Glenn Britt, a longtime chairman and chief executive of Time Warner Cable Inc., died Wednesday at his home in New York City after fighting cancer, the company said. He was 65 years old.

Mr. Britt retired from his executive positions at Time Warner Cable at the end of last year, after a dozen years running the cable operator, but had remained on the board. In February, Time Warner Cable, the No. 2 cable operator by subscribers, agreed to be acquired by the biggest cable company, Comcast Corp., for $45 billion.

Born in Hackensack, N.J., Mr. Britt rose through the finance side of the media business, starting in 1972 at Time Inc., which owned publishing entities as well as cable systems and Home Box Office. After Time merged with Warner Communications in 1989, he moved to the combined company's new Time Warner Cable unit. He was an early proponent of the cable industry diversifying from its roots in television into Internet-access services.

As the pay-TV business matured, Mr. Britt described broadband as becoming an "anchor service," a historic move for a company built on selling TV subscriptions. "Glenn led a shift in increasing the importance and positioning of broadband versus the conventional business," said Michael Willner, the former CEO of Insight Communications, a small cable operator Time Warner Cable acquired in 2012. "He prodded and pushed us to think in that way." "He combined a big-picture, looking-down-the-road intelligence with terrific deal skills and a real sense of integrity," said Richard Parsons, a former chief executive of Time Warner Inc.

Former Federal Communications Commission Chairman Michael Powell recalled that Mr. Britt once came into his office several years ago when the FCC was first trying to determine how broadband should be defined. Mr. Britt "didn't need a Washington lawyer or technologist" to explain broadband; "he could sit there by himself and could explain in great detail how broadband worked." Mr. Powell, now head of the industry group National Cable and Telecommunications Association, said Mr. Britt was one of the first people to explain to him that "a bit is a bit"—and that from "here on out, all communications will become the same thing: It's just 1s and 0s."

Mr. Britt also became known as an outspoken critic of rising programming costs demanded by TV-channel owners, particularly broadcasters. He was a significant voice in Washington, D.C., lobbying against so-called retransmission fees broadcasters are increasingly demanding for the right to carry their programming.

He was well-regarded on Wall Street for pursuing shareholder-friendly measures, such as stock buybacks, after Time Warner Cable was spun off from its corporate parent Time Warner in 2009. Mr. Britt also planted the seeds for Comcast's acquisition of Time Warner Cable. While the immediate impetus for the deal was sparked by Liberty Media Corp. and its cable affiliate Charter Communications Inc.'s pursuit of TWC last year, Mr. Britt had raised the idea of a TWC-Comcast deal well before, according to Comcast Chief Executive Brian Roberts.

Mr. Roberts, who said he knew Mr. Britt for the better part of 30 years, said Mr. Britt called him "way before" Charter's advances and said he had something he wanted to see him about. Mr. Britt suggested that they should try to put the two companies together. Mr. Roberts said Comcast didn't engage at the time, as it was still digesting its 2011 acquisition

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of NBCUniversal, but said he has "reflected on that" since then. "He just felt the world was changing" and the "next step against all this competition was to become a part of Comcast," Mr. Roberts said. "We didn't always agree on strategy" over the years, but "I go back to how right he was about a lot of the technological changes that were coming."

Liberty and Charter's proposal of a deal—initially at a meeting between Mr. Britt and Liberty CEO Greg Maffei in May 2013— lured Comcast into the fray, resulting in the February deal. Mr. Britt announced his retirement in July. In October, he disclosed a recurrence of cancer he had suffered several years earlier. Mr. Britt is survived by his wife, Barbara. The couple had no children. *Wall Street Journal*

AT&T Inc.'s proposed $48 billion acquisition of DirecTV is the only way the two companies can compete with Comcast Corp. and Time Warner Cable Inc. in the market for bundled video and broadband service, the company told regulators.

AT&T filed its public-interest statement with regulators late Wednesday, justifying the transaction by arguing consumers increasingly seek an integrated bundle of video, voice and broadband service at home, and neither AT&T nor DirecTV is capable of offering such a bundle nationwide at present. The filing argues DirecTV is hampered by its inability to offer high-speed broadband service, while AT&T offers broadband nationwide but video only in a few select markets.

Both the Justice Department and the Federal Communications Commission must sign off on the deal. The Justice Department will examine the transaction for its effect on competition, while the FCC has a broader mandate to ensure the deal is in the public interest. The key sticking point will likely be areas where both AT&T and DirecTV currently compete in the pay-TV market.

AT&T said its U-Verse product, which supplies high-speed broadband and pay-TV services to almost six million customers, could at best cover only a quarter of the nation's TV households. Even in areas it offers U-Verse, AT&T says it can't compete with cable companies because it must pay more for content. The combined AT&T/DirecTV would have 26 million video subscribers, second only to a combined Comcast/Time Warner Cable with 30 million, and therefore be able to negotiate better terms with the programmers.

Central to AT&T's argument is the notion that consumers prefer their video, broadband and data service to be bundled, as has become increasingly common. The filing also suggests that AT&T would find a way to deliver video content to mobile devices, and to deliver high-speed wireless broadband to areas outside AT&T's wireline network footprint.

AT&T commits to deploying high-speed broadband to 15 million new customers as part of the transaction, but only two million will receive high-speed fiber connections. Whether the promise proves compelling to regulators will depend in part on whether the speed of the connections makes them compelling competition to cable companies in the market for high-speed broadband.

As part of the transaction, AT&T commits to abiding by the FCC's now-defunct net-neutrality rules, passed in 2010, for three years. The rules ban broadband providers from blocking or slowing down traffic to specific websites. AT&T also commits to offering stand-alone pricing for broadband Internet service and DirecTV for three years. *Wall Street Journal*