

Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

Power Moves: Cablefax Salutes Industry's Most Powerful Women

It's that time of year, when the industry's trailblazers in media, broadband and technology gather together in NYC to celebrate **Cablefax's** Most Powerful Women at an annual luncheon. Women leaders from a wide swath of companies including **Charter**, **Disney**, **Hallmark Media** and **Altice USA** took center stage for their work advancing the industry, their companies and other women.

The theme of lifting others up permeated the celebration at The Edison Ballroom. "It is a privilege to mentor as equally as it is for me to be a mentee. I am hopeful in doing so that I am able to fill someone else's cup with the newness and open the door for their dreams to also come true," said Cablefax's Mentor of the Year, **Terri Hines**, EVP of Communications for **Fox Sports**. Hines shared her career path, thanking a mentor who believed in her from the start and eventually had enough faith in her to recommend her as his successor—no interview required—despite her having no experience in the field and a background solely in marketing.

Ashley Williams, a multi-hyphenate most known for her acting work, was on hand to speak about her evolution into a directorial force. After seeing the number of male directors that headed her productions at Hallmark Media, she was struck by the lack of female leaders on set. When the conversation turned to how tough it is to find veteran women filmmakers, an idea sparked in Williams to create "Make Her Mark," and

Hallmark Media was more than ready to partner with her on it.

"Why can't our generous, fatherly Canadian male directors become teachers to these women? Moonshot, why can't we ensure their success in some way?" Williams said during her keynote. Just a few weeks ago, the inaugural Make Her Mark director candidate, **Crystal Lowe**, had her directorial debut after seven weeks of learning every aspect of prep, shooting and post-production. Another female director is joining the program's ranks in the coming weeks.

While Williams encouraged the audience never to put themselves into a box out of fear of being seen as too much, **Good Morning America 3's Alicia Quarles** reminded attendees in a fireside chat to also take time to take care of themselves. In August 2022, Quarles live-streamed a severe anxiety attack on the same day she discovered she was pregnant. She discovered a week later that she was expecting twins, and she worked tirelessly to seek help and get her mental health back on track. After asking the audience who had skipped a doctor's appointment in favor of work and seeing far too many hands go up, Quarles told everyone to make time to check in with themselves and their friends. "I didn't check in with myself and I ended up in a situation I didn't want anyone to be in. Find purpose through your pain," Quarles said.

Julie Grant, **Scripps' Court TV** anchor and host of "Opening Statements," and **ESPN** anchor/host and **NBA** reporter **Cassidy Hubbarth** were on hand to help present the awards to honorees, who all posed together at the end for the legend-



Cablefax

MOST POWERFUL WOMEN

DECEMBER 6, 2023

The Cablefax team is thrilled to announce this year's honorees for The Most Powerful Women Awards, recognizing the distinguished women leaders who are innovating and inspiring in the media and broadband space.

JUST RELEASED

www.CablefaxWomen.com

ary Most Powerful Women group photo. This year's honorees included Women Advancement Champion *Janet Han Vissering* of **National Geographic** and 12 of our Most Powerful Women were recognized as special Glass Breakers for breaking through the glass ceiling and lowering the ladder for others. They are: **Mediacom's Italia Commisso-Weinand**, **AMC Networks' Kristin Dolan**, Disney's *Dana Walden* and *Rita Ferro*, **Warner Bros. Discovery's Kathleen Finch** and *Savalle Sims*, Charter's *Jessica Fischer*, **Comcast/NBCU's Kimberley Harris** and *Dalila Wilson-Scott*, **JC2 Ventures' Yvette Kanouff**, **Cable One's Julie Laulis** and **Fox News' Suzanne Scott**.

The event and [just-released issue](#) of **Cablefax: The Magazine** also recognized eight women as Rising Tide Honorees, the next generation of female leaders in the industry. Each Rising Tide member was joined on stage by the champion who nominated them—a peer, a manager, or a mentor—someone who is promoting them within the industry and kicking down doors for them.

In what's become an annual tradition, Cablefax polled attendees on the questions that are on everyone's minds—such as how long *Taylor Swift* and *Travis Kelce* will last. The consensus was months, though more than a few romantics believe the romance is forever. Most of the crowd said their first exposure to AI came from "Star Trek," with friends in the industry a close second. And lastly, we asked what percentage of women hold C-Suite roles according to the 2022 McKinsey Women in the Workplace report. Some 32% of attendees guessed 9%. The good news is that it was 26%, but there's still room for improvement, especially among women of color which came in at 5% for C-Suite positions.

Read the entire magazine, including our Most Powerful Women's takes on how they use AI, what they thought of the "Barbie" movie and more at CablefaxWomen.com.

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FCC FORMS PRIVACY AND DATA PROTECTION TASK FORCE

The **FCC's** Enforcement Bureau has signed MOUs with four states' Attorneys General to share expertise, resources and coordinated efforts in conducting privacy, data protection and cybersecurity-related investigations. Those states are Connecticut, Illinois, New York and Pennsylvania, but more are encouraged to join. To lead the work on privacy and data protection issues that fall under the FCC's authority, Chairwoman *Jessica Rosenworcel* created the Privacy and Data Protection Task Force. The group will work across the agency on rulemaking, enforcement and public awareness regarding privacy and data protection concerns like data breaches, SIM-swapping scams and port-out fraud.

The **WHO** and the **WHY**

CFX's spotlight on recent new hires & promotions



LUDO Dufour
VP, LICENSING
CURIOSITY

3 THINGS TO KNOW

- Curiosity appointed Ludovic to the newly created role for his expertise in non-fiction co-production and distribution. Ludovic will oversee the global licensing of Curiosity's portfolio of films, series and specials, helping maximize the company's global IP. That includes programs such as "Light on Earth," "The Real Wild West" and "Beyond the Spotlight." He'll report to Curiosity President/CEO Clint Stinchcomb.
- Ludovic joins after a two-year stint as Director, Partnerships & Co-Productions at Red Bull Studios. He focused on financing, co-production and worldwide distribution of TV programming and theatrical documentaries including "The Real Mo Farah," which earned a British Academy of Film and Television Arts Award for Single Documentary and Grierson Award for Best Sports Documentary.
- A native of France, his career has taken him across the globe from Saint Lucia to London, to Amsterdam and now Los Angeles. Ludovic has an Oscar to his name as well, having been an associate producer for the 2020 film "My Octopus Teacher."

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HULU MAKES DISNEY+ DEBUT AS BETA TEST

The process of adding **Hulu** to the **Disney+** platform has begun. The limited beta version of Hulu on Disney+ was introduced Wednesday to subscribers of the Disney Bundle. Subscribers will see a Hulu tab appear at the top of the platform, which will provide access to a "Hulu Hub" which comes with most movies and series from Hulu's library. Hulu's official launch on Disney+ remains slated for March.

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REMEMBERING NORMAN LEAR

Norman Lear, writer, producer and TV industry mainstay, passed away of natural causes Tuesday at his home in Los Angeles. He was 101 years old. Lear developed popular sitcoms including "All in the Family" and "Sanford and Son," but was known for his willingness to weave social commentary into his shows and address cultural talking points. "His funny, realistic and fearless approach to storytelling rang true in his sharp writing

and rich characters. He redefined the sitcom by introducing topics that had previously been avoided, including race, poverty and sexism. And he did it all with wit and heart, making it relatable to millions of Americans,” **CBS** said in a statement. His passion for social justice extended to organizations like Declare Yourself, which he founded in 2004 to advocate 18- to 29-year-olds to register to vote, and his political advocacy group People for the American Way. Lear also spoke at the 2015 L. Patrick Mellon Mentorship Program Luncheon held during **NAMIC**’s Annual Conference. “At 93 I’ve never seen more spirit of generosity,” he said on Twitter following the event. An on-air memorial card will simulcast across **CBS**, **ABC**, **NBC**, **Fox** and **The CW Network** tonight at 8pm.

SAG-AFTRA RATIFIES CONTRACT

The **SAG-AFTRA** strike is officially over. The actors’ union voted to ratify the new three-year contract by a vote of 78.33% to 21.67%. SAG-AFTRA didn’t reveal the exact number of voters, but did note the turnout was 38.15%. The deal encapsulates compensation increases, protections against generative AI and improved streaming compensation and is valued at more than \$1 billion. “Whether you were a strike captain, phone-bank volunteer, picketer, social media warrior, a participant in the wages and working conditions process, or simply supportive of your union’s efforts, you were part of this moment,” SAG-AFTRA said in a statement. “In 2024, our sibling unions IATSE, AFM, and the Teamsters and the Hollywood Basic Crafts will be entering negotiations, and they will be able to use our groundbreaking gains as leverage in their own bargaining efforts.”

T-MOBILE RUNS MMWAVE TEST

In a test that used 5G standalone millimeter wave on its production network, **T-Mobile** claims it aggregated eight channels of mmWave spectrum to achieve download speeds of over 4.3 Gbps without relying on low-band or mid-band spectrum for the connection. The provider worked with **Ericsson** and **Qualcomm** for the 5G test, also aggregating four channels of mmWave spectrum on the uplink, which reached over 420 Mbps.

EPB QUANTUM QUNNECT-ING FOR VALIDATION RUNS

EPB Quantum Network is looking to accelerate the development of quantum technology into commercial use, and it’s teaming up with **Qunnect** for a series of on-site collaborative validation runs. It’s the first time two commercial quantum networking companies have used their hardware to support a distribution protocol jointly. Qunnect will work with **Qubitekk**—the company that powers the hardware and software for EPB Quantum Network—to determine the interoperability of certain quantum technologies across a network.

CARRIAGE

The outdoor-focused **Pursuit Channel** is now available to **DirectTV Stream** and **DirectTV** customers without a satellite. Pursuit is already available to satellite and U-verse customers, featuring shows like “Ted Nugent’s Spirit of the Wild,” “Surviving Mann,” “Yamaha’s Whitetail Diaries” and “Dean Partridge’s Canadian Whitetail TV.” Two **CW** stations are joining the DirectTV Stream lineup as well: WYCW-CW (Greenville and Spartanburg, South Carolina, and Asheville, North Carolina) and KAUT-CW (Oklahoma City).

RATINGS

The Bengals’ 34-31 win over the Jaguars on Monday Night Football earned **ESPN** 16.48 million viewers, the most-watched Week 13 MNF contest since 2010. That includes viewership from **ESPN2**, **ESPN Deportes**, **NFL+** and **ABC** and is also up 46% from last year’s Week 13 MNF game between the Saints and Buccaneers. MNF is averaging 16.7 million viewers per game so far this season, up 29% from the same point last year. – Friday’s premiere of “Candy Cane Lane” on **Prime Video** accumulated 1.2 million U.S. households watched during the L+2D window, according to Samba TV. – It’s been a month since **ESPN**’s “Daily Wager” rebranded to “ESPN Bet Live,” and viewership for November was up 47% YOY. Average viewership was up 34% as well, and its November 26 telecast was good for its second-most viewed show in 2023.

FIBER FRENZY

Construction has started for **Vexus Fiber** and its fiber optic network in Denison, Texas. The privately funded project will bring symmetrical multi-gig speed service to over 12,000 residents and businesses in the area. Construction is expected to be completed in 12-18 months. The company also plans to open a retail location in Denison next year. – Mid-Atlantic provider **Lumos** broke ground in Clayton, North Carolina, beginning the construction process of the company’s \$50 million investment in Johnston and Harnett Counties.

PROGRAMMING

The 89th Heisman Award winner will be unveiled Saturday at 8pm on **ESPN**. **Chris Fowler** will lead the broadcast with **Holly Rowe** and **Marty Smith** joining throughout the show alongside other ESPN analysts and Heisman winners **Robert Griffin III**, **Desmond Howard**, **Tim Tebow** and **Andre Ware**. – **HBO** and **Max** inked a multi-year pay-1 U.S. output deal with **A24**. The agreement will bring A24’s theatrical film slate to HBO, Max and **Cinemax**. Films to be made available include “Priscilla,” “Dream Scenario” and the upcoming “The Iron Claw.” Additionally, WBD and A24 extended their licensing agreement to bring additional films like “Everything Everywhere All at Once” and “Uncut Gems” to HBO and Max.

Think about that for a minute...

The Poster Child FCC

Commentary by Steve Effros

It's going to be a cruel legacy for FCC Chair Jessica Rosenworcel if what she is best known for is as the poster child for the evisceration of administrative law. That, I suspect, is the direction the FCC is on right now with serious overreaching of regulatory authority which will not be missed when highlighted at the Supreme Court.

I've mentioned the cases the Supremes are teeing up right now having to do with critical questions of regulatory power. One is the question of whether courts should continue to give "deference" to regulatory agencies when it comes to the interpretation of the statutes they administer. For a long time the answer to that has been "yes." But several of the most recent appointments to the Supreme Court, notably Justice Gorsuch, have made it clear they disagree.

The point here is that most regulatory agencies, having to deal with fast-moving events, tend to continually assume more power to respond to those events since the underlying statutes written by Congress are rarely modified. We all know how fast Congress works these days. So when the FCC, for example, decides that it can regulate all sorts of aspects of cable television, even though the original statute at the time did not have any mention of that technology, the courts gave "deference" to the generalized language in the statute that the Commission pointed to, and allowed the regulations to go forward.

The trend now is the opposite on almost all things the Supreme Court gets involved in. Specific language and even punctuation marks are read like tea leaves to determine what was written, and the extent to which there is any leeway, based on the specific words, for interpretation allowing expansion. Here's where the FCC is pushing the envelope to the point that it's likely to be cited in what I anticipate will be future decisions of the Court significantly curtailing the tendency of all regulatory agencies to expand their jurisdiction.

Two examples where the FCC is painting a target on its forehead, so to speak, are the Commission's ever-expanding definition of when it no longer needs to impose additional regulations to

promote broadband access, and whether it can regulate all sorts of additional industries to guard against "digital discrimination."

This is not easy to explain because the Commission seems to be going in two directions at once. In the first instance, they are once again "moving the goalposts" to assure that they retain jurisdiction to regulate cable/broadband by constantly changing the "minimum" service necessary to satisfy the statute. That is, how fast is fast? How much of a "buildout" of broadband access is sufficient to finally say that the FCC need not get involved in more rules to promote that buildout? Once again the Commission is suggesting that the public needs more, faster broadband and it even suggests that it will ignore its own calculations (the new "broadband map") to suggest that things aren't as good, or as fast, or as complete as they would like them to be. But who is "they?" I suspect the Supremes will say it's not the FCC, it's Congress which has the only authority to specify those things.

Ironically, Commissioner Rosenworcel just said, on the other hand, that her Commission does NOT have jurisdiction over the broadband "edge" providers; streaming services, etc. So while another rule they are contemplating, regulating rates or even what can be "bundled" with what, can be applied to cable in the name of promoting consumer protection and competition, those same rules can be totally ignored by cable's competitors! There's little argument that there's lots of competition in delivering video these days!

This just doesn't make any sense, and I suspect these glaring anomalies will lead the FCC to Supreme Court decision infamy.



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(Steve Effros was President of CATA for 23 years and is now an advisor and consultant to the cable industry. His views do not necessarily reflect the views of Cablefax.)

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