



**Creating Leaders.  
Together.**

## **Women in Cable Telecommunications Executive Team**



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

Maria E. Brennan is the President and CEO of Women in Cable Telecommunications (WICT), a 10,000 member global nonprofit celebrating over 35 years of serving women in the cable industry. During her time at WICT, Brennan has worked collaboratively with its leaders and stakeholders to steer the organization's strategic vision, resulting in record levels of membership, sponsor support and program participation.

Prior to joining WICT, Brennan served for nine years as the President of American Women in Radio and Television (AWRT) and has worked with numerous diversity-based nonprofits, including the National Association of Women Business Owners and The International Alliance of Women. She has more than 23 years of executive management experience with associations ranging in size from 2,000-33,000 members, with particular expertise in the areas of strategic planning, public relations, operations and advocacy.

As the public voice of WICT, Brennan is an experienced public speaker and advocate for both media industry and diversity issues. She is a frequently quoted expert on 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 is an award-winning writer, having received an EXCEL Award for her byline, "Hear Me Roar." She was elected to serve on the Women's Leadership Board at Harvard University in 2007, and is a member of its strategic planning and communications board subcommittees. She is a charter member of the FCC's Diversity Advisory Board where she is currently serving her fifth term. She is a coalition member of WIPP—Women Impacting Public Policy and is a Commissioner for the Girl Scouts Healthy Media Council. In 2014, Brennan was recognized with a Vanguard Award by the National Cable & Telecommunications Association in recognition of her contributions to the cable industry's innovation, growth and progress. In addition, she has been named among *Cablefax's* list of Most Powerful Women in Cable annually since 2010.

Brennan received her CAE (Certified Association Executive) distinction from the American Society of Association Executives; a certification earned by only 5% of non-profit executives in the US. She teaches continuing education classes in the nonprofit sector where she has served as an ASAE CAE immersion instructor. She has completed executive education courses at the Stanford Graduate School of Business and Harvard's Kennedy School of Government.



**Lesa Faris**  
**VP, Business Development & Special Projects**  
**WICT**

As the Vice President of Business Development & Special Projects for Women in Cable Telecommunications, Lesa is responsible for the solicitation and implementation of a broad range of activities that fuel growth in non-dues revenue for WICT. This includes sophisticated partnership and portfolio development, and other avenues of revenue-generating activities. In pursuit of these new relationships, Faris collaborates with key industry leaders to create strategies that identify high-potential target sectors and campaigns to convert them.

Faris has more than 19 years of fundraising and high-end event planning experience, encompassing sales and marketing in the corporate, nonprofit, and government sectors. She has orchestrated both domestic and international events for up to 15,000 attendees, experience that has provided a strong understanding of the return-on-investment expectations of prospective corporate partners and sponsors.

Faris has remained steadfast in her focus on business development for several exceptional nonprofits within the hospitality and women's community – namely, the Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association, the American Society of Women Accountants and the National Association of Women Business Owners. She has also consulted for the SCORE Association, a nonprofit dedicated to educating entrepreneurs and helping small businesses start, grow, and succeed nationwide. Faris produced remarkable results acting as executive director for a small, charitable nonprofit in the health arena. During her time with the Ehlers-Danlos National Foundation, Lesa turned the nonprofit from red to black by appealing to a small, but passionate and loyal membership base and a close cadre of corporate supporters nearly doubling revenues within a year. However, Lesa's business acumen and strong judgment is best utilized when following her passion of working for organizations that are in support of women in growth and leadership positions in all areas.

Faris is a social sciences graduate from Michigan State University, where she pursued a multidisciplinary major focusing on labor law, economics, and sociology. At present, she is an active member in both American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) and Meeting Professionals International (MPI). Faris received her Certified Meeting Professional (CMP) certification in 2008 and is a believer in ongoing professional development.



**Talton Gibson**  
**SVP, Marketing & Communications**  
**WICT**

Talton Gibson is the Senior Vice President of Marketing & Communications for Women in Cable Telecommunications (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 20 years of experience in management, strategic communications and advocacy in the entertainment and media, political, and nonprofit sectors, with a focus on empowering women.

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, including those of several female candidates. In the nonprofit sector, Gibson helped create and 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 empowering women. 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. He also served as a curriculum advisor for an award-winning online advocacy institute for women in the Middle East and North Africa on behalf of the Center for Liberty in the Middle East.

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.



**Greg Hickman**  
**VP, Member & Chapter Development**  
**WICT**

Greg joined the WICT team in 2004 and brings years of experience working with non-profit and government organizations. In his current role as VP, Member & Chapter Development, Greg oversees the organization's efforts to grow its membership and develop WICT chapters across a larger geographic footprint.

Prior to taking on his current role, Greg was Senior Director, Communications & Interactive Media, where he was responsible for the WICT website and other electronic tools, as well WICT's social media efforts. From 2011-2015 Greg was named by *Cablefax* to its Digital Hot List, an annual "who's who" of the top technology executives in the cable industry. He was the only non-profit executive named to the list in each year.

He brings to WICT his knowledge and skills in member services, electronic media and technology, as well as marketing, communications and member services, along with a healthy sense of humor and a desire to support others in their pursuit of success.

Greg earned his Bachelors Degree in 1992 from Washington College in Chestertown, Maryland, where he double majored in Business Management and French Literature. He began a Masters of Business Administration program in International Business at the George Washington University before deciding to pursue other interests.



**Christina Vergara Andrews**  
**SVP, Educational Programs**  
**WICT**

Christina has built a career leading high-profile educational programs that promote diversity, advocate learning, and reflect current trends in professional development as well as in broadcast, cable and related media spaces. At WICT, she is responsible for executing the organization’s professional education strategy, overseeing the development and delivery of leadership education and other programs related to WICT’s mission.

Prior to WICT, she served as the Director of Convention Education at NAB, managing 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. Before that, Christina served with NATPE over fifteen years in a number of roles, including oversight of the organization’s event programming. Programs under her direction included the annual NATPE conference, a complement to and highlight of the television industry’s prominent program marketplace, and the annual LATV Fest.



**Rebecca L. Walker, CPA, MBA**  
**EVP, Finance & Technology**  
**WICT**

Rebecca L. Walker is the Executive Vice President of Finance and Technology at Women in Cable Telecommunications (WICT). Prior to joining WICT, Walker served for three years as the Vice President and Chief Financial Officer at American Forests, a national conservation charity. She has more than 15 years of experience as a leader in the not-for-profit sector including roles at Reading Is Fundamental, United Way of the National Capital Area and The Summit Foundation.

Walker received an MBA from the University of Maryland's Robert H. Smith School of Business and is a Certified Public Accountant. She lives in Washington, DC with her husband, Gregg, and their two daughters.