

# SPECIAL REPORT

## CABLE PIONEERS

Denver will play host to the first Cable TV Pioneers Dinner tied to Cable-Tec Expo.



# Cable TV Pioneers Head West Into a New Era

51st annual event in Denver will be first in concert with Cable-Tec Expo

WHAT BETTER LOCATION than Cable's Capital to usher in a new era for the Cable TV Pioneers' annual banquet?

The first 50 iterations of the event were held in conjunction with NCTA-The Television & Internet Association's now-defunct annual convention, most recently known as INTX. On Oct. 17, the gala for the first time will be held just before the start of the SCTE-ISBE Cable-Tec Expo, from Oct. 17-20.

"Change growth, and celebrating this year's induction in Denver, prior to the annual SCTE-ISBE Cable-Tec Expo, is one of the many ways we are adapting and growing," dinner chair Dave Fellows said in a statement. "We believe our 51st banquet will have a significant attendance and provide sponsors with a wonderful opportunity to participate in one of the top events of the industry this year."

This year's class of 20 honorees — 14 men and six women — were selected from what the group said was a record number of nominees. They join the more than 700 men and women who comprise past Cable TV Pioneers classes. The black-tie gala will be held at The Brown Palace, 321 17th St., Denver. For more information on the Cable Pioneers, go to [cabletvpioneers.com](http://cabletvpioneers.com). ■

*Profiles in this section were compiled and written by Craig Kuhl.*

# SPECIAL REPORT

## CABLE PIONEERS

### TOM ADAMS

During his pioneering 40-year cable career, Tom Adams has not only shown a wide range of skill sets — from field technician for NewChannels to his current position as executive vice president of field operations for Charter Communications — but the leadership qualities to accomplish several key industry advancements.

For example, he led Time Warner Cable's beta launch of high-speed data; developed and launched Newhouse Communications's home-security business; and was first to deploy TWC's DVR and internet-protocol telephone services. And with those accomplishments, he managed the operations with the highest of standards.

Adams's passion for mentoring and developing the industry's future leaders has equaled his technology advancements, as evidenced by his active roles in such industry organizations as the Society of Cable Telecommunications Engineers, the Cable & Telecommunications Association for Marketing and Women in Cable Telecommunications, and his work beyond the cable industry with the United Way and other organizations fostering diversity.



Cable Pioneers.

During his journey through cable, he has tirelessly worked for his customers' best interests, from his responsibilities as marketing manager, director of product management and VP of marketing to CEO. His "win-win" philosophy has earned him praise at every stop during his pioneering career and provided valuable expertise and insights to his legion of customers.



Beyond his work within the cable industry, he has also shown the same level of commitment to various nonprofit organizations, including work with his local Methodist church, where he has taught Sunday School and leadership studies and has served as a board member and as chairman of the Beacon of Hope.

### CYNTHIA CARPENTER

Cynthia Carpenter's 26-year odyssey through the cable industry began inauspiciously enough as employee No. 16 at Starz Entertainment. But it would launch a career in sales and marketing that transformed several marketing paradigms at myriad networks and MSOs.

From her role as director of marketing at PrimeStar, where she directed the marketing efforts of a \$400 million division of Time Warner Cable, to her current position as VP of



human resource operations for Charter Communications in Denver, her active, engaged, and competitive nature cultivated during her years as a student at Cornell (where she played Division I ice hockey) would serve her well.

She would bring her marketing experience, forward thinking and leadership qualities to companies such as High Speed Access Corp., Level 3 Communications, Charter Communications and others.

Yet her work with organizations such as WICT, and her pivotal role at the Rocky Mountain Children's Law Center, which transforms the lives of abused, neglected and at-risk children, make her a worthy new addition to the 2017 class of Pioneers.



### MATT BLANK

As one of the most influential and impactful players on cable's stage, Matt Blank's achievements during his 30-year career have made an indelible mark on the cable industry, and earned him a place in the 2017 class of Pioneers.

Blank's tenure at Showtime Networks, which began in 1988, has been nothing short of spectacular. He has helped transform Showtime into one of the most successful programmers in the TV industry, growing it into three premium networks — Showtime, The Movie Channel and Flix, plus the Smithsonian Channel joint venture. Most recently, Showtime launched a new standalone streaming service available through Amazon, Apple TV, Google, Roku and other platforms.

Blank was also a champion and an early adopter of advancing technologies such as HD and SVOD.

Yet his accomplishments go well beyond cable. He has been honored by numerous nonprofit organizations, including his work with the Harlem Children's Zone, which takes a holistic approach to rebuilding a community by helping thousands of children and families break the cycle of poverty.

### STEVE BRETT

Amidst the cable industry's go-go years of the 1980s and '90s, Steve Brett's work as general counsel for Tele-Communications Inc., United Artists Entertainment and subsequently with the NCTA, would lead to a place in this year's class of Pioneers.

Fresh from the Wharton School of Business and the University of Pennsylvania Law School, Brett would go on to serve as legal counsel for key cable companies during the industry's most volatile period, as it fought to grow its business through a gauntlet of legal battles and regulation.

His work as vice president and secretary of most of TCI's subsidiaries and as senior executive VP for AT&T Broadband led to his current position as chairman of General Communication Inc., an independent MSO and largest Alaska-based diversified communications provider.

Outside of the cable industry, Brett has held many nonprofit leadership positions with the Volunteers of America, Colorado Symphony Orchestra, Boulder (Colo.) Community Foundation and other groups, while also acting as an informal mentor to young cable executives and fellow board members.

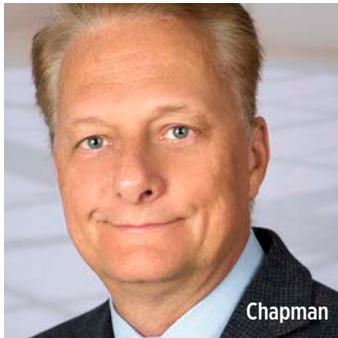


### JACK BRYANT

In 1982, Jack Bryant would launch his cable career as account manager at Oak Communications minus much fanfare. Thirty-five years later, with an impressive resume that includes positions at Scientific-Atlanta, General Instrument, Arris, Wave7 and his current role as president and CEO of ComSonics, he joins the 2017 class of

# SPECIAL REPORT

## CABLE PIONEERS



### JOHN CHAPMAN

A true pioneer in the ever-evolving world of technology, John Chapman's vision, innovation and strategic thinking have earned him a place in this year's class of Pioneers.

A classic example of such thinking came in 1996, when Chapman founded the cable-modem termination systems business at Cisco Systems, where he architected and shipped the industry's first CMTS.

And Chapman was just getting started. As a prolific inventor, he has more than 100 patents issued and pending related to the Data Over Cable Service Interface Specification (DOCSIS) and has published more than 30 cable-related white papers.

He has been an invaluable asset at Cisco, spending his entire career at the highly respected company and receiving three Cisco Pioneer Awards for DOCSIS.

In 2012, he was inducted into the SCTE Hall of Fame for his work with DOCSIS and awarded the National Innovation Award in China for his work on Remote PHY.

He continues to support and mentor engineers, especially women in technology and was a member of the NCTA's paper selection committee for several years.

### ANNE COWAN

Immediately following passage of the 1992 Cable Act reregulating the industry, it became startlingly clear that a bold new marketing strategy was needed. Enter Anne Cowan and a future generation of marketing professionals.

Cowan's vital role in reinventing cable's marketing approach was intended to help the industry craft positive messages for the media and consumers.

It worked. And it led her to CTAM, where she would train, coach and encourage scores of young industry executives and a growing army of marketers in the finer points of cable marketing.

Most recently, she engineered the merger of Association of Cable Communicators (ACC) into CTAM, enhancing its marketing collaborations with a critical public relations and communications component.

She continues her support for the Alliance for Women in Media and the empowerment of women and in furthering diversity in her industry.



### CHRIS DUNKESON

In 1993, Chris Dunkeson's pioneering cable career was quietly launched at Jones Intercable as an installation technician and then warehouse coordinator. Today, he is responsible for all of Comcast's residential and business customers as area vice president of New Mexico.

That's quite a career trajectory, and one that has led to a place in the 2017 class of Pioneers.

His increased responsibilities at Comcast are a product of his increased industry knowledge and experience, having witnessed upgrades, call-center expansions, new product launches and employee growth.

He was instrumental in rolling out Comcast's high-speed internet service in the early 2000s and currently oversees more than 200,000 customer relationships, while reducing trouble call rates and increasing on-time arrival rates.

He has served in several leadership roles at nonprofits as well, including the Greater Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce, National Multiple Sclerosis Society of New Mexico and the United Way of Central New Mexico.

### JANA FAY

Jana Fay's roots in the cable industry run deep. She was C-SPAN's first employee, hired away from the NCTA by founder Brian Lamb circa 1978, before the network even existed.



She's played a vital role in the fledgling public-service network's expansion for more than 40 years. During those growth years, Fay literally saw the groundbreaking

for the first private satellite uplink in Washington, D.C., for C-SPAN.

Her commitment to the network led to her current position as vice president of finance, corporate secretary and treasurer.

The valuable experience gained through her many financial responsibilities would culminate in her appointment as a corporate officer.

Beyond her C-SPAN duties, Fay has played many key roles in industry financial and audit organizations.

### CHARLOTTE FIELD

With AT&T Broadband serving as her apprenticeship, Charlotte Field took her acquired skills as division manager to Comcast following the merger of the two companies.

For the next 16 years, Field would be instrumental in

advancing the company's network operations, most notably the design and implementation of network operations center (NOC) processes, while identifying

peering issues with the migration of the @Home internet service to AT&T Broadband's CMTS infrastructure.

Her eventual move to Charter Communications in 2015 as senior vice president of application platform operations would elevate her to one of the top women's executive positions in the industry, and a place in this year's class of Pioneers.

She continues to give back to her industry and community by serving on several boards, including the University of Colorado Engineering Advisory Board and mentoring future female leaders through various industry organizations such as the SCTE's Women in Technology program.



# SPECIAL REPORT

## CABLE PIONEERS

### TONY FINGER

Circa 1981, a fresh-out-of-college Tony Finger would join newly acquired CommScope as a sales representative, arriving just in time for cable's decade of wild growth.

His tutors included such cable icons as Tom Jost and others, providing him with the insights he would use over the next 36 years to carve out his place in the 2017 Pioneer class.

Finger's close relationships with major MSOs established him as one of the most respected and knowledgeable executives in the cable industry, evidenced by his being named Cox Communications's vendor of the year while receiving its Collaboration Award in 2017 for work on new cabling solutions.

His lengthy career in sales led to his current position as vice president of sales service providers, MSO, at CommScope.

His work with the SCTE has been a notable component of his resumé, having served as a board member offering his guidance on several organization functions.



Finger

adding capital budgeting, technology improvements, performance and other functions to his job description.

Armed with this valuable experience, Hanson in 1997 started and grew Cougar Communications into a 50-employee technical services company with more than \$12 million in annual revenue. Once Cougar had grown, Hanson helped launch another startup,



Hanson

Ambit Project Management, which today is addressing the increased need for project managers with field experience.

As a vital member of the cable industry, he has been a member of

SCTE since 1980, working with the organization tasked with using the return paths of cable systems to deliver high-speed data and internet services.

### DALE HOPKINS

Considered one of the cable industry's true trailblazers, Dale Hopkins has helped build and manage numerous high-growth media companies — from major MSOs to digital and traditional media companies — since 1980.

Her deep understanding of the interactive community and its lack of resources led to her founding of Marketing Interactive, the first conference to address the challenges and accomplishments of marketers in interactive entertainment.

Hopkins's career path has included positions at CBS, E! Entertainment, G4 Media, GSN and her current role as president and CEO of In Demand. Her cable expertise and entrepreneurial skills have proven invaluable to cable's marketing organization, CTAM.

Outside of her industry contributions, Hopkins was a founding member of the Waldorf School in Los Angeles; is a board member of Toberman Neighborhood Center, a nonprofit organization assisting Los Angeles Harbor-area families in living healthy, purposeful lives; and is a leading force in anti-gang activities.



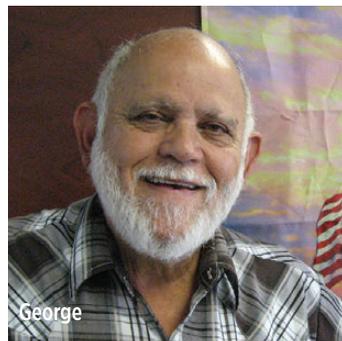
Hopkins

### JAMES GEORGE

The pioneering efforts of 54-year cable industry veteran James George, starting in 1964 as owner and president of one of the earliest CATV systems in West Palm Beach, Fla., truly represent cable's early entrepreneurial spirit.

After partnering with the late Glenn Jones to form Jones Spacelink in 1979, George would go on to found Telesat, another CATV system, and design and build out systems in the Caribbean, Iceland, Mexico and in other countries, while serving in various capacities at several cable-related companies.

His extensive cable resume also includes consulting work for the United Nations, which sent him to Russia to design and install a small town's phone system.



George

George has been elected to several boards in the engineering field and has been a member of SCTE since 1973, and now a worthy new member of the Pioneer class of 2017.

He was nominated for the International Peace Prize by the Caribbean's United Cultural Convention and continues to mentor students at the Marion Technical Institute.

### TIM GROPP

Tim Gropp's early years in the telecom industry would lay the groundwork for his 30-year career in cable and his place as a Cable Pioneer.

Gropp's depth of knowledge and wide range of experience in marketing, engineering, operations, supply chain and business development have been vital in his rise from account executive to his current position as senior vice president of sales at Arris. For the past 10 years, he has led and managed sales teams across all of Arris's product lines.

Most notably, he recently led Arris's team in building Australia's future broadband with National Broadband Network, Co., the government business enterprise tasked with delivering open access broadband to all premises in Australia.

His sales teams have also placed a broad set of cable products and technologies around the globe. All of this after earning a degree in ... botany. Go figure.

Gropp has also been a driving force for Adaptive Spirit, the industry's effort to support the U.S. Paralympic downhill skiing and snowboard teams.



Gropp

### LARRY HANSON

In the fast-moving, early years of cable, Larry Hanson proved to be the right guy at the right time, joining TCI in 1977 as its regional engineer for three states.

Hanson would eventually assume responsibility for the engineering and technical staffs in eight states, while

---

## DEBRA LEE

In 1986, during the cable industry's growth spurt, Debra Lee would join fledgling network Black Entertainment Television as vice president of legal affairs. It would mark the beginning of a stellar 30-year career culminating in her current position as CEO of BET Networks.

Lee has played a pivotal role in delivering record-setting ratings and led the network into original movies, documentaries, concert specials, news, public-policy coverage and late-night talk shows. But perhaps her signature at the Viacom-owned network group is pioneering an entire genre of music, entertainment, news and public-affairs programming for African-Americans.

Lee's achievements have not gone unnoticed. She was named to both The Cable Center's Cable Hall of Fame and the *Broadcasting & Cable* Hall of Fame, along with earning the NCTA's prestigious Vanguard Award in 2003, the first African-American woman executive to receive the honor.

And she's now a member of the Cable Pioneers class of 2017.



---

## SEAN MCGRAIL

In 1984, Sean McGrail's move from Continental Cablevision to director of marketing of New England Sports Network, a fledgling regional sports network channel, would have a lasting impact on the network, McGrail and the cable industry as a whole.

Throughout the 1980s, NESN, the TV home of baseball's Boston Red Sox and the NHL's Boston Bruins, grew steadily as a premium TV service. It strategically invested in additional sports rights, news content and technology innovations, all under the guidance of McGrail as the network's vice president of marketing.

Yet that was just the beginning of his pioneering career.



Promoted to president and CEO in 2000, McGrail would alter the distribution of NESN to increase its reach and, in 2004, he led efforts to become the first regional sports network in the U.S. to distribute all of its home games in HD. One year later, upgrade the entire network schedule to HD.

Beyond his NESN responsibilities, McGrail has devoted much of his personal time to industry groups such as CTAM, WICT and others, and has served on several charity boards throughout New England.

---

## RON MCMILLAN

Ron McMillan's 35-year career with Warner and then Time Warner Cable has been fraught with engineering challenges, and with true pioneering spirit met and solved.

His entry into the cable business as vice president of engineering for Warner Cable in Houston, circa 1982, would provide a litmus test as he assumed the overall supervision and responsibility for its engineering department.

It didn't take long for him to become Warner Cable's corporate VP of engineering, where he would oversee the planning, budgeting and execution of all engineering plans for the Warner-owned systems.

It was McMillan's skills and ability to manage people that stood out, as it quickly became apparent he could manage employees to get the job done.

He took those skills beyond cable as well, serving on several industry related boards in Texas and Wisconsin and with several non-profit organizations such as the Be An Angel Foundation, Kid Care and Child Advocates Inc.



---

## JAY VAUGHAN

Forty years ago, Jay Vaughan joined a small, developer-owned cable system near Austin, Texas, as a rookie technician, installer, maintenance and repair man.

The invaluable experience gained at that small system performing a wide range of jobs would lead him to a notable career and countless accolades from his peers, along with numerous industry innovations as a top engineer with Rogers U.S. Cablesystems, ATC, Charter Communications and, most recently, principal consultant with DVS Services Inc.

At each career stop, he has led the search for more cost-effective plant upgrade strategies, and in the late 1980s consulted with the French MSO Com-Dev on all technology topics. Most recently, he project-managed the development of Charter's Worldbox version 1.1.

Vaughan has regularly presented papers at SCTE, NCTA and CableLabs conferences, and helped lay the groundwork for CableLabs's DOCSIS Cable Modem Certification process.



---

## RICHARD WHITE

In 1973, newly minted Pioneer Richard White would join the young cable industry as staff engineer for Vision Cable in Fort Lee, N.J., and, for the next 44 years, bring his much-needed engineering prowess to the industry.

He has been at the forefront of developing and introducing numerous technologies. For example, his guidance in launching the first operational 450-MHZ system and his role as early adopter of digital set-top boxes, high-speed data, digital video, DVRs, voice-over-internet protocol, status monitoring, VOD, home security and gaming, all contributed to his pioneer status.

His installation in 1979 of one of first FM video fiber links was a groundbreaking effort.

White's contributions outside of his technical innovations are numerous, serving as a senior member of the IEEE since 1971. Apart from his many achievements in cable, he has served as state director of the LAMB Foundation of North Carolina and is a member and past president of Knights of Columbus in Charlotte, N.C. ■

