



NEWS

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**FCC COMMISSIONER MICHAEL J. COPPS
CALLS FOR NATIONAL DISCUSSION OF ETHICS IN GOVERNMENT AND
CONSOLIDATION IN THE MEDIA; SEEKS FURTHER ACTION ON THE PUBLIC
INTEREST OBLIGATIONS OF DIGITAL TELEVISION BROADCASTERS**

Delivering the 20th Annual Everett C. Parker Ethics in Communications Lecture, Commissioner Copps cited the need for “some public discussion of what is appropriate.’ Not just what is legal...although that is always critical, but what is right and in the interest of our people and our country.”

In his speech, Copps called upon the Commission to resurrect its review of the public interest obligations of digital television broadcasters. These “pending proceedings should be reactivated and made priority proceedings and brought to conclusion. They are entitled to every bit as much attention as that being devoted to digital tuner and set-top boxes.” Copps further urged the Commission “to determine what additional proceedings on DTV’s public interest obligations might be appropriate.”

Copps also challenged the media to participate in the Commission’s review of ownership in their industries, “not just on the overall economic effects of consolidation in the media, but also on its social, cultural, political and diversity effects, too.” Copps acknowledged that it “won’t be easy” to get the media involved in this debate. “Some very important media enterprises have financial interests riding on the outcome of the ownership proceedings. The very institutions we rely on as a forum for this debate are the very institutions most affected by its outcome.” Copps noted “this is an excellent opportunity for the media to demonstrate the independence of their newsrooms from their corporate interests.”

The lecture, sponsored by the United Church of Christ and the Telecommunications Research and Action Center, honors Dr. Everett C. Parker, a pioneering advocate for the public’s rights in the broadcast arena.