

Cable Center Hall of Fame

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Introducing the 2019 Cable Hall of Fame Class

The newest class of the prestigious Cable Center Hall of Fame will be celebrated at the Ziegfeld Ballroom in New York City on May 2. Join us in learning a more about these leaders and their contributions to the industry.



Leslie Ellis

President
Ellis Edits, Inc.

As the industry's tech translator, are there any concepts that you find especially difficult to explain? From a current events perspective, I'd put "5G" pretty high on the list, because it wants to be so many things, all at once. The details of what's

happening in the access network (the "last mile," and fiber-deeper, DAA, RemotePHY, that whole kettle of fish) is a pretty good reason to get cross at engineers for making things so dang complex. The stuff I'm following because I desperately want to understand it better are things like quantum computing and neural networks. (In part because just by saying words like that, people think you're smarter. Ahh I crack myself up.)

How do you keep up-to-date? By being as close to the real tech action as possible, while digesting as much information as possible. There's no better way to learn about a topic, technology, or idea than to help an expert to explain it to a non-expert.

What have you learned from your experiences as a volunteer with high school robotics group cableFIRST? That we should all adopt the FIRST program ethos that is "gracious professionalism." Gracious professionalism posits that fierce competition and mutual gain are not separate notions, and that kindness and creativity can coexist. There's not enough room to detail why we should all be doing as much as we can to support local FIRST robotics programs! The one thing this industry has, that not many others do, is feet-on-the-street. We—and by "we" I mean all of us in the industry we used to call "cable,"—are in-market. This means you, SCTE members, and you, WICT members, and you, everybody else. Ok. Stepping off of soap box...

You're a pretty well-known beekeeper. Do you find any similarities between your day job and your hobby? Hmmm. I can tell you a dissimilarity: When you take the lid off of a beehive, and start pulling out frames to see what's going on, the slower you go, the better off everyone is. Bees don't like being rolled and pinched any more than you would, if someone pried off your house, then started moving all your stuff around. It's important to move so slowly, you almost feel like you're exaggerating. In my day jobs—writing and editing, especially—quick turnarounds are appreciated. You need to be good at what you do, and fast about it, without being sloppy.

What does it mean to you personally to be inducted into the Cable Hall of Fame? I'm still trying to get my head around it. As you likely know, I'm far more comfortable on the other side of questions like that! I guess the gist of it, if this is some kind of passing of the torch, where the leaders in this industry want to put me in the same category as the Big League People amongst us ... of course I'm humbled. And I'll give it my all. Count me in.



Rob Kennedy

President & Co-CEO
C-SPAN

You left a for-profit cable business for a non-profit, where you've remained for more than 30 years. What's kept you rooted to C-SPAN? Honestly, I wondered if I would be here five years, let alone 30! I knew from the beginning that

my finance and engineering background was a good fit for my role here. But two things increased in significance to me over time, and kept me rooted here. First, a growing appreciation for the C-SPAN mission and the importance of providing the public with unfiltered information from Washington. And second, collaborating with a team that is wholly dedicated to this mission—and who are a lot of fun to work with, too!

There are many things that make C-SPAN unusual, including its dual-management structure. How do you and Susan make this work? We have a lot of experience—we've been doing this for over 30 years! I think it starts from having complimentary areas of expertise along with a devotion to the C-SPAN mission. From the beginning we agreed to tackle the big decisions together. So, whether it's goal setting, budgets or strategic decisions, we decide those as a team. But the 'secret sauce' may be the simplest thing of all: our offices have always been literally next door to each other's.

Some people might not realize that you're the unofficial C-SPAN deejay, helping select the classical music played over the years during quorum calls and at other moments. What's the goal with musical selection and any chance some jazz might slip into the playlist? I would say most people don't know that (laughs). We use music on-air during long periods of silence in the Congress: Senate quorum calls and House votes. The music can't infer a particular mood or commentary, so classical music works best. Although not every piece of classical music works—for example playing a funeral march when a nomination is being voted down would not be good! As painful as it is for me to say this, jazz doesn't fit the bill.

What's your favorite C-SPAN memory? That's like asking me to choose among my children! The 1997 purchase of our radio station in Washington, DC, is one that comes to mind. Not only did it launch us on the road to audio programming—manifested today in podcasts—but our board's approval was a noteworthy example of the industry's commitment to extend our public service beyond traditional television. Another example is our robust web presence over the years, including our free video library.

How do you feel about joining the Hall of Fame? Gobsmailed. Totally unexpected. It's a great personal honor for us, but it's a tremendous reflection on C-SPAN and the success we've achieved over our first 40 years. Which is about much more than Susan and me. It's been a team effort that wouldn't have happened without our staff, our affiliates, and our board of directors. They will all be very much on our minds as we accept our award.

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Phil Kent

Former Chairman and CEO
Turner Broadcasting System, Inc.

When you look back at your 11 years leading Turner, what stands out? The most satisfying aspect was building and leading an extraordinary team of executives, which is the ultimate legacy of any leader. We were early proponents of multi-

platform branding with CNN and Cartoon Network, followed by our broader entertainment networks, as well as building a strong international business. The acquisition of post season Major League Baseball and joining with CBS to present the NCAA men's basketball tournament—along with maintaining a decades long NBA partnership—will keep the company formerly known as Turner resilient for many years to come.

What advice would you offer AT&T as they integrate Turner into the company?

The AT&T integration has already occurred, so my only advice is to emphasize making the employees feel appreciated.

You serve on the board of the CDC Foundation, an independent nonprofit created by Congress to assist the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's health protection work. What have you learned from being a part of the Foundation?

From my long association with the CDC Foundation, I've come to see infectious disease control—both at home and abroad—as an essential national security issue and economic security matter. The work of CDC personnel all over the world is heroic and largely unappreciated.

What do you see as the biggest challenge facing the industry today—and what's your advice for tackling it?

I believe that the industry needs to do a much better job marketing the price/value benefit of the expanded basic network package, to continue to mitigate the trend of "cord cutting." Between programmers and distributors, I believe short-term thinking and efforts to gain relative advantage need to give way to more long-term strategy and collaboration. I still believe in the promise of TV Everywhere, particularly via mobile.

What does it mean to you to join the Cable Center's Hall of Fame? I'm very proud to have contributed to the growth and health of our industry. Being asked to join the HOF is a very nice recognition of this.



Kyle McSlarrow

SVP, Customer Experience
Comcast Corp.

You left the day-to-day regulatory world behind eight years ago. Do you miss it at all? And what advice would you offer for settling the never-ending argument over net neutrality? It's not so much a case of missing what

I did before as it is that I was ready to do something different and I enjoy leading teams and serving our customers. So, I honestly don't think about it much. Of course, I do miss a lot of the friends and colleagues I was fortunate to work closely with. On net neutrality, the core principles have never been an issue and are the way we do business.

What's something that you learned about cable that you could only really understand running a region vs leading NCTA? It was a little humbling to run a market after leaving a national role. NCTA gave me a great perch to see the strategic

themes and developments. But, the first time someone walked me through our operating metrics like quota and productivity, I realized that I was going to go through the most intense education in my life...and that I needed to do it quickly. I don't think I fully appreciated how complex our network, systems, products and interactions were until I was in the field.

What most needs to happen in the industry to improve the customer experience?

I've always thought that our industry was one of the most innovative industries in the last 50 plus years. Certainly, every decade there are plenty of example of great innovators and disruptive technologies. But we've been doing that consistently that entire time. So, my belief is that we should harness and leverage our great products, network and technologies to redefine what an exceptional customer experience means.

You're a relative newcomer to cable, joining the industry in 2005. What about cable made you want to stick around?

It mostly has to do with the people in the industry. From my introduction to the CEOs who conducted my first interview, through my experience at NCTA, and during my time at Comcast, I continue to marvel just how much there is a common denominator of humility mixed with a passion for winning. That has always appealed to me.

What does this honor mean to you?

I'm not sure I can do justice to how surprised I was to learn about it. I'm relatively new to the industry. But to me, cable (and Comcast) are my home. So, it means a lot and I'm very honored to join with those inducted this year...all of whom I admire and consider good friends.



Steve Miron

CEO
Advance/Newhouse

What do you miss about running Bright House? Definitely the people. We had an outstanding team at Bright House and a great partnership with Time Warner Cable and working with the people at both of those companies was the best part of my job and the part I miss the most.

Stepping away from day-to-day cable operations must have allowed you to more closely examine some of the other technologies and industries out there. What excites you?

I am still very excited about cable. As part of the board of directors of Charter, we hear about lots of technology which will help get even more utility out of these wonderful networks we've built. It is amazing to me to see how our infrastructure and network stand up over time as we've adapted to service customers' demand. We've evolved from one-way analog services, to digital services, to residential HSD services with continued speed improvements, to enterprise services, and now wireless, all through this incredibly robust and flexible network that continues to grow.

You're on the board of the Crouse Health Foundation, the fundraising arm for Crouse hospital of Central New York. Has this experience opened your eyes to new ways broadband can facilitate patient care?

My father has spent some time at Crouse Hospital in Syracuse, and I would no longer have him around were it not for the quality of care he received there on multiple occasions. I'd like to do what I can to help make sure my hometown has first rate medical care for those who need it. I am indebted to Crouse for what they've done for my family and I plan to help them to the best of my ability.

There's a joke that coax runs in your family's veins. Your father, Bob Miron, retired after 50 years in broadcasting and cable. What's the greatest lesson you learned from him? My father is a great listener, always prepared, and has impeccable follow through. The list is long, but those items are high on the list of what I've learned from my Dad.

What does being named to the Hall of Fame mean to you? To me, being included in the Hall of Fame is recognition of the job our team did at Bright House. It is an honor for Bright House to be included in this distinguished group.



Susan Swain President & Co-CEO C-SPAN

C-SPAN got quite a number of 40th anniversary well wishes recently. Do you have a favorite moment from the fanfare? It has really been fun to hear from so many people we've worked with over the years, through emails, calls, and

social media. I also enjoyed watching a spontaneous meme pop up on Twitter and Facebook where folks found their C-SPAN debut in our video archives and posted the photo as a kind of "happy birthday" message to the network.

Why do you think C-SPAN has remained so relevant all these years? I'd argue that C-SPAN is more relevant today than at its founding, for two reasons: the 250,000 hours of searchable video content stored in our Archives. It's an incredible national resource nurtured by our cable industry board over the decades....and also because our "fly on the wall" coverage provides unfiltered context for political and policy events in an era when people are deluged with information from all points on the political spectrum.

Some have argued that giving members a platform to grandstand on has led to more partisanship. Are there drawbacks to having this always-on lens? There are many reasons why political partisanship has increased over the past four decades. If C-SPAN coverage has contributed somewhat to that, it's a worthy trade-off. We C-SPANners are of the "sunlight as disinfectant" orientation. We believe the public has a right to see the sausage-making by their elected officials.

You've just released a new book with Brian Lamb and C-SPAN that expands on C-SPAN's Historians Survey of Presidential Leadership. Are there common traits that link the best- and worst-ranked leaders? The historians and biographers we feature in our book point to preparation, decisiveness, communications skills and personal growth in office as traits of our most successful leaders. Invert those characteristics and you will find those presidents at the bottom of the pack.

What does being inducted into the Hall of Fame mean to you? First and foremost, I see this award as a recognition of C-SPAN's place in the telecom industry and in society, and that matters a lot to me and the corps of colleagues who have spent their careers at our network. It's also an incredible honor to be seen as someone

who's contributed to an industry I love. I'm also really delighted to be inducted with Rob Kennedy—we have an amazing partnership of three decades, which will now be memorialized in the HOF.



MTV

Founding Creators - Mark Booth, Tom Freston, Judy McGrath, Bob Pittman, Fred Seibert, John Sykes (*Q&A with McGrath)

What part do you feel MTV played in the fusion of the music and broader entertainment industry—which these days seems to be one in the same? When MTV launched into the popular culture, we made some key choices that helped define us. "Call your cable company and say, I WANT MY MTV!" We went directly to the consumer and said, this is for you. You are front and center in our experiment. This is your MTV. As Amazon today is customer-centric first and foremost, MTV set out to reflect the generation who grew up with music and television. We literally brought them together, we built a brand that borrowed from fashion and art and social issues, driven by music....but always with a sense of the young consumer first. We would never grow old with our original fan, but would always speak to the changing nature of each new generation, in their own language. Reminds me very much of the digital explosion, and the big brands that dominate our lives today.

What was the reasoning for the eventual decision to expand MTV beyond music videos—and eventually turn to reality and other forms of youth content, almost to the exclusion of music videos? By the mid-80's, we were experimenting with content inspired by music...news, events, documentaries, and more. We recognized that the audience had an appetite for original content, and that we could create content that would reflect, entertain and inspire them, while making our brand and our business stronger.

What were some of the challenges around the expansion of MTV into other Viacom nets like VHI, etc? A distinctive brand identity and a deep understanding of the audience for that brand was key to all of our successes. With VHI, we had another opportunity to create amazing content like "Behind the Music," "Pop Up Video," "Save The Music" and many more notable franchises that spoke to a different demo and psychographic. These brands collectively added up to something much more meaningful to the audience, and thus, to the industry.

What does it mean for MTV to be the first cable network to be inducted into the Hall of Fame?

We all feel thrilled at the chance to celebrate the creativity and spirit of MTV, with the industry who launched us into the culture and supported us every step of the way. It was truly a collective effort, so I find it much more rewarding to salute the network and our partners in the room, rather than singling us out as individuals. It was the ride of a lifetime, and I continue to have faith in MTV around the world.

Jim Robbins Receives Bresnan Ethics in Business Award



You have to figure that Bill Bresnan would be pretty happy that the award created in his honor is going to the late Jim Robbins.

When the former Cox Communications president and CEO passed away in 2007 at age 65, Bresnan offered high compliments. "Jim's longtime leadership of Cox Communications, his personal commitment

to customer service and diversity, and his devoted service to our industry in so many ways, serve as an example of excellence for all of us in cable today, and for all those who follow in the future," said Bresnan, who passed away two years later after battling cancer.

Robbins joined Cox in 1983, with the company's size quadrupling during his leadership. Cox employees remember him as one of the first to insist on customer care standards in the industry. "The

differentiator is how you treat your customer. It sounds like motherhood and apple pie. Easy to say, hard to do," Robbins told *Cablefax's CableWorld* magazine shortly before his 2005 retirement.

Robbins served twice as chairman of NCTA and won multiple awards, including the industry's prestigious Vanguard Award for Distinguished Leadership. He was also a veteran, serving as a destroyer line officer and a gunboat flotilla public affairs officer during two tours of duty with the U.S. Navy in Vietnam from 1965 to 1967.



AS C-SPAN CELEBRATES 40 YEARS,

longtime leaders and
2019 Cable Hall of Fame inductees
Susan Swain and Rob Kennedy
continue to drive

C-SPAN INTO THE FUTURE —

THANKS

to the unwavering support and
strategic guidance of industry
leaders, including those from the
Class of 2019 and many legendary
past inductees.

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