium when the Vols are playing. And of course, the Great Smoky Mountains are a real national treasure, and wonderful for all people who love the outdoor life.

### What does being part of the Cable Center Hall of Fame mean to you?

It is such a huge honor to be inducted into the Hall of Fame, and to be alongside people who I have known and admired for many

years. I am lucky that I get to do something that I love for a career, and to be recognized in this way is just the icing on the cake.

### 'The Sopranos,' Television drama series, David Chase, creator, HBO

# Sopranos

**In what ways do you think "The Sopranos" left a mark on television today?**

This was one of the first dramas that HBO was interested in making, and we were trying to present something different from what the networks were doing. I do think it kind of changed the way you could tell stories. The Sopranos sort of begat certain other things and then those things begat certain other things. The gentleman who produced "Game of Thrones" in the beginning said it was The Sopranos with dragons. So, I guess it still does have an influence.

### The Sopranos gets credit for popularizing the "anti-hero" on TV. Why do people find anti-heroes so compelling?

Why do girls in junior high school find bad boys compelling? They're risk takers, they don't play by the rules. All of us have this desire to be that way in a certain sense, to be unconstrained by societal norms. That's my point of view, but they usually get punished so that makes it okay, in most people's eyes.

### There are a lot of reboots and sequels. Any chance Tony and the gang will ever be revived?

I don't know if we'll ever see The Sopranos again. I tend to doubt it.

### How do you feel about The Sopranos being the first television show inducted into Cable Center Hall of Fame?

I was so surprised to hear that the show was being inducted. I'm very honored. Everybody on the show just feels tremendously honored by this. It was a great experience for all of us. And this will be a continuation of that.

### David Zaslav President and CEO, Discovery Communications



**There's been a lot of emphasis in recent months on building a skinnier bundle. How do you think Discovery is positioned for this?**

Our goal is to reach every person on every platform, so this is a great opportunity for us.

### What have you learned from Discovery's growing international business that has been applicable to the US business?

You must have strong content, which can be a powerful force driving scale for distributors.

### What's your proudest career moment?

Ringling the opening bell at the Nasdaq was an incredible moment.

### Last year, Discovery launched Project C.A.T.: Conserving Acres for Tigers. What have you learned from this?

Value of public – private partnerships, using our voice and reach for an important cause.

### Who is/was your mentor and why?

John Malone and Bob Miron. Their vision for the industry and our business have been a huge influence.

### What does being inducted into the Hall of Fame mean to you?

Great honor to be recognized among so many dear friends, peers I've worked with for 25 years.

### Steve Burke CEO, NBCUniversal



As CEO of NBCUniversal, Burke oversees the company's portfolio of news, sports and entertainment networks, a motion picture company, TV production operations, a TV stations group and theme parks. It's a role he took in 2011 following the closing of Comcast and GE's JV merging the assets of NBCU with

Comcast's programming assets. Burke previously served as COO of Comcast Corporation, which gives him a solid understanding of the distribution side of the business. He joined the company in 1998 as president of Comcast Cable, with the MSO becoming the largest cable company, residential Internet service provider and third-largest phone company during his tenure. One of Burke's challenges now is navigating a world of OTT offerings, skinny bundles and other competition. It's an issue he's very familiar with. Last year, he quipped at an investor conference that he has five millennial children and none of them subscribe to cable or satellite. At the same time, he doesn't see them paying \$45 for 25 channels via an OTT service. "That having been said, our job at NBCUniversal is to license our products and maximize the cash flow of our individual channels," Burke said. "And if people are interested in putting together OTT businesses like Sling or the Hulu product or Sony or others, we're going to sell to those suppliers."

# Congrats

Lenny Daniels and Sandra Dewey  
**Cablefax Top 100 Executives**



**TURNER**



[adult swim]



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