**WICT History and Talking Points**

* When WICT was founded in 1979, cable was just emerging as an industry. Only 20% of American households were wired for cable and customers received about 20 channels. There was just one dominant phone company. AT&T and the internet was just a government experiment.
* At that time, two cable industry executives, Lucille Larkin, NCTA’s Vice President for Public Affairs and Gail Sermersheim, Vice President and GM of HBO’s Southern Region, shared concerns about the shortage of women in the industry and the lack of professional development targeted to the unique experiences, challenges and competencies of women in cable.
* Larkin and Sermersheim decided that building and organization devoted to the advancement of women might fill this void. So together, they founded Women in Cable at the Western Cable Show in Anaheim, California.
* Fast forward 37 years, and you have today’s WICT- an organization that sits atop a solid foundation of achievement, recognition and relevance. With nearly 10,000 members and 19 chapters nationwide with a new chapter recently in England, WICT represents women at every stage of their cable career.
* Members range from entry level employees to the C-suite. At WICT we support development at all career stages, providing dynamic models customized to the unique competencies and skills of women in the industry.
* WICT’S Betsy Magness Leadership Institute launched in 1993, honoring a true industry pioneer who was instrumental in building TCI; later AT&T Broadband and Internet and now Comcast Communications, into one of the most prominent and influential companies in the industry. Betsy Magness and her husband did this by starting a cable company in Memphis, Texas, in 1956 and later merged their two companies’ into TCI. BMLI is now recognized as one of the industry’s flagship executive development programs whose fellows now exceed 500 executives.
* Since 2003, WICT’s PAR Initiative has illustrated the correlation between the best practices in Pay Equity, Advancement Opportunities and Resources for Work Life in effectively competing for the talent that grows the bottom line. And with the recent Census Bureau announcement that the wage gap has now widened so that a working woman now earns an average of 77 cents for every dollar earned by a working man, PAR is still clearly needed.
* WICT is poised for an exciting future. Maria Brennan is WICT’s President and CEO. Brennan comes from American Women in Radio and Television and she brings more the 23 years of experience managing non-profit organizations to WICT. In 2007, Brennan was elected to serve on the Women’s Leadership Board at Harvard University; she is serving her third term on the Diversity Board of the Federal Communications Commission, and is the appointed liaison to Women Impacting Public Policy (WIPP).
* WICT is at the forefront of an industry undergoing constant change. Since its founding in 1979, WICT has remained steadfast in its resolve to advance the position and influence of women through proven leadership programs, original research and numerous member services.
* With vital chapters like WICT, Pacific Northwest, the organization strives to realize its vision of a cable telecommunications industry where women are valued for business contributions they bring to the table every single day.