

# Cabletown is LGBT comcastic

This month, 42 years ago, saw me in New York City beginning to fight the battle for equality. At that time, just 18 — and when just being gay could mean the loss of everything: your job, your home, your family and friends, your house of worship — never did I expect that, 42 years later, I'd be sitting in a room with the CEOs of TV networks, movie studios and cable companies promising their commitment of inclusion of the LGBT community in their diversity program. And, indeed, that happened last week.

Last week, I attended the initial Comcast NBC/Universal Joint Diversity Council meeting. The board was created when Comcast merged with NBC-TV and its subsidiary, Universal Studios. The 37 of us spent a Thursday and Friday learning the ins and outs of the giant that now is Comcast and its divisions. I learned that Focus Features, which distributed "Milk" and "Brokeback Mountain," is a part of the company. So are Bravo, USA and SyFi networks, to name a few. And on LGBT content, Comcast cable delivers Logo and [Here](#) to more viewers than any other source.

So, I guess the question is how serious does Comcast believe in diversity? The answer: very much. As part of the merger, there were many groups mentioned in the diversity program. Comcast noticed the absence of those four little letters, LGBT, and on their own, above the agreements, added our community to the list.

And to make the point, Comcast had most of its top executives fly in from Los Angeles or come down from "30 Rock" in New York City. Every division of the company was represented. One of my favorite moments was meeting the legendary Paula Madison, a pioneer in diversity in media who was VP of NBC/Universal. Upon our introduction, she looked me in the eye and said, "We have this film we got from Sundance that you must see." We later talked about the marketing of the film, "Pariah." Set to be released in the fall, the film was written and directed by Dee Rees. It was a standout at this year's Sundance.

Over at NBC, we were talking about LGBT characters in programming, then in the news division about the way the LGBT community is portrayed. NBC is a news leader with

"Today Show" in the morning, top-rated "NBC Nightly News" with Brian Williams and, for politics, MSNBC.

In 1972, I began the nation's first campaign to end our invisibility on network TV. This board proves not only how far we have come as a community, but also the commitment of Comcast to assure that not only is the company inclusive but also supportive of its LGBT workforce. This is simple, but what a delightful and exciting project. ■

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## Mark My Words

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