

**Remarks of Commissioner Robert M. McDowell
Minority Media & Telecommunications Council
Monday, July 20, 2009
The Westin Grand Hotel
Washington, D.C.**

As prepared for delivery

Thank you, David, for your kind words – and I thank everyone at MMTC for giving me the honor, and the pleasure, of saying a few words about my friend and colleague Mike Cops. I'm delivering what are supposed to be “introductory” remarks, but Mike needs no introduction to most of you in this room. Since he began serving on the Commission in May of 2001, he has been an indefatigable champion of diversity in general and the promotion of minority ownership of communications companies in particular. MMTC has made a wise choice in singling him out for this year's Everett C. Parker Award for his distinguished service during his many years in government, and for his commitment to diversity and inclusion in the media and telecom industries.

Mike's passion – and wit – on the subject certainly have made for many memorable moments during Commission meetings. Mike and I may not always agree on policy issues and the agency's legal authority on some matters, but I admire his talent in expressing his views. Who else would have analogized our December 2007 media ownership decision as “another big, shiny present for the favored few who already hold an FCC license – and a lump of coal” for everyone else? Or who else could have said in his statement in the Comcast/BitTorrent order that the FCC needed to “make clear that the Commission is not having a one-night stand with net neutrality, but an affair of the heart and a commitment for life.” In short, I can admire a guy who gives good sound bites.

Mike and I actually have a lot in common. We're sort of a regulatory odd couple: he is a Democrat appointed by George W. Bush and I am a Republican appointed by Barack Obama. I don't know if that means we are bipartisan or simply confused. But, in all seriousness, I asked my law clerks to analyze my voting record and compare it against my colleagues'. It ends up that we voted the same way 89.72% of the time. In other words, nine out of ten of my votes were with Mike. If this keeps up, we will ruin each other's reputations.

But promotion of greater diversity is one important goal that we share, even if we sometimes favor different means of achieving it. Mike's commitment to that objective has been manifest in ways beyond mere public speeches. His recent leadership of the DTV transition has been deservedly praised, for example, but not many people outside the Commission may have recognized that a major part of his focus was on ensuring that diverse needs on the *receiving* end of the new digital technology were met. Under Mike, the agency deployed hundreds of staffers and engaged thousands of contractors to provide hands-on help to the TV viewers most in need of assistance, including the elderly, the disabled, and low-income and minority households. This was another way of advancing the FCC's diversity goal in the media space – for, obviously, that objective can only be achieved when content actually *reaches* the diverse American audience.

During his Acting Chairmanship, Mike also devoted what little time he could spare from DTV and broadband issues to reconstitute and reinvigorate the Commission's Advisory Committee for Diversity in the Digital Age – several members of which are with us in the room tonight. Tapping members for such a committee is one thing, but charging them with specific tasks is another, more serious sign of commitment. Mike directed the Committee to grapple with the thorny constitutional issues that surround race-conscious minority ownership rules, and I look forward to reviewing the Committee's analysis and recommendations before we must tackle

the next media ownership review. I have especially enjoyed reading all of the online conspiracy theories surrounding the new Diversity Committee.

In conclusion, I congratulate Mike for joining the select ranks of Everett Parker Award winners, and I congratulate MMTC for its wisdom in choosing him. Thank you again for inviting me here today, and I am happy to turn the podium back to David for the award presentation.