

INTRODUCING THE

## 2026 Cable Hall of Fame Class

The Cable Hall of Fame is inducting six more visionaries into its ranks at a celebration on Thursday at the Ziegfeld Ballroom in NYC. This year's honoree class, which includes CFX Editorial Director Amy Maclean, share their perspectives on the past and future of the industry in an exclusive Q&A.



LOU  
**BORRELLI**  
CEO, NCTC

**Many of NCTC's members are the backbone of rural connectivity. What's the biggest hurdle currently facing independent operators as they push to close the digital divide?**

Rural markets are not immune to competition. We fight on multiple fronts—fiber, fixed wireless, satellite, streaming services... The BEAD debacle that delayed the distribution of funds to build is more than a speed bump. You can add to that a regulatory environment that needs to be overhauled. Need I say more?

**You helped grow Marcus Cable from 15,000 to 1.3 million customers between 1989-98. What did you learn about the industry during that time that still applies today?**

It takes collaboration to be successful - no one can do it alone. Treat people as you want to be treated—customers, employees, programming and technology partners, local government and civic leaders. Being local is your super power—commit to your communities and they will be loyal to you...assuming you treat them right.

**You were also at the forefront of AOL Time Warner's high-speed cable launch. Looking back, did we accurately predict the impact of broadband, or has it surpassed even your highest expectations?**

My expectations continue to be exceeded. Twenty-five years ago it was about

“always on” and more speed than dial-up... a pretty low bar. AOL had great content, technology and 34 million customers paying \$19.95 for dial-up. It should have been a slam dunk for the company and the industry, but pride and egos on both sides got in the way so I got out.

**You're known for being a passionate sailor. What has sailing taught you about leadership that the boardroom never could?**

As the captain, you are responsible for the ship and crew. Preparation is essential and successful execution is critical to achieve the desired result—in the boardroom and at the helm. On the water, a schedule is for fools—you can have a float plan, but you will get there when you get there. Weather and sea conditions is a potential life or death situation waiting to happen. What have I learned? A bad day on the water beats a great day in the boardroom!

**“It takes collaboration to be successful—no one can do it alone.”**

— Lou Borrelli

**What does being inducted into the Cable Hall of Fame mean to you?**

It is hard for me to get my head around the fact my photo will be hanging with the likes of Rosencrans, Dolan, Bresnan, Koplovitz, Brodsky, Commisso—both of them—Marcus, Bergman, Malone, Carlsen and all the great men and women who have given so much to our industry, the communities we serve and the people who became family along the way. I just hope I don't wake up and find out it was just a dream. ■



## Congratulations, *Lou Borrelli*.

Your induction into the Cable Hall of Fame honors a career defined by vision, leadership, and impact.  
The course you charted will benefit generations to come.

NCTC proudly celebrates your induction and your leadership that continues to guide and inspire our industry.

**NCTC**

National Content & Technology Cooperative



**KRISTIN  
DOLAN**  
CEO, AMC  
Global Media

**AMC has leaned heavily into a “boutique” streaming strategy. Why is the targeted approach to niche audiences the more sustainable model?**

As with our distinctly defined linear networks, our streaming products are designed around specific genres and content offerings. Our goal is to make and curate programming that engages fans. We then activate the capabilities of our distribution and licensing partners to deliver that content to the widest audience possible. Our wholesale approach and unified tech stack allow us to move content efficiently across all platforms, with predictable costs and a great viewer experience.

**How do you balance the need for familiar franchises with the risk of taking big swings on original shows?**

I think we balance these goals quite well. We’ve been very successful at building out world-class franchises like “The Walking Dead” or our Anne Rice universe, while still finding space to nurture a show like “Dark Winds,” which to date has delivered four 100% Rotten Tomatoes seasons in a row. Our newest original, “The Audacity,” is an adult prestige drama that represents our biggest swing this year. The ability to extend and reimagine existing franchises while fostering new universes has kept our company strong and relevant in a bustling but chaotic environment.

**You were a part of the leadership team that oversaw Cablevision’s \$17.7 billion sale to Altice USA. What did that process teach you about guiding a company through times of**

**change—something that continues to be felt in today’s media space?**

The leadership team at Cablevision during the time that preceded the sale was one of the best ever assembled, certainly one of the most trusting and collaborative teams of which I’ve been a part. We had developed a strong culture, clear objectives and organized processes that allowed us to optimize the business prior to the sale. And we were blessed with a Chairman, CEO and Board of Directors who focused on multi-year objectives versus quarter-to-quarter results.

**If the Kristin Dolan of 2015 had to negotiate a carriage deal with you today, who would win, and what would be the main sticking points?**

You’d actually need to ask my friend Tom Montemagno of Charter that question. He was our head of Programming at Cablevision at the time and somehow managed to fight many tough battles with our content partners while still maintaining their respect and friendship at the end of each negotiation.

**What does being inducted into the Cable Hall of Fame mean to you?**

The Cable Hall of Fame honors the pioneers who built this industry, many of whom I’ve had the good fortune of working with. Most notable to me would include the late Charles Dolan, a bold and fearless visionary who helped create content, packaging and products that defined our industry. In sports, hall of famers are recognized for how well they played the game. The men and women honored here actually created and built the game while they were playing it, to the benefit of millions and millions of consumers across the United States. It’s humbling to be recognized with this group of leaders, past and present. ■

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## TOM RUTLEDGE

*Director Emeritus — Former CEO of Charter Communications, 2012-2022*

Tom Rutledge is worthy of the 2026 Bresnan Ethics in Business Award not just for where he ended up, but how he got there. He started on the line—literally—climbing poles, splicing cable taps and building a cable system from the ground up while working for Eastern Telecom as a technician as he pursued a B.A. in economics.

That perspective guided his climb up the corporate ladder, which included 10 years as CEO of Charter Communications, seven as COO of Cablevision and a long run at Time Warner Cable and its predecessors. Rutledge understood the real-world impact of corporate choices on customers, employees and communities and he car-

ried that with him as Charter more than tripled in size through its acquisitions with Time Warner Cable, Bright House Networks and, appropriately for this award, Cablevision's Bresnan Broadband systems (Optimum West). Through it all, he kept a focus on the frontline, evidenced in part by Charter raising minimum wage to \$20/hour and onshoring all jobs.

Rutledge, who retired as CEO of Charter in December of 2022, also gave back to the industry as Chairman of the CableLabs and NCTA boards. The Bresnan Ethics in Business Award was created to honor outstanding cable leaders who best exemplify Bill Bresnan's longstanding commitment to ethics in business, and demonstrate societal, community and philanthropic engagement. ■



## DAVE FELLOWS

*Former CTO, Comcast;  
Past Chair of the Cable TV  
Pioneers*

**Is there an industry contribution you're most proud of?**

The answer is DOCSIS, but the part where for the first time the industry agreed on a common specification. I led the DOCSIS Certification Board which finalized the spec, and the SCTE subcommittee which turned the spec into a U.S. standard. We then took the U.S. Standard to the ITU, and achieved an International Standard. Forty years ago, every tiny cable system had its own standards—never mind trying to get different MSOs to agree on something. The industry had agreed in concept to work towards a single standard, but the tricky part was getting every MSO's technical organization to agree. Some wanted a symmetric system, some wanted a telephone return path so their systems could remain one-way, others had already launched service and didn't want to obsolete their deployed equipment and the IEEE and Telephone industry wanted ATM. This all had to be considered and I am very proud of the people who worked toward the common spec, and I worked hard to command the respect that allowed people to trust in that common spec.

**Before you entered the industry, you had a successful rowing career. What lessons from your rowing days did you bring to your work in the cable business?**

Rowing is all about teamwork—you all get to the finish line together. So, you learn the team is better than the parts, and everyone must help everyone be their best. In an eight-person boat, when you are swinging together, you feel you have the strength of eight, the strength of a superhero. I have had that same feeling in industry. Also you learn about yourself, and your own limitations and how to overcome those limits. I was elected captain of my undefeated college crew, and also of the Olympic Rowing team, so I also learned about leadership, and especially leadership by example. You learn about the thrill of winning, and the heartbreak of defeat. You learn to focus, and that hard training is what leads to victory on race day.

**How do you think the cable industry is positioned to support the needs of the AI boom?**

I was happy to retire when I did, confident I had done all I could to position the industry for the converged future. And then AI came along and I thought, "If only I was 20 years younger!" First, AI will help every cable employee do his or her job. It will diagnose network symptoms before they become outages. It will walk individual customers through issues and create offerings for them.

We used to speak of “the market of one” but you need the power of AI to really achieve that. In many ways, it feels like 1993, where we had launched Internet access, and we knew we had something special, but the world was fixated on “Is the Internet real or is it hype?” In the short term, it (the Internet 20 years ago, and AI today) is all hype, but in the long term, you can’t over-hype it enough! And one last word: latency!

### **What does joining the Cable Hall of Fame mean to you?**

The first thought that went through my head, as I teared up when Michael Wilner told me, was like Sally Field: “You really like me!” But the second thought was the respect that all of the teams of which I’ve been a part share in this honor. It is the recognition that the DOCSIS teams, the converged platform teams, the fiber optic teams, the teams at S-A, Continental, MediaOne, AT&T Broadband, Comcast, CableLabs, SCTE and so forth all share in this award. Every one of those groups contributed a part of the industry we know and love today. I’m still enjoying the ride! ■



**AMY MACLEAN**  
*Editorial Director, CFX*

**You’ve been with CFX for more than 20 years, told so many important stories and talked to many influential people in**

### **the cable industry. Is there a story or interview that’s stuck with you to this day?**

That’s tough. I’ve written a lot of stories, attended so many events and interviewed some fascinating people the years. One that stands out is an interview I did with Michael Powell as he was preparing to step down as NCTA’s CEO. I’d been in his office a few times over the years, but never asked him about the many mementos that adorned it. I finally got the chance and loved hearing all the stories, from the long journey surrounding the military cavalry sword to the smiley face his father Colin Powell snuck in when signing his commission as FCC Chairman. There was also something that felt full circle about that conversation as my first Cablefax assignment outside the office was covering a Powell appearance in 2001 when he was FCC Chairman. He regularly had reporters in his office for press briefings when he was at the FCC, and I felt like I’d really gotten to know him even before he took the NCTA job. It was fun watching him

move over to cable and see the industry react to him.

### **We’re at a time when newsrooms are shrinking and media organizations are leaning more heavily on AI for newsgathering and content creation. What advice do you have for journalists just entering the field?**

Technology has reshaped the journalist’s toolkit many times over the years, but one constant remains: great reporters build real-life relationships. That’s never going to change. Get out of the office. Meet people face-to-face. Be curious and never forget—your sources are real people whose lives are far bigger than your story.

### **You’ve covered cable through many of its ups and downs and sea changes. What do you think the next evolution of the industry will look like?**

We live in a digital world now, and cable has become the connective tissue that powers it. The industry won’t settle for just being a pipe in the home. It’s already evolving into the connective hub for our digital lives. We’re seeing MVNO offerings, streaming aggregation and smart home integration. I think cable will push this even further into gaming, education, music, fitness and more by pairing its powerful infrastructure with personalized user interfaces.

### **You’re very involved in your local food pantry. Can you share why that cause is important to you?**

Personal connections matter to me. I’ve lived in Germantown, Maryland, for 20 years now, and I love it. I found Germantown Help when looking for ways to give back to my community. I was drawn to how it operates a little differently than most food pantries in that groceries are delivered directly to recipients. Not only does this make it easier for people without cars, but it’s also better for the environment not to have vehicles idling in long pick-up lines. As a delivery driver, I bring a week’s worth of groceries right to someone’s door and into their home. It’s a small act, but it creates a meaningful connection with my neighbors. Plus, it’s pretty good exercise!

### **What does joining the Cable Hall of Fame mean to you?**

I’m truly humbled. My job has always been to tell this industry’s story, so to be recognized as even a small part of it means a great deal to me. I’ve had the privilege of learning from and working alongside so many outstanding journalists—this honor really belongs to them as well. It’s something I hope to share with my grandkids one day. ■



## TONY SPELLER

*Senior Vice President, Network Operations*

The Cable Center's Innovation and Intrapreneurship Award for Excellence recognizes a visionary who has gone above and beyond to drive meaningful and positive change in the industry. This year's recipient, Comcast SVP, Network Operations Tony Speller, has done just that across his more than 35 years leading technological innovation.

Speller currently oversees Comcast's network operations strategy for its Connectivity & Platforms business across a 40-state footprint. It's his job to ensure that the Xfinity network provides reliable, seamless service in a converged era when the connectivity industry has evolved into the backbone of virtually all digital experiences, as well as AI and edge computing.

Speller led the deployment of next-gen technologies across 17 states.

But his impact goes beyond the workplace. Speller has also made a difference as a mentor and community leader. Speaking to CFX in 2024, he shared that his advice to future generations is to "be bold and take calculated risks" and to step out of their comfort zones because "we perform at our absolute best when we do this."

Speller is involved in several charitable organizations, including the United Way, the Urban League and the Greater Houston Partnership. He was also recognized as a Cable TV Pioneer by SCTE and recently received the NAMIC Leader in Technology Award. ■



## CURTIS SYMONDS

*President, HBCU Go*

**An HBCU television project has been a passion for you for many years. What kept you committed and what ultimately helped it take flight?**

My passion for this project stems from my roots at Central State University, where both of my parents worked. My mother worked there as a physical education teacher and my father worked 50 years in the maintenance department. Growing up with them in that environment, I saw firsthand the immense value of an HBCU education. This pushed me to ensure more people become aware of the culture, history and legacy of these institutions. After 14 years of pitching the idea, meeting Byron Allen was the turning point. He not only believed in the vision for HBCU GO but also provided the essential resources to make it a reality.

**How did Central State University—Ohio's only public HBCU—influence who you are today?**

Growing up on campus allowed me to learn the school's history directly from its great presidents. Being involved in campus life from such a young age helped me appreciate what the university means to both the African Ameri-

can community and to me personally. My experiences as a child on campus, combined with my time as a student athlete playing basketball and studying physical education, molded me into the individual I am today.

**You played a key role in building BET into an attractive acquisition for Viacom in 2001. As Paramount and WBD prepare to merge, what do you hope the next chapter looks like for the brand?**

During my 15 years as VP of Affiliate Marketing at BET, I proudly contributed to the company's significant growth. What I hope for BET in its next chapter is for the brand to return to its roots: community focus. With so many platforms now competing for the African American audience, BET must re-energize the spirit that drove its early success. I have great confidence that President Louis Carr, whom I have worked with for many years, will successfully lead the brand into this new era.

**You were COO for the WNBA's Washington Mystics from 2005-2007. Did you envision the kind of momentum we're seeing now in women's sports?**

Yes, I always believed this growth was inevitable. During my time with the Mystics, I told the league that Women's sports would become a major global player within a decade. Coming from a TV background, it is rewarding to see many of the ideas I advocated for come to fruition today. For too long, the sports world failed to fully

appreciate the athletes in Women's sports such as golf, soccer and track and field, to name just a few. These sports, however, have now become focal points for engagement in the modern sports landscape. Looking at the success of women in the Winter Olympics, for example, clarifies why I anticipated this level of growth following my tenure with the WNBA.

#### **How does it feel to be named to the Cable Hall of Fame?**

It is a truly incredible feeling. After 40 years in the media business, being recognized by my peers is the icing on the cake. Having represented the industry through roles at Continental Cablevision, ESPN, BET and now Allen Media Group, I feel I have reached a career pinnacle. To stand on that stage in April 2026 and look out at the people honoring this journey is a moment I will treasure. I am deeply grateful to the board for this selection. ■



## **Industry Organization and Event**

*(Answered by Chairman Steve Raymond)*

#### **When the CTAM Colorado chapter ended, it could have been the end of what was then called SkiTAM. Instead Adaptive Spirit was formed and has continued to grow. What's the secret to its longevity?**

We felt like we were already drawing industry members and companies from all over the U.S. and we should be able to rebrand as a standalone event. Joe Rooney was my fellow co-chair and CMO of Cox at the time and he came up with the name Adaptive Spirit. We wanted to establish the organization as an industry event that brought leaders, partners and industry members together to network and learn while supporting the US Para Ski and Snowboard team. Anyone attending Adaptive Spirit is immediately attracted to the athletes, their stories and comes away with a changed perception about disability and what is possible.

#### **The telecom industry doesn't seem like a natural partner for supporting the U.S. Paralympic Ski and Snowboard teams. How did this come to be?**

It was a little lucky I suppose. My good friend Bob Meserve was a member of the U.S. Disabled team in the late '80s

and early '90s. He had retired but let me know that U.S. Skiing was going to be disbanding the Disabled team as they had lost a major sponsor. I was president of the Rocky Mountain Chapter of CTAM at the time and my co-chair was Ginny Kaus from Time Warner Cable. Ginny knew the head coach of the U.S. Disabled Team. Our chapter was looking to create a networking and educational event and supporting a worthy cause. We both thought of the team. It made sense as we were the Rocky Mountain Chapter and many of us are skiers and Colorado is a great draw.

#### **Education and networking are key to the event.**

#### **Where is the real energy in the room right now?**

We are very focused on keeping up with our changing industry and we focus on the key topics that are relevant to the industry. We invite senior leaders to discuss the biggest industry issues. Our sponsor list has evolved as the industry has grown beyond cable. We now have over 65 sponsors ranging from MVPDs, mobile providers, data cloud companies streaming provider and vendors that support every platform.

#### **Of course, the skiing and slalom are part of the tradition. What's one of the most memorable moments that has happened on the slopes over the years?**

The dual Giant Slalom, which is held on Saturday, features sponsor race teams and we pair each sponsor team with an athlete from the Para Ski and Snowboard teams. We have a competitive category and a recreational category. The competitive category features more accomplished skiers and even some ringers have been known to show up to compete on sponsor teams. We even has Gold medalist Picabo Street and Jonny Moseley compete in years past. One year, one of our sponsors was so focused on winning the race so he brought his "interns for the day" and they all happened to be on the National Champion University of Denver ski team!

#### **How does it feel for Adaptive Spirit to be part of The Cable Hall of Fame?**

We are very honored to be recognized by the Hall of Fame. We believe our industry can be very proud of the past 30 years of support they have provided the athletes of the U.S. Para Ski and Snowboard teams. This support has led to the U.S. having teams that consistently compete for the Nations Cup, which recognize the best Para Ski and Snowboard teams each year. This consistent support has allowed us to set up an endowment which will be a long-term way to support the teams and the athletes. ■



# Congratulations, Tom

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The 2026 Bresnan Ethics in Business Award recognizes your decades of principled leadership and dedication to our local communities.

Your exemplary vision, integrity and pioneering spirit helped shape the cable industry. You are an inspiration to us all.

**Charter**<sup>®</sup>  
COMMUNICATIONS