

**Remarks of FCC Chairman Kevin J. Martin
Ceremony Honoring Dr. Benjamin Hooks
Washington, D.C.
July 19, 2006**

As Prepared For Delivery

I want to offer a special welcome to Dr. Benjamin Hooks, and his wife of more than 50 years, Mrs. Frances Hooks. It is an honor and pleasure to have you back at the FCC.

I want to recognize the members of Congress who are with us today. I am pleased that all of my colleagues on the Commission are with us: Commissioner Michael Copps, Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein, Commissioner Deborah Taylor Tate, who hails from our honoree's home state of Tennessee, and our newest member, Commissioner Robert McDowell. I also want to recognize the former commissioners who are with us, James Quello, Tyrone Brown and Gloria Tristani.

I want to thank the Commission staff, especially those members of the FCC Benjamin Hooks Chapter of Blacks in Government, who worked hard to put together this special event. And I want to thank Wesley Jarmon, President of the FCC's chapter of Blacks in Government ("BIG").

Today is a special occasion. We are gathered here to celebrate the life and accomplishments of Benjamin Lawson Hooks. Dr. Hooks uniquely possesses the heart and soul of a minister and the mind of a lawyer. Dick Wiley, former Commission Chairman and a good friend of mine and of Dr. Hooks, has spoke of his amazing oratory ability. According to Dick, Dr. Hooks is probably the greatest speaker to ever sit on the FCC. Dr. Hooks, do you still give lessons?

Throughout his life, Dr. Hooks ministered at churches in Memphis and in Detroit. His career also included the professions of Army sergeant during World War II, public defender, TV producer and host, and Adjunct Professor of Political Science. Most important however, was Dr. Hooks' commitment to the advancement of civil rights. In 1965, he became Tennessee's first African-American Judge. Dr. Hooks then became the first African-American Commissioner on the Federal Communications Commission, serving from 1972 to 1977 when he left to become Executive Director of the NAACP.

During his tenure at the Commission, Dr. Hooks actively promoted the employment of African-Americans and other minorities here at the Commission and in the broadcast industry at large. He supported the Equal Time provision and the Fairness Doctrine. When he was at the FCC, it established Equal Employment Opportunity rules for broadcasters and created its own EEO office.

As a preacher he focused on spiritual matters but Dr. Hooks had a great practical touch as well. He and then Chairman Wiley held a seminar to impart the practicalities and realities about owning a business as part of his efforts to encourage minority ownership of broadcast properties. Many in the broadcast industry owe their careers to Dr. Hooks as a result.

Dr. Hooks also reminds us of the importance of fulfilling the provision of the Communications Act that established the Commission, which is to bring the benefits of communications services to all Americans. Expanding the reach of broadband and other advanced communications services has been my top priority as Chairman and we are beginning to see some positive results of that effort. But there is more work to be done, and I will continue to work with all of my colleagues along those lines.

Dr. Hooks, almost 30 years after you left, your impact at the Commission is still felt. We salute all of your efforts - before, during, and after your time here at the Commission - to make that provision of the Communications Act a reality for everyone.

I appreciate everyone's efforts to be here and the work that went into planning this ceremony.

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