

Future looks bright for McCourt

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Business Editor

TRENTON — Americans are rapidly changing their viewing habits as the Internet, cable and the cell phone serve as the primary conduits for consumers' entertainment needs.

Because the consumers' appetite is so vast, the telecommunications industry is trying to not only keep up, but stay ahead of the demand for more convenient ways to be entertained.

Sitting at the industry's front door watching intently the changes is David McCourt, the former chairman and chief executive officer of the RCN Corporation.

"Technology is manipulating programming like it never did before. The Internet and the cell phones are a big deal," McCourt said.

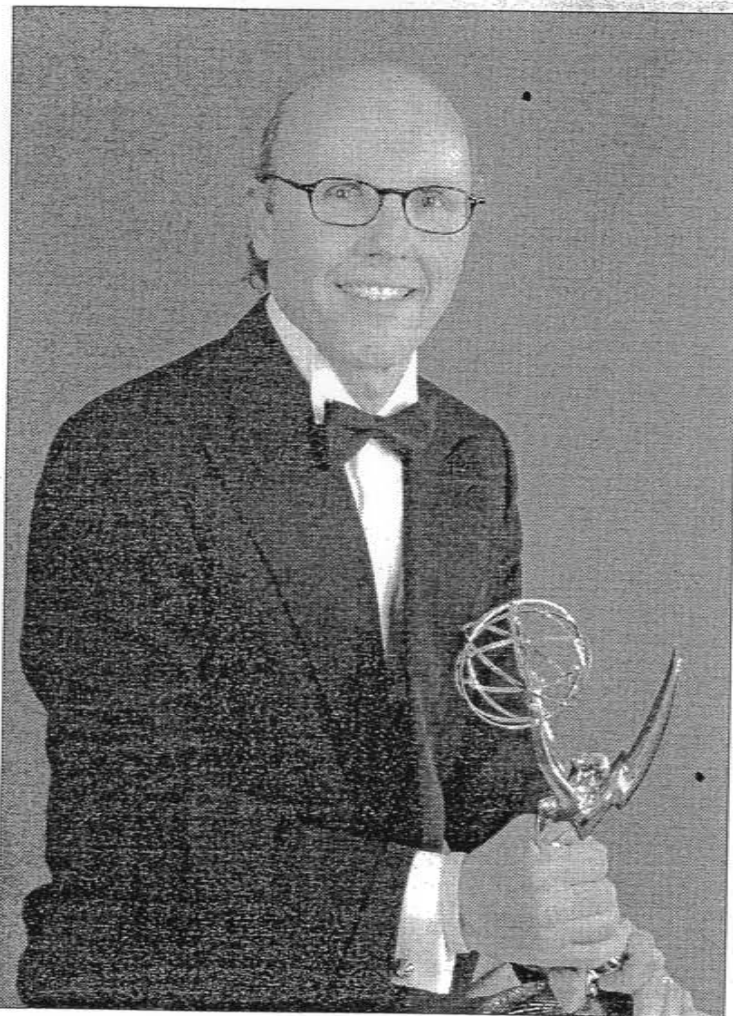
McCourt, 48, explained the Internet has changed how people can distribute their work and distribute content only before seen on television or through cable. Today, a girl in India can use a digital camera to create a film short or television show and place on the Internet for worldwide distribution.

Distribution on the Internet is changing the industry and leveling the playing field for independent producers of film and television.

"The TV business is going to change more in the next 10 years than the telecom business has changed in the last 10 years, and we intend to play a role in that change," McCourt said.

McCourt, now chairman and chief executive officer of Granahan McCourt Capital in Princeton, has maintained a role in television production serving as producer for the very popular PBS series "Reading Rainbow" and producing several documentaries.

Last week, the telecom and media investor received a



David McCourt is the former chairman and chief executive officer of the RCN Corporation. Trentonian Photo

Daytime Emmy award for his role as producer for the critically acclaimed series "Reading Rainbow." He has served as a producer for the 20-year-old series hosted by actor LeVar Burton for 10 years.

The series has received 20 Emmys since first being tele-

vised on Public Broadcasting stations.

"It's great being part of something like Reading Rainbow. And it's great to be associated with a series associated with literacy in America, which is an important issue. The show has been on for so many years but the quality of

the show feeds the desire of the consumer to just have something that deals with literacy and it is easy to watch," McCourt said.

He added, "I think on a worldwide basis there is a market for shows that deal with children issues."

Over the last 25 years, McCourt has founded 10 companies in three countries and is widely recognized as a transformational force in the telecommunications and media industries.

McCourt started investing in media companies back in 1983 in the Caribbean where he built and owned the first independent television station on the island of Grenada and began producing a variety of family programming for the Caribbean market. This television station was sold, two years later after the liberation of Grenada by U.S. forces during Ronald Reagan's presidency. However, McCourt kept his programming interest from those early days.

"My TV business in Grenada was very simple, but profitable. It was television the way Edward R. Murrow would have wanted it to be," said McCourt.

Now, McCourt has returned to his roots investing in media companies that sit on the forefront of change in the telecommunications industry. Granahan McCourt Capital is choosing to invest in those companies that serve as a catalyst to change in the industry, companies changing because of regulatory change or McCourt helps them change through a change in strategy, a sale or spin-off.

"I have always been committed to bringing the best products to consumers whether it was integrated telecom services or the highest quality programming," he said. "I continue to believe that these businesses not only serve customers, they are very rewarding investments."