

**Remarks of Jonathan S. Adelstein
Commissioner, Federal Communications Commission**

**Blacks in Government Ceremony
Honoring Dr. Benjamin Hooks
Federal Communications Commission, Washington, D.C.
July 19, 2006**

[As prepared for delivery]

It is a real pleasure for me to honor Dr. Benjamin Hooks – one of our great national leaders. His life story is that of a legend and a great patriot. As we all know, Dr. Hooks is a World War II veteran, a soldier in the civil rights struggle, the first black criminal court judge in Tennessee, the first African American Commissioner on the FCC, the former Executive Director of the NAACP, and a gifted Baptist minister.

Dr. Hooks has always served as an agent of social change in America. He is a man of principle, courage, law and faith. The true legacy of his career is not just in his professional accomplishments, which are many; rather, it is in the ideals and values that he believed, defended and tried to achieve in every facet of his professional life.

As a sitting Commissioner on the FCC, I take great personal pride in knowing that I walk in the footsteps of Dr. Hooks in defending the First Amendment rights of Americans and promoting equal access and opportunity for minorities in all industries overseen by the FCC, especially broadcasting.

Like you, I believe that the freedom and democracy we share in the United States require our “eternal vigilance” to fight to preserve them.

Dr. Hooks, the Museum of Broadcast Communications says that your appointment to the FCC in 1972 “must be seen as one part of a long history of demands for access to broadcast media by African Americans.” Well, nearly 30 years since you left the Commission, the struggle continues.

Today, we are making similar demands for access and opportunity for Americans of all racial and economic backgrounds. While people of color make up over 30% of our population, they own only 4.2% of the nation’s radio stations and 1.5% of the nation’s TV stations and these numbers continue to fall.

We all know that people of color should not be viewed as mere participants in the broadcasting industry; they should be owners and managers. Dr. Hooks, your legacy here at the Commission represents this goal. As a steward of the public trust, and one who humbly follows in your footsteps, I will continue the fight to promote diversity in media ownership and employment during my time at the Commission. Thank you for your leadership and your inspiration.