

**Remarks of Commissioner Deborah Taylor Tate**  
**NAB Special Reception Recognizing the Important Role of Women in Radio**  
**September 27, 2007**

Thank you for having me. As I look around this room, it is truly an honor to be in the presence of such remarkable women. We have with us Susan Davenport Austin, Vice President and Treasurer of Sheridan Broadcasting Corporation, which manages American Urban Radio networks, the only African-American owned national radio network, with over 400 affiliates across the country. We also have Caroline Beasley who serves as Executive Vice President and CFO of Beasley Broadcast Group, Inc., which is the 18<sup>th</sup> largest radio broadcasting company in the country. Also here this afternoon is Susan Patrick, co-owner and executive Vice President of Legend Communications. Susan has been in the media brokerage business for more than 20 years. And then we have Mary Quass, President and CEO of NRG Media, which operates 84 radio stations across the Midwest.

This is quite a group. And I haven't even mentioned Edie Hilliard, Erica Farber, Mary Bennett, Ginny Morris, and so many others, whose accomplishments I could spend the rest of the night listing. Women like these inspire all of us-- and provide examples for our daughters and the young women across this country of what women today are accomplishing in the media industry.

Just last week I was in Chicago for a hearing on media ownership, and had the opportunity to meet with Melody Spann-Cooper, President of Chicago's only African-American-owned radio station, WVON, and take a tour of her station. She purchased the business in 1999 and has made incredible improvements to the studio and facilities. Melody has been recognized by the *Chicago Sun-Times* as one of the Ten Most Powerful Women in Media, a well-deserved distinction. As she accurately pointed out, her success is a model for the entire community. These are the kinds of stories I hear all across the country.

Despite these victories, we still have many battles ahead. Women comprise 51% of the population, yet, according to Edie Hilliard's 2007 study, women own just 3.4% of the 11,884 radio stations in this country. Only 7% of the directors of the 14 largest radio companies are women. Only 4 of the 42 "Most Powerful People in Radio" are women. Turn on the television and you'll see plenty of women's programming. Radio stations have a long way to go to catch up. The challenge before us is not to cast blame, but to create a solution. The Minority Media & Telecommunications Council has identified three primary hurdles that most small businesses confront, particularly those owned by women and minorities: lack of access to financing, both capital and debt; lack of access to spectrum; and lack of access to opportunity. I want to partner with each of you to make sure we are doing all that we can to remove these obstacles. I know that we share the same goal-- to promote diversity at all levels of media, from management to ownership to other "spheres of influence."

As I have said many times, if we are truly to experience diversity we must see women not just in ownership positions, but also in the boardroom and the control room. I want to see more women in broadcasting who are, like you, making decisions, making deals, and truly making history. Programs like NAB's Education Foundation give me reason to believe we will turn the tide, and the next generation will see diversity at all

levels of media organizations. Last year I spoke to one of the NAB Broadcast Leadership Training Classes. The success of that program speaks for itself—18 graduates currently own their own stations; 28 have moved up to senior management or larger markets; several are in the process of acquiring stations. In addition to the Education Foundation, NAB's Ownership Forum provides aspiring broadcast station owners with vital contacts and information, and the Station Disposition Forums work closely with the Minority Media Telecommunications Council to host meetings which connect women and minorities from all across the country.

As a Commissioner I want to again pledge to do what I can regarding our own policies, so I am looking for your ideas, your vision, your successes and your failures regarding these policies. There are a number of race- and gender-neutral initiatives that I believe the Commission could undertake to remove barriers to market entry by small businesses and promote diversity of media voices. Some are informal and more immediate in their impact – the use of our time and efforts to champion the issue of ownership diversity, to call attention to it and raise the level of conversation. Others require formal action, including Congressional legislation and Commission rulemaking. However change is accomplished, I hope we all agree with the end goal. We just need to get to work!

Perhaps the most effective action the Commission could take is to establish a new tax certificate program similar to the one in effect from 1978 – 1995. In the years following its inception, the program contributed to an increase in minority broadcast ownership from 60 stations to over 300 stations. I also hope that the Commission will act soon to consider the use of FM translators by AM stations. As of 2001, more than half of all minority-owned radio stations were AM stations. Chairman Martin and I have also discussed allowing tv stations to lease new, unused digital programming streams. This is precisely how Melody Spann-Cooper has been so successful. She has a leasing agreement with Clear Channel, with an option to buy. After the DTV Transition, which I hope we are all talking about, spectrum will be left over and available for new uses. Allowing spectrum leasing would provide women and minority owners new opportunities for distribution of their own programming streams.

Finally, Minority Media Telecommunications Council has suggested relaxation of the Commission's equity-debt plus, or EDP, attribution standard. An in-market party providing more than 33% of the total assets of a licensee is considered to have enough control over the licensee to create an attributable interest in the licensee's stations, resulting in those stations counting toward the financier's ownership limits in that market. Raising the EDP attribution threshold could help small businesses attract the debt financing they need to enter the broadcast market.

Additionally, we need to challenge all broadcasters—large, small, independent, and network-owned, to reassess the content we are providing to women listeners. Women are the primary decision makers when it comes to the purchase of consumer goods. For example, women make 75% of decisions about buying new homes, and 81% of the decisions about buying groceries. They influence at least 80% of all household spending. We are talking about literally billions of dollars. Broadcasters need to realize that tailoring programming to women is a pro-business decision.

With regard to women in management positions, 90% of programming directors are male, and 84% of general managers are male. We can't expect women to own

stations or even have access to capital if they haven't had CEO experience. There are new and hopefully successful business models being tried, such as internet streaming, which perhaps may give women and other minorities another avenue for leadership.

Rather than allowing women radio listenership to continue to decline, maybe we need to challenge the industry to look at the numbers, the spending patterns, and actually invest in this revenue stream.

While many of you here today have made it, you broke the glass ceiling. We cannot be complacent and we have to ensure that we keep moving in the right direction. I challenge the businesses and industries that come before the FCC to bring us creative ideas. We cannot merely accept the statistics and status quo. I had hoped we would have a real conversation, compiling real concepts and maybe even a few solutions, the possibility of industry support or a developing a new Quetzal type fund. So while I want to praise those of you who have met with success, I also want to recognize our failures and take some action. Please help me use my time effectively—whether policy, rules or bully pulpit.

Margaret Mead once said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." As I look around this room tonight, I see the very people who are changing the world. I encourage you to continue toward the goal of creating radio stations that reflect the diversity of America. Thank you.