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Former HBO Chairman and Chief Executive Richard Plepler signed an exclusive production deal with Apple Inc.'s new TV streaming service, a five-year deal that underscores the tech giant's growing ambitions in entertainment. The deal will include original series, feature films and documentaries for Apple TV+, its new streaming service, according to the company. The Wall Street Journal earlier reported in November that [Apple and Mr. Plepler were in advanced discussions](#), and the New York Times first reported that they had reached a deal.

Mr. Plepler will be working with Zack Van Amburg and Jamie Erlicht, the company's heads of world-wide video. Mr. Plepler launched Eden Productions, a new production company based in New York. Apple's signing of Mr. Plepler gives its streaming service, which launched Nov. 1 with nine new programs, an experienced and well-known entertainment veteran, as it aims to compete with Netflix Inc. and Amazon.com Inc.'s dominant streaming platforms. "I'm excited to work with Zack, Jamie and the standout team at Apple who have been deeply supportive of my vision for Eden from day one," Mr. Plepler said in a statement Thursday. "Apple is one of the most creative companies in the world, and the perfect home for my new production company and next chapter."

Mr. Plepler had been with HBO for nearly 30 years, the last six as its CEO. He left the company last February after it became clear that he would have less control under AT&T Inc., its new owner, than under prior owner Time Warner Inc. Apple is in a race to beef up the offerings of its fledgling TV service, which is available for a price of \$4.99 a month or free with some purchases of new company merchandise. Apple has struck agreements for shows with producers Steven Spielberg and J.J. Abrams and mogul Oprah Winfrey. [Apple has also held talks](#) with James Bond-franchise owner MGM Holdings Inc. and the Pac-12 Conference, according to people familiar with the matter.

Apple has joined a heated competition with Netflix, Walt Disney Co. and other companies seeking to build streaming content, as viewers opt out of big cable television packages. The company is also seeking to steer consumers toward subscription options for video, music and other services. Its goal is to surpass 500 million paid subscriptions next year. Apple currently has 450 million paid subscriptions, a 36% increase from the 330 million it reported in 2018. — *Wall Street Journal*

[Michael G. Fitzpatrick](#), a Republican who represented Bucks County in Congress for four terms, has died at 56. His death was confirmed to [The Bucks County Courier Times](#) by Pat Poprik, the county Republican chair. Poprik couldn't immediately be reached for comment Monday morning.

Fitzpatrick, of Levittown, was known as a relatively moderate Republican popular in his Bucks County swing district. He served in Congress from 2005 to 2007, losing his seat to Patrick Murphy in the 2006 Democratic wave amid unrest over the Iraq War. But he won the seat back in 2010 amid the rise of the Tea Party, holding it again from 2011 to 2017. Citing a belief in term limits, he didn't seek reelection in

2016. [His brother, Brian Fitzpatrick](#), ran instead and currently holds the seat.

Mike Fitzpatrick had been diagnosed with colon cancer in 2008. [He was in remission in 2010](#) when he ran for Congress again. In 2016, he underwent [a surgery](#) after a cancer screening. His battle with cancer had continued in recent years, those who knew him said.

“Many don’t appreciate that he fought gravely for years dealing with the implications of his cancer,” said Former Rep. Pat Meehan, a Delaware County Republican who served in Congress with Fitzpatrick. “Throughout it, he was an outstanding representative who really knew his district and took a courageous and independent position on many issues.”

In Congress, Fitzpatrick focused on issues including medical device safety, abortion, the [banking reform debate](#), and end-of-life care. He chaired a committee that developed legislation to address terrorism financing. He was instrumental in opening the Washington Crossing National Cemetery for veterans in Upper Makefield Township. That was his “legacy issue,” Meehan said, “which will last in perpetuity.”

While he supported Republican priorities such as repealing the Affordable Care Act and lowering taxes, Fitzpatrick often joined a small handful of more centrist House members in resisting the most far-reaching policies and confrontational tactics of the party’s ascendant right wing. Former Democratic Rep. Patrick Murphy, who beat Fitzpatrick in 2006 and then lost the seat to him in 2010, said they “both tried to be gracious in victory and defeat.” He called Fitzpatrick “a tireless and tough campaigner.” “Our nation lost a true patriot,” Murphy said. “Mike Fitzpatrick was a champion for our beloved Bucks County. No one worked harder than Mike.”

Fitzpatrick grew up in Levittown in a family of 10, graduating from Bishop Egan High School as an Eagle Scout. He attended St. Thomas University in Miami, and received a law degree from the Dickinson School of Law of the Pennsylvania State University. He ran for the state House from Bucks County in 1990 and 1994, losing both times, and then became a county commissioner in 1995. He served for almost a decade before running for Congress.

Fitzpatrick also practiced law with various firms in Bucks County. “He exemplifies the kind of public servant that was in it for the right reasons,” Meehan said, “and in time, his legacy will be appreciated more and more.” He and his wife, Kathleen, had six children. –

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