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MINORITY MEDIA OWNERSHIP WORKSHOP (MB DOCKET NO. 09-182)

How the FCC's Media Ownership Rules Affect Minority and Female Ownership

JANUARY 27, 2010

On behalf of American Women in Radio and Television (AWRT), I want to thank you for inviting us to participate in this workshop. My name is Sylvia Strobel, and I am the interim president of AWRT. Prior to stepping in to this role in October, I was a member of the National Board of Directors of AWRT for eight years, and most recently served as Chair of the National Board.

AWRT is proud of its 59-year-history. AWRT was formed in 1951 as successor to the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) women's division. NAB approved the new organization, offering complete cooperation and assistance. The following year, more than 280 women gathered to celebrate and approve the structure of AWRT. AWRT has grown its membership immensely since its founding, and has nineteen professional chapters throughout the United States. Our members are quite diverse in age, work experience and job duties. AWRT local chapters provide members with a local forum for personal and professional development and enhance leadership, public speaking and group decision-making skills.

The mission of AWRT is to advance the interests of women in media and allied fields by educating, advocating and acting as a resource to our members, the industry and the public. One of our key goals is to promote the entry, development, advancement and retention of women in the media industry. AWRT continues to evolve to meet the needs of its members in a changing

media landscape, and serves as a partner, resource and educational service provider to the media industry at large. Ongoing initiatives include government and regulatory advocacy, employment information services, professional development programs, and industry updates.

Two new initiatives undertaken by AWRT headquarters over the last few years include a new Student Chapter Program and a Mentoring Program. Both are geared to increasing the number of women entering the media industry, as well as providing career advancement opportunities. AWRT currently has eight student chapters, with several more student chapters in development. Our student chapters include Georgia State, Spellman College, George Washington University, Lyndon State, Howard University, Montclair State University, Penn State University and Central Michigan University. Our student members are recognized through our annual Gracies® Awards, and offered scholarships to attend AWRT educational events, like our Annual Women's Media Forum held each March in Washington D.C. Where possible, students are paired with professional AWRT chapters and/or members for additional career development guidance.

AWRT's Mentorship Program was developed nearly four years ago to pair senior level AWRT members in the media industry with emerging professionals. Mentoring is a powerful tool that is critical to the advancement of women, as well as to the success of broadcast companies and the media industry as a whole. Not only does it play a significant role in the development of an individual's career, it helps companies enhance the skills of their employees and diversity their workplace.

AWRT's Student Chapter Program and Mentorship Program are critical if we are to provide meaningful employment and advancement opportunities for women in the media

industry. Furthermore, the number of women in management and/or ownership in the media industry is still small, and programs like those offered by AWRT can provide a direct link to increase the number of women in executive roles, serving on corporate boards and owning media companies.

We have all seen the dismal numbers – too few women hold senior management positions in broadcast companies, and only 5% of television stations and 6% of radio stations are owned by women. Few women serve on the boards of Fortune 500 media companies or hold the position of CEO. When drilling down to mid-sized companies, the number of women holding leadership or ownership positions is still relatively small. It is difficult to reconcile these numbers when realizing that more women than men have been graduating with Bachelor’s degrees since the 1980s – which reflects most of the workforce under the age of 50.

AWRT will continue to advocate on behalf of its membership and the media industry to change these facts and figures, and increase opportunities for women through proactive, productive and measurable programs and incentives. We are pleased to be invited to participate in the workshop and provide our suggestions and recommendations for improving the opportunities for women in the media industry. We would ask that as the FCC weighs changes to the current media ownership rules, that it take into account any disparate impact of such change on women’s ability to purchase stations and/or be a part of the purchasing companies’ senior management teams. Where possible, we also respectfully request that women’s “access to capital” to purchase stations be thoroughly reviewed, with the understanding that the majority of station purchases – including stations in small markets and rural areas – generally exceed

SBA-guaranteed loan amounts and are not well-received by local or regional lenders or investors, who have little experience evaluating broadcast properties.

We realize that the current economy and evolution of digital technology has had a profound impact on the broadcast industry, and that any changes made to the media ownership rules must account for many factors. AWRT certainly does not promote changes that hinder the broadcasting industry's ability to evolve, compete and continue to provide key services – particularly to local markets. However, we do recommend due diligence, research, and where possible, specific programs that provide resources and financing options for women seeking to advance in the media industry or purchase media properties. AWRT is willing and able to provide assistance, research, outreach and training in support of the FCC's work in this regard.