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Profile of Walda Roseman

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Walda Roseman is Founder and CEO of CompassRose International, Inc., a respected ICT consulting firm that assists governments, businesses and international organizations with strategic regulatory, policy, commercial and technology challenges. CompassRose is known for its special expertise in international communications policy and regulation, technology and change management, and business development involving information and communications technology.

Ms. Roseman has served in a variety of executive positions, including Director of the U.S. Federal Communications Commission's Office of International Communications, Intelsat Senior Executive for External Relations and Senior Strategic Advisor, Executive Vice President/Chief Operating Officer of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Senior Vice President of National Public Radio, and Director of Public Affairs for the White House Office of Telecommunications Policy. She has served as Adjunct professor to George Washington University. Ms. Roseman is active in the ITU, serving as Vice Chairman of the Telecommunications Development Advisory Group and Chairman of its Working Group on Private Sector Issues. She is also founding Chairman of the ITU Youth Forum, and is a member of the TELECOM Forum Advisory Committee. Ms. Roseman serves on several boards, including the American Refugee Committee International, the U.S. ITU Association, and the International Executive Board of the Suzanne Mubarak Cyberpeace Initiative.

Satellites seemed to follow me in my career, or perhaps more accurately, I have followed them. I became intrigued with satellite communications when I joined the former White House Office of Telecommunications Policy. It was the mid-1970's and people at OTP had grand ideas for satellite communications, which they called Intelsat and Inmarsat. It was still early days in our understanding of the wealth of services that satellites could provide, other than international telephony. We were soon to be shown, though, how valuable satellites would become to the distribution of audio and video services. I went to National Public Radio (NPR) and been there very long before we become the first nationwide broadcasting system to interconnect by satellites our member stations and remotely produce live programming. In 1978 All Things Considered shifted from using a 56kbps circuit to a 15 KHz channel for its evening news. The sound quality was so clear that there was some thought of introducing crackle into the early transmissions so that the listening audience would truly believe that the story they were hearing was actually being fed from Missoula, Montana, for example.

When I joined Intelsat in 1984, my experience as a broadcaster inspired me to push within Intelsat to make it more broadcaster friendly. It was during this period that the International Satellite Operators Group (ISOG) was formed to work with

Intelsat on broadcasting' issues. In 1990 I went from Intelsat to the Federal Communications Commission, where I was handed as my first major task leadership of the FCC's agenda for the 1992 World Administrative Radio Conference. The U.S. had a heavy satellite agenda that included gaining worldwide allocation of spectrum for mobile satellite systems. Europe, a formidable opponent to our agenda, was strongly against the U.S. proposals, preferring to allocate that same spectrum to advanced terrestrial mobile communications. I suppose if I were to choose where I was most involved in helping bring changes to the satellite business it would be my three years at the FCC, during which time we succeeded in getting the key parts of our WARC-92 agenda adopted and then laying the regulatory foundation for MSS; making significant strides in opening up the international FSS business to competition; and opening our northern and southern borders to satellite newsgathering. My fascination with satellites has continued into my consulting practice, perhaps high points of which have been the roles we played in helping the satellite industry gain the trade conditions it needed as part of the WTO Basic Telecom Agreement, structuring the GMPCS MoU. that is administered by the International Telecommunication Union, and helping gain U.S. codification of the satellite auction exemption.

I began my professional life at a time when there were very few women professionals in the communications industry, or anywhere for that matter. In those early days, I was fortunate to find myself being offered "the first woman who." type positions in an era of awakening women's employment rights. I never held a job, however, that had existed before. This afforded me tremendous opportunity and a chance to hire other talented women. On the other hand, particularly at Intelsat in the mid-1980's, some of my male colleagues worried a great deal about how officials from its international membership would react to a woman representing Intelsat. I must say that when traveled, I was almost always treated with respect, sometimes viewed as a bit of a curiosity, and inevitably was introduced to their most senior woman - often new college graduates. What I came to believe particularly as a result of my international work with satellites, to quote a PTT executive from Egypt in 1984, was "As long as we can communicate, there is a chance for peace."

As I look forward to the next five years for the satellite industry, I see the technical and business conditions taking shape whereby satellites can resume their front and center legacy position of doing good while doing well. The severe bandwidth constraints of developing countries and rapid growth of wireless options offer extraordinary market opportunities for satellite companies that can adapt their service and business models to provide broadband and other services to the challenging economic and other conditions of developing countries. These opportunities translate into prospects for new, creative talent, including line leadership. I would urge women who might be interested in entering the industry to set your sites high and define and seize the new opportunities.