



Women in Cable  
Telecommunications<sup>SM</sup>

**Creating Leaders.  
Together.**

## Women in Cable Telecommunications Executive Team



### **Maria E. Brennan, CAE, President & CEO**

Maria E. Brennan, CAE, is the President and CEO of Women in Cable Telecommunications (WICT), a national non-profit organization comprised of more than 9,000 members that has been serving women in the cable industry for over 30 years.

Prior to joining WICT, Brennan served as the President of American Women in Radio and Television (AWRT). She has more than 22 years of executive management experience with non-profits ranging in size from 2,000-33,000 members. Brennan has particular expertise in the areas of strategic planning, communications, advocacy and resource development.

As the public voice of WICT, Brennan is an experienced spokesperson and advocate for both media industry and workplace equity issues and has represented numerous diversity-based nonprofits. She is a frequently quoted expert on issues of pay equity and work/life integration and has been published or featured in such magazines as *Broadcasting & Cable*, *Working Mother*, *Association Trends*, *Selecta* and *CableFAX*.

Brennan was named among *CableFAX*'s list of Most Powerful Women in Cable in both 2010 and 2011. She is an award-winning writer, having received an EXCEL Award for her byline, "Hear Me Roar."

In 2007, Brennan was elected to serve on the Women's Leadership Board at Harvard University, and is a member of its strategic planning and communications board subcommittees. She is serving her fourth term on the Diversity Advisory Board of the Federal Communications Commission, and was recently named a Commissioner of the Girl Scouts Healthy Media Council. In addition, Brennan is a coalition member of Women Impacting Public Policy (WIPP) and is a long-standing member of American Society of Association Executives (ASAE), through which she has earned CAE Accreditation.



**Kathy Payne, Chair, Board of Directors - Vice President, Content Acquisition at Cox Communications**

Kathy Payne is Vice President of Content Acquisition for Cox Communications Inc. In this position, Payne is responsible for video content negotiations for over 100 cable networks distributed across multiple platforms to millions of Cox customers. She is also actively involved with the deployment of the company's video-on-demand and high-definition television services.

Payne joined Cox in 1993 as Attorney. She was later promoted to Senior Counsel and Assistant General Counsel before joining the Cox programming department in 2001 as Director of Programming and later, Executive Director of Programming. Prior to joining Cox, she served as Vice President and Assistant General Counsel for USTravel Systems Inc. and as Attorney with Dow, Lohnes. A graduate of Duke University, Payne holds a bachelor's degree in public policy studies, magna cum laude, and a J.D., with honors, from the Duke University School of Law.

Payne serves as Chair on the national board of directors for Women in Cable Telecommunications. She is a graduate of Class X of the Betsy Magness Leadership Institute, WICT's premier executive leadership program for women executives, and has been a member of the WICT Board of Directors since 2007. Multichannel News and the WICT New York Chapter honored Payne as one of the 2009 Wonder Women, and she has been included on CableFAX's "Most Powerful Women in Cable" list four times since 2006. Kathy was selected to receive WICT Atlanta's 2007 Horizon Award as the Woman to Watch in Atlanta. Additionally, she has been a member of the National Cable Television Association's music licensing committee since 1997. Payne is a member of the District of Columbia Bar Association and is a founding board member of the Atlanta Chapter of Cable Positive. She is married to David Payne, SVP and GM of CNN.com, and they have two rising media stars, Kendall and Halle.



**Parthavi Das, Chief of Staff**

Parthavi Das is responsible for the development and execution of WICT advocacy initiatives, programming and the strategic direction of the organization.

She manages the PAR Initiative, WICT's effort to measure and support the advancement of women in the cable and telecommunications industry based on Pay equity, Advancement opportunities, and Resources for work/life support. In addition, Das manages the WICT recognition awards to include the Accolades, the most prestigious awards program offered by WICT.

Her previous accomplishments include managing WICT's Best Practices Initiative, a comprehensive workforce study examining corporate best practices in the areas of diversity, work/life, compensation, learning and development and their impact on corporate cultures. She also managed the publication of the companion guide, Diversity Through Investment, a white-paper compilation of WICT research designed to help companies implement gender diversity best practices in their own organizations.

Parthavi's other ongoing responsibilities include association outreach which entails forming alliances with related industry organizations to ensure WICT stays current with industry trends and helps to broaden WICT's membership base.

Parthavi earned a master's degree in Telecommunications from Michigan State University and a bachelor's degree in Communications from Northwestern University. She is also a proud graduate of the highly distinguished Betsy Magness Leadership Institute (BMLI) Class XIII.



### **Talton Gibson, Vice President of Communications**

Talton Gibson is the Vice President of Communications for WICT. He is responsible for marketing, branding and public relations, working to help advance WICT's mission in a collaborative and strategic manner. Gibson brings over 18 years of experience in management, strategic communications and advocacy in the entertainment and media, political and nonprofit sectors.

Gibson's entertainment and media experience includes work as a sweeps publicist for Paramount Domestic Television's Hard Copy, managing media relations for American Women in Radio & Television and serving as the public relations director for Feld Entertainment's luxury circus, Barnum's Kaleidoscope. Gibson's political background includes work for former North Carolina Governor Jim Hunt and managing Congressional campaigns in North Carolina, Georgia and Illinois. In the nonprofit sector, Gibson served as a senior advisor and executive director for The Israel Project, successfully leading their international research and advocacy efforts. From 2006 until joining WICT in 2010, he worked as a communications, management and strategy consultant with international nonprofits focused on promoting human rights and gender diversity. In that capacity, he served as the US Director for the European Foundation for Democracy – creating a campaign with Muslim reformer, author and filmmaker, Irshad Manji, to educate media, Congress and the nonprofit community on challenges to universal human rights.

A native North Carolinian, Gibson was educated at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Additionally, he studied crisis management and communications, and entertainment publicity at UCLA.



### **Walt Sisson, Senior Vice President of Finance & Administration**

Walt joined Women in Cable Telecommunications in October of 2006 as Vice President of Finance and Administration. In this capacity, he oversees all accounting, financial investment, human resource, information technology and office administration functions.

Prior to joining WICT, Walt served as Vice President for Finance and Administration at American Rivers, Inc. He previously worked in the recycling and environmental services fields, where he assisted several large municipal entities in establishing residential and commercial recycling programs.

Walt also served as an appointee to the Citizen's Advisory Committee for Solid Waste and Recycling in Fairfax County, Virginia. He earned a B.A. in accounting from Old Dominion University and an M.B.A. from Virginia Tech. Walt is a CPA.

In his spare time Walt enjoys running, cycling, and playing a variety of sports with his son, Justin. Walt and Justin are novice soccer players and big fans of DC United and the Washington Capitals.



### **Christina Vergara, Vice President of Education & Program Development**

Vergara is responsible for WICT's professional education strategy, overseeing the development and delivery of leadership education and other programs related to WICT's mission.

Vergara recently joined WICT after serving for two years as the Director of Convention Education at NAB in Washington, DC. While there, she managed a team of internal and external partners to produce over a dozen distinct educational programs as part of the NAB's annual trade show serving 85,000 + media professionals. Under her direction, the conference team updated program packages and offerings, which drove conference participation up by 30% in 2010.

Prior to NAB, Vergara served with NATPE over fifteen years in a number of roles. She most recently worked as their Director of Event Programming, which involved developing and producing the annual NATPE conference, a complement to and highlight of the television industry's prominent program marketplace. Vergara also co-founded and produced the annual LATV Fest. Under her strategic direction, this event expanded into a three day television festival, for which she also brokered a number of key partnerships and sponsorships including the creation and expansion of NATPE's Diversity Fellowship Program.

Vergara was educated at the University of Maryland. She continued her education with project management coursework at Georgetown University and completed media and entertainment business classes at UCLA and USC. She is a member of the Project Management Institute.