

Opening Remarks of Commissioner Kathleen Q. Abernathy
Equal Employment Opportunity *En Banc* Hearing
June 24, 2002

I want to thank you all for coming today and being a part of this hearing on our proposed equal employment opportunity rules. The Commission's goals of broad outreach and anti-discrimination play a vital role in serving the public interest. Broad outreach and anti-discrimination rules will enable all people from various backgrounds within each community to become aware of specific job openings and media opportunities in general. The longer-term recruitment initiatives, including scholarships and internship programs, will help a wide array of people develop the knowledge and skills to pursue these opportunities. In addition, media companies will benefit from a range of qualified applicants from which to choose, while qualified candidates will have a fair opportunity to compete for jobs. And the public will benefit by receiving services created and delivered by a talented workforce.

I had the opportunity to meet last week with an inspiring group of college students who are working in the industry through the Emma L. Bowen Foundation for Minority Interests in Media internship program. These bright, insightful and intelligent students were concerned about the opportunities that lay ahead of them. I believe that EEO rules – partly by fostering involvement in programs like the Bowen Foundation – will ensure that these students and others will become a part of our vibrant media industry.

I am glad so many people wanted to come here and talk with us today. The insight and viewpoint of the industry and the public are, as always, an important part of this process. A key ingredient to developing proposed rules will be learning from the success stories. As we will hear today, there are many initiatives that companies have undertaken on their own irrespective of any Commission rules. I applaud these efforts. I hope that others can learn from their example and understand how outreach programs can contribute to the success of their companies as well.

As a Commissioner, I am not looking for better opportunities for any particular group of people, but I want to ensure that there are equal opportunities for all.