Allocation

The future of station allocation is unclear. In the early 1990s, when high-definition television (HDTV) was expected to overtake U.S. television, skeptics pointed to the history of U.S. television allocations. HDTV could have required more extensive bandwidth, and, therefore, the reordering of spectrum allocations. But in the past, except for the shifting of some VHF stations required by the Sixth Report and Order, the FCC has not changed a previously granted allocation no matter how compelling or leveling the reason. The dominance of the major networks has always been preserved. The channel positions have never changed materially, and audiences have remained comfortable with familiar placements. It is unlikely that the FCC will dabble with allocations in the future. Yet as viewers grow increasingly dependent on cable as their television provider, the role of station placement may decrease in importance. Future station assignments and changes will hardly affect either cable channel placement or the social routines of the television viewer.

Joan Giglione

See also Communications Act of 1934; Educational Television; Federal Communications Commission; "Freeze" of 1948; Hennock, Frieda B.; Networks: United States

Further Reading

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Obuchowski, Janice, "The Unfinished Task of Spectrum Policy Reform" (Special Issue on the Sixtieth Anniversary of the Communications Act of 1934), Federal Communications Law Journal (December 1994)
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Ally McBeal

U.S. Dramedy

The FOX series Ally McBeal catapulted into the center of cultural discussion shortly after its launch in 1997. The series' form and narrative were distinctive, marked by the use of eccentric characters, digital graphics, and the incorporation of song and dance scenes reminiscent of variety-comedies and film musica-
cals. Significantly, however, the series' title character also sparked sometimes heated cultural debates about the status of feminism, femininity, and womanhood. The show raised many of the dilemmas faced by the post-baby boom, post-second-wave feminist generation of women. Original plans at FOX, however,