## What is the Academy?

The American Academy of Achievement is unlike any other organization in the world. For six decades, our nonprofit foundation has sparked the imaginations and raised the aspirations of extraordinary young people across the United States and around the globe by bringing them into direct personal contact with the preeminent leaders and innovators of our times.

The American Academy of Achievement was founded by Brian Blaine Reynolds, an acclaimed photographer best known for his contributions to *Life* magazine and *Sports Illustrated*. Reynolds established the Academy of Achievement to bring aspiring young people together with real-life heroes — the kind of achievers he met every week on assignment. He discovered that visionaries and pioneers, who often strike us as larger-than-life, are real people who endured setbacks and persevered through everyday challenges, like anyone else. The difference is in how they kept their eyes open to new opportunities, and in how they went about achieving their dreams. The Academy's first annual Banquet of the Golden Plate program was held at Monterey, California in September of 1961.

President Bill Clinton speaking to the Academy delegates at the 2002 International Achievement Summit in Dublin.

The Academy's annual gatherings transfer knowledge, inspiration and the benefit of extraordinary life history from one generation of established achievers to the next generation of young people, who will, in turn, become leaders in their respective fields.

Pioneering Women of Achievement: Captain Grace Murray Hopper, USN, famed inventor and developer of COBOL computer programming language, receives the Academy's Golden Plate Award from Admiral James B. Stockdale, USN, Medal of Honor recipient, at the 1983 Summit in San Diego; Rosa Parks, civil rights pioneer, during the 1996 Academy program in Sun Valley, Idaho; December 2022: Awards Council members Justice Amy Coney Barrett and Justice Anthony Kennedy present Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson with the Golden Plate Award in Washington, D.C.

The Academy has provided thousands of outstanding young scholars, scientists and social entrepreneurs with all-expense-paid life-changing experiences, through which the rising generations whose dreams will determine our collective tomorrow have drawn inspiration from those individuals who have shaped our world of today.

President Ronald W. Reagan addressing the Academy of Achievement delegates at the 1990 Summit in Chicago.

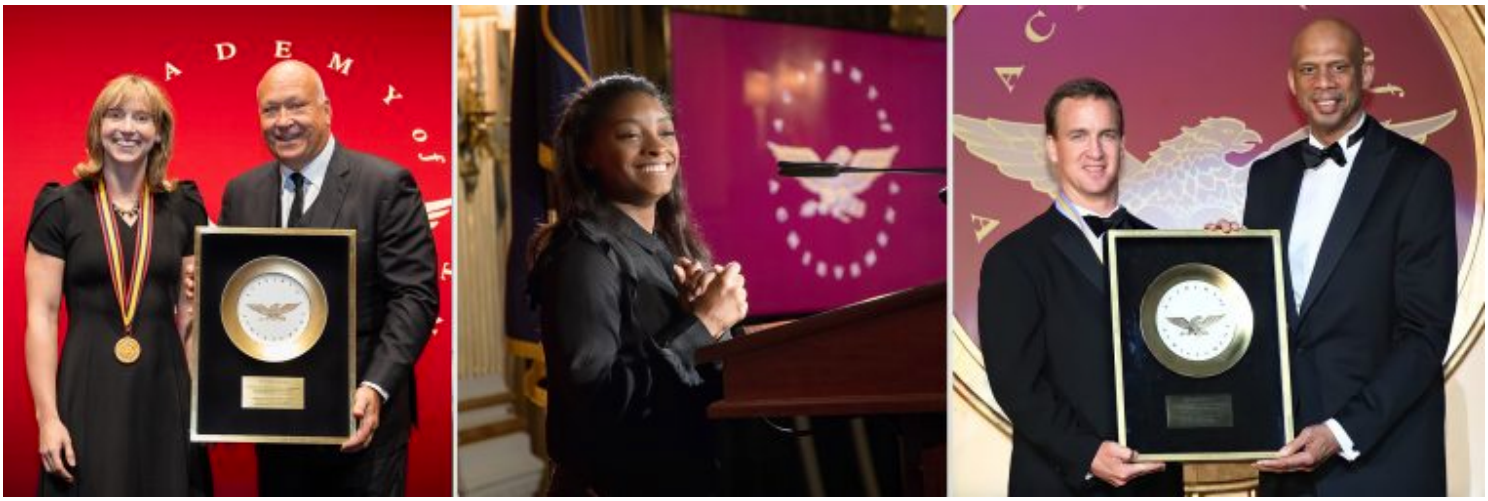
Since 1961, these generation-spanning forums have allowed exceptional young scholars to interact one-on-one with Pulitzer and Nobel Prize-winners in the arts and sciences, public servants, explorers, humanitarians, champion athletes, entrepreneurs, entertainers, and countless others who represent achievement in their respective fields. Such personal encounters send an enormously powerful message to young people raised in a world that so often values the superficial and ephemeral over the monumental and enduring.

1986, The American Academy of Achievement's 25th-anniversary Summit at historic Mount Vernon, Virginia: (Left) Screen legend Shirley Temple Black with 3-time Heavy Weight Boxing Champion of the World Muhammad Ali at a reception. (Center) Neil Armstrong, the first man on the moon and Academy Class of 1973, addressing the Summit delegates and members as Summit moderator Olivia de Havilland looks on. (Right) The internationally-acclaimed artist, Robert Rauschenberg, with Council member, paleontologist and evolutionary biologist, Stephen Jay Gould.

These gatherings take on special significance in light of our vastly changing world. The opportunity for students of various lands and faiths to enter into meaningful, reasoned dialogue with eminent leaders from diverse fields ignites hope for the future. Without greater understanding between nations, there can be no lasting peace, and this kind of intellectual discourse between individual leaders, both present and future, is essential to establishing such an understanding.

President George H.W. Bush, Golden Plate awardee, meets delegates at the 1995 Summit in Colonial Williamsburg.

In this spirit, the Academy has established the International Achievement Summit, as well as programs such as Achievement TV and the Museum of the American Dream, located in Washington, D.C. The biographies, interviews, symposiums, podcasts, textbooks and photographs presented on the Academy's website, www.achievement.org, have been compiled from the American Academy of Achievement's exclusive collection of interviews.



Legendary Sports Figures: Swimming champion and Presidential Medal of Freedom recipient Katie Ledecky is presented the Golden Plate by Academy Awards Council member and Baseball Hall of Famer Cal Ripken Jr. during the 2024 Summit held in New York City.; Simone Biles, 2017 honoree and first U.S. gymnast to win four Olympic gold medals, addresses Summit delegates during the 52nd annual International Achievement Summit at Claridge's Hotel in London, England.; Awards Council member and basketball all-time scoring champion Kareem Abdul-Jabbar presenting the Golden Plate Award to Peyton Manning, Super Bowl champion quarterback, during the American Academy of Achievement's 2007 International Achievement Summit held in Washington, D.C.

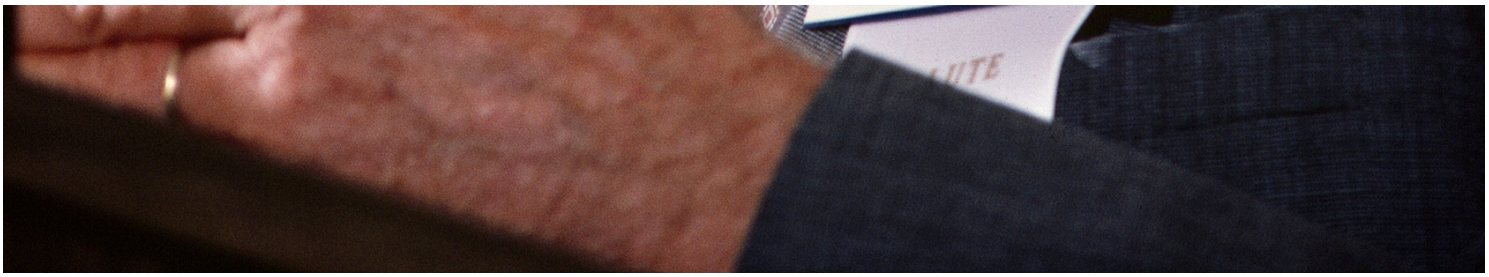
The Academy has developed a comprehensive video archive of historical figures, weaving their stories into a unique narrative history of our world. While we believe that everyone can benefit by exploring the lives of these extraordinary leaders, visionaries, and pioneers, we encourage students, in particular, to draw on these materials while forming their own judgments and values. We encourage all to study these unique figures from our common heritage and to discover how their inspirational life stories can be used to create roadmaps to our own successful destinations.

# The International Achievement Summit

President Barack Obama addressing the delegates at the 46th annual Achievement Summit in Washington, D.C.

The Academy of Achievement held its first annual International Achievement Summit in 1999. The forum gives exceptional scholars from around the world the opportunity to interact with preeminent achievers. The Academy invites leaders in diverse fields of endeavor to attend the Summit and participate in a series of symposiums and roundtable discussions. Approximately 80 men and women — 50 distinguished previous awardees and 30 new honorees — interact with 100 delegates — graduate students, research fellows, scholars, young scientists, physicians and social entrepreneurs — over the course of several days in an informal setting.

AMERICAN
ACADEMY OF ACHIEVEMENT
JIMMY CARTER
President of the United States



President Jimmy Carter addresses the assemblage of Academy of Achievement members and student delegates during the 1984 “Salute to Excellence” program at the historic Lafayette Club outside of Minneapolis, Minnesota.

The Academy’s Golden Plate Awards Council, comprised of past honorees of the Academy, annually reviews a broad spectrum of candidates for invitation to the Summit. From this list, the Awards Council selects 30 new Academy honorees. The highlight of the annual International Achievement Summit occurs on the final evening of the gathering at the Banquet of the Golden Plate. At the ceremony, each honoree is presented with the Golden Plate Award and the Academy of Achievement gold medal as a “representative of the many who excel” in their chosen professions.

Awards Council member, President Gerald R. Ford, presents the Golden Plate Award to Elizabeth Taylor, recipient of two Oscars for Best Actress, at the American Academy of Achievement’s 1985 ceremonies in Denver, Colorado.

The Academy of Achievement launched its series of International Achievement Summits at Budapest, Hungary in June of 1999, in conjunction with the NATO conference hosted by the Supreme Allied Commander Europe.

## The American Dream on the International Stage

Awards Council member and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Dr. Elie Wiesel presents the Academy of Achievement's Golden Plate Award to Shimon Peres at 2003 International Achievement Summit ceremony in Washington, D.C.

First Lady Laura Bush, a 2007 Academy guest of honor, welcomes the delegates and members to the 46th annual Banquet of the Golden Plate ceremonies during the International Achievement Summit held in Washington, D.C.

The International Achievement Summit can best be described as a global celebration of the human spirit to excel that lies at the heart of the American Dream. Its honored guests are those who have made a significant difference in today's world through individual effort in their own fields of endeavor. The roster of Academy members reads like a "Who's Who" of achievement and includes many Nobel, Pulitzer, National Medal of Science, Business Hall of Fame, Presidential Medal of Freedom, Congressional Gold Medal, Medal of Honor, Tony, Grammy, Emmy, and Oscar winners.

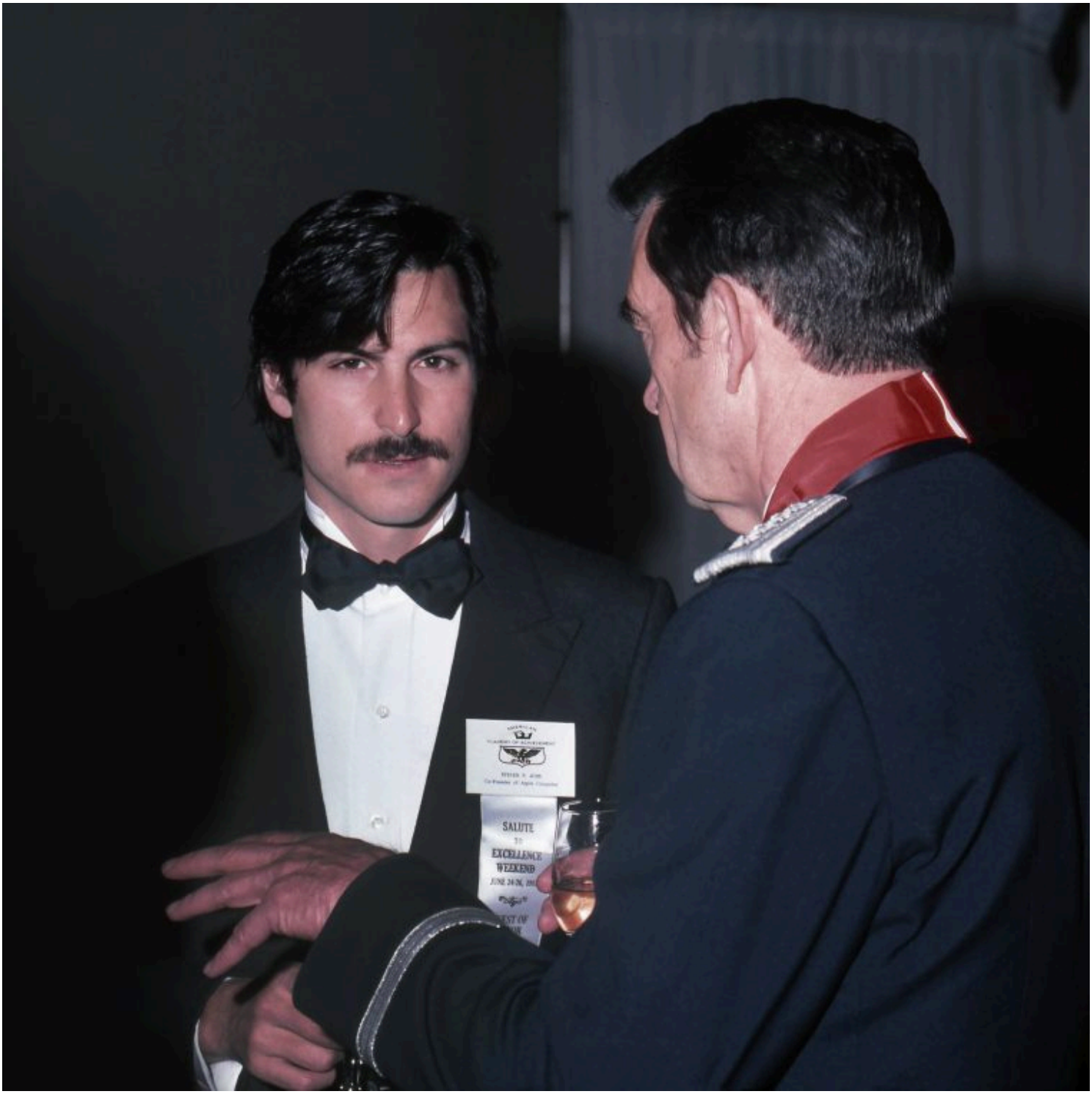
Media executive Barry Diller, singer-songwriter Dolly Parton, and financier Carl H. Lindner at the 1992 Summit in Las Vegas. Awards Council member Anthony M. Kennedy, Justice of the United States Supreme Court, with Aerosmith lead singer Steven Tyler at dinner at The Met during the 2019 Summit. Astronomer Carl Sagan and Kentucky Fried Chicken founder Col. Harland Sanders at the head table during the 1975 Golden Plate ceremonies.

A sense of electricity grows throughout the program, as the delegates — through direct personal contact with past and present Academy honorees — are reminded of the shared history of human progress, and of the common heritage of individual leadership and initiative, which know no national boundaries. Similarly, the honorees draw inspiration from the promise represented by the young delegates. Generational and cultural barriers fade away as participants join in the spirit of the occasion, a celebration of the individual's power to shape our world.

Left: International Achievement Summit Host Chairman Catherine B. Reynolds with 2004 Academy of Achievement honoree His Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan, at the reception in the Grand Hall of The Field Museum in Chicago. Right: Her Majesty Queen Rania of Jordan receives her award at the 2005 Banquet of the Golden Plate in New York.

Academy members and delegates alike come away revitalized, with a new sense of purpose. Past Academy participants from all walks of life have echoed the sentiments of Helen Hayes, First Lady of the American Theatre, who described it as "…one of the most inspiring and gratifying occasions in my lifetime of occasions."

# Who Chooses the Honorees?




Steven P. Jobs, the 26-year-old co-founder and the board chairman of Apple Computer Company, with General David C. Jones, USAF, Golden Plate Awards Council co-chairman and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, at the American Academy of Achievement's 1982 Banquet of the Golden Plate in New Orleans, Louisiana. (Getty Images)

The Academy's Golden Plate Awards Council annually reviews a broad spectrum of candidates who are inspiring "exemplars of excellence" for possible invitation to the International Achievement Summit. From this list, the Awards Council — comprised of eminent past honorees of the Academy — selects 30 new honorees.

Fifty illustrious previous awardees join the new honorees at the Summit, and participate in the awards presentation at the Banquet of the Golden Plate ceremony.

## The Golden Plate Awardees

2014: Golden Plate Awards Council member and 1989 Academy guest of honor Oprah Winfrey introducing legend of American cinema, Sidney Poitier, at an American Academy of Achievement ceremony in Los Angeles, California; Oprah Winfrey presents one of her lifelong heroes, Sidney Poitier, with the Academy of Achievement's Gold Medal.

The following is a partial list of Golden Plate honorees. These visionaries and pioneers — whose ideas and talents have influenced the world — have all participated in the annual International Achievement Summit and addressed the student delegates. They are listed with the year of their induction into the Academy. A more comprehensive Summary of Golden Plate recipients, grouped by decade and field of endeavor, is also available.

**U.S. Presidents**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2007 | Barack Obama | 44th President of the United States |
| 2002 | William J. Clinton | 42nd President of the United States |
| 1995 | George H. W. Bush | 41st President of the United States |
| 1990 | Ronald W. Reagan | 40th President of the United States |
| 1984 | Jimmy Carter | 39th President of the United States |
| 1971 | Gerald R. Ford | 38th President of the United States |

**Public Servants**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2026 | Scott Bessent | United States Secretary of the Treasury |
| 2022 | Amy Coney Barrett | Justice, Supreme Court of the United States |
| 2022 | Ketanji Brown Jackson | Justice, Supreme Court of the United States |
| 2022 | Mitch McConnell | United States Senate |
| 2017 | Neil M. Gorsuch | Justice, Supreme Court of the United States |
| 2012 | Sonia Sotomayor | Justice, Supreme Court of the United States |
| 2006 | Nancy Pelosi | Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives |
| 2005 | Anthony M. Kennedy | Retired Justice, Supreme Court of the United States |
| 2003 | Hillary Clinton | Former U.S. Secretary of State |
| 2002 | Henry A. Kissinger, Ph.D. | Nobel Prize for Peace |
| 1998 | James A. Baker III | Former U.S. Secretary of State |
| 1995 | Ruth Bader Ginsburg | Justice, Supreme Court of the United States |
| 1988 | General Colin L. Powell, USA | Congressional Gold Medal |
| 1987 | Sandra Day O'Connor | Justice, Supreme Court of the United States |
| 1986 | Lt. General Vernon A. Walters, USA | Presidential Medal of Freedom |
| 1978 | General Omar N. Bradley, USA | America's Only Five-Star General |
| 1977 | General Jimmy Doolittle, USAF | Medal of Honor |
| 1961 | General Douglas MacArthur, USA | Congressional Gold Medal |

**World Leaders**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2024 | Volodymyr Zelenskyy | President of Ukraine |
| 2017 | Paul Kagame | President of the Republic of Rwanda |
| 2004 | H.M. King Abdullah | King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan |
| 2004 | H.E. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan | President of the Republic of Turkey |
| 2003 | Shimon Peres | Nobel Prize for Peace |
| 2000 | Benazir Bhutto | Former Prime Minister of Pakistan |
| 2000 | Mikhail S. Gorbachev | Nobel Prize for Peace |
| 2000 | Lech Walesa | Nobel Prize for Peace |

**Champions of Human Rights**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2019 | Bryan Stevenson | Founder of Equal Justice Initiative |
| 2019 | Leymah Gbowee | Nobel Prize for Peace |
| 2019 | Nadia Murad | Nobel Prize for Peace |
| 2004 | Congressman John R. Lewis | Champion of Civil Rights |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2003 | Archbishop Desmond Tutu | Nobel Prize for Peace |
| 1997 | Coretta Scott King | Pioneer of Civil Rights |
| 1996 | Elie Wiesel | Nobel Prize for Peace |
| 1995 | Rosa Parks | Pioneer of Civil Rights |
| 1978 | Frank M. Johnson, Jr. | Presidential Medal of Freedom |

**Innovators in Information Technology**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2017 | Sir Demis Hassabis | Nobel Prize in Chemistry |
| 2014 | Tony Fadell | iPod Mastermind and Founder of Nest |
| 2007 | Sir Tim Berners-Lee | Father of the World Wide Web |
| 2004 | Sergey Brin | Co-founder of Google Inc. |
| 2004 | Larry Page | Co-founder of Google Inc. |
| 2001 | John L. Hennessy, Ph.D. | President of Stanford University |
| 2001 | Jeffrey P. Bezos | Founder and Executive Chairman, Amazon.com |
| 1998 | Michael S. Dell | Founder and Chairman, Dell Inc. |
| 1997 | Larry J. Ellison | Founder and Executive Chairman, Oracle Corporation |
| 1992 | William H. Gates III | Co-founder, Microsoft Corporation |
| 1987 | John Bardeen, Ph.D. | Inventor of the Transistor |
| 1985 | George Kozmetsky, Ph.D. | Technology Entrepreneur |
| 1985 | Donald E. Knuth, Ph.D. | *The Art of Computer Programming* |
| 1983 | Rear Admiral Grace Murray Hopper, USN | Developer of COBOL Computer Language |
| 1982 | Steven P. Jobs | Co-founder, Apple Computer |
| 1982 | Arnold O. Beckman, Ph.D. | Inventor and Entrepreneur |
| 1981 | William R. Hewlett | Co-founder, Hewlett-Packard Company |
| 1980 | Theodore H. Maiman, Ph.D. | Inventor of the Laser |
| 1972 | Philo T. Farnsworth | Inventor and Television Pioneer |
| 1970 | Jack S. Kilby | Inventor of the Integrated Circuit |
| 1967 | Claude E. Shannon, Ph.D. | Father of Information Theory |
| 1967 | Vladimir Zworykin, Ph.D. | Father of Television |
| 1967 | Gordon K. Teal, Ph.D. | Inventor, First Silicon Transistor |
| 1965 | Harold A. Rosen, Ph.D. | Father of the Communications Satellite |
| 1965 | Howard H. Aiken | Father of the Computer |

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|---|---|---|
| 1962 | John R. Pierce, Ph.D. | Inventor of Communications Satellites |

**Business Leaders**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2026 | Arthur M. Blank | Co-founder, The Home Depot |
| 2019 | Paul Tudor Jones II | Investor and Philanthropist |
| 2012 | Ray Dalio | Hedge Fund Master |
| 2008 | Kenneth C. Griffin | Financier and Patron of the Arts |
| 2007 | Laurence D. Fink | CEO of BlackRock, Inc. |
| 2006 | Jamie Dimon | CEO of JPMorgan Chase & Co. |
| 2004 | Michael R. Bloomberg | Founder and CEO of Bloomberg L.P. |
| 1999 | Stephen A. Schwarzman | Chairman and CEO of The Blackstone Group |
| 1994 | Carlos Slim Helú | Financier and Philanthropist |
| 1989 | Philip H. Knight | Co-founder and Chairman, Nike, Inc. |
| 1989 | Ralph Lauren | Fashion and Design |
| 1989 | Charles R. Schwab | Entrepreneur and Philanthropist |
| 1989 | Oprah Winfrey | Media Entrepreneur |
| 1988 | George R. Roberts | Leveraged Acquisitions |
| 1987 | Henry R. Kravis | Financier and Investor |
| 1984 | Robert Edward (Ted) Turner | Founder, Cable News Network |
| 1982 | Chung Ju-yung | Founder and Chairman, Hyundai |
| 1979 | Jay A. Pritzker | Finance and Hotels |
| 1977 | John D. MacArthur | Insurance Entrepreneur |
| 1976 | Stephen D. Bechtel, Sr. | International Construction |
| 1973 | Ray A. Kroc | McDonald's Restaurants |
| 1972 | Lord Roy Thomson, First Baron of Fleet | Newspaper Publishing |
| 1972 | Akio Morita | President, Sony Corporation |
| 1970 | H. Ross Perot | Computer Services Entrepreneur |

**Sports Heroes**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2026 | Nick Saban | Legendary Hall of Fame Football Coach |
| 2024 | Billie Jean King | Congressional Gold Medal |
| 2024 | Katie Ledecky | Swimmer and Olympic Gold Medalist |
| 2022 | Allyson Felix | Olympic Champion |
| 2017 | Simone Biles | Gymnast and Olympic Gold Medalist |

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|---|---|---|
| 2008 | Bill Russell | Basketball Hall of Fame |
| 2007 | Peyton Manning | Super Bowl Champion Quarterback |
| 2000 | Sir Roger Bannister | Track and Field Legend |
| 1997 | Cal Ripken Jr. | Baseball Hall of Fame |
| 1995 | Mike Krzyzewski | Collegiate Basketball Champion |
| 1990 | Michael Jordan | Basketball's Most Valuable Player |
| 1988 | Walter Payton | Pro Football Hall of Fame |
| 1986 | Muhammad Ali | Boxing Champion of the World |
| 1982 | Dean E. Smith | Legendary Basketball Coach |
| 1982 | Wayne Gretzky | Hockey's Scoring Champion |
| 1979 | Paul (Bear) Bryant | Collegiate Football Coach |
| 1978 | Tom Landry | Pro Football Hall of Fame |
| 1977 | Hank Aaron | Baseball Immortal |
| 1976 | John Wooden | Basketball's Coaching Legend |
| 1975 | Willie Mays | Baseball Hall of Fame |
| 1973 | Bart Starr | Super Bowl Champion Quarterback |
| 1969 | Mickey Mantle | Baseball Hall of Fame |
| 1968 | Stan Musial | Baseball Hall of Fame |

**Cinema and the Performing Arts**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2026 | Misty Copeland | Ballerina Extraordinaire |
| 2024 | Gustavo Dudamel | Maestro of the Music World |
| 2019 | Sir Roger Daltrey | Rock and Roll Hall of Fame |
| 2019 | Pete Townshend | Rock and Roll Hall of Fame |
| 2019 | Lord Andrew Lloyd Webber | Musical Theatre Composer |
| 2017 | Sir Michael Caine | British Film Icon |
| 2017 | Jimmy Page | Guitarist and Founder of Led Zeppelin |
| 2014 | Sidney Poitier | Oscar for Lifetime Achievement |
| 2005 | Itzhak Perlman | Virtuoso of the Violin |
| 2005 | Stephen Sondheim | Composer and Lyricist |
| 2005 | Denzel Washington | Presidential Medal of Freedom |
| 2004 | Dame Julie Andrews | Stage and Screen Actress |

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|---|---|---|
| 2003 | Bob Dylan | Nobel Prize in Literature |
| 1999 | Aretha Franklin | The Queen of Soul |
| 1998 | Morgan Freeman | Master Screen Craftsman |
| 1996 | James Earl Jones | Tony Award for Lifetime Achievement |
| 1994 | Robert De Niro | Internationally Honored Actor |
| 1994 | Francis Ford Coppola | Filmmaker, Producer and Screenwriter |
| 1992 | Dolly Parton | Queen of Country Music |
| 1992 | Barbra Streisand | Singer, Actress and Director |
| 1991 | Dizzy Gillespie | Master Trumpeter |
| 1991 | Audrey Hepburn | Film Actress and Ambassador |
| 1991 | Martin Scorsese | Master Filmmaker |
| 1989 | George Lucas | Creator of *Star Wars* |
| 1988 | Johnny Cash | Country Music Legend |
| 1986 | Steven Spielberg | Master Filmmaker |
| 1985 | Elizabeth Taylor | Two Oscars for Best Actress |
| 1980 | Clint Eastwood | Motion Picture Production |
| 1979 | Henry Fonda | Motion Picture Legend |
| 1977 | Stevie Wonder | Singer, Songwriter and Activist |
| 1975 | Ray Charles | Musician and Vocalist |
| 1974 | Jimmy Stewart | Legendary Film Actor |
| 1972 | Helen Hayes | Film and Stage Actress |
| 1972 | Frank Capra | Three Oscars for Best Director |
| 1970 | John Wayne | Legend of the Silver Screen |
| 1961 | William Wyler | Three Oscars for Best Director |

**Authors**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2024 | Haruki Murakami | Acclaimed Japanese Novelist |
| 2019 | Ian McEwan | English Novelist and Screenwriter |
| 2019 | Orhan Pamuk | Nobel Prize in Literature |
| 2017 | Sir Kazuo Ishiguro | Nobel Prize in Literature |
| 2012 | Louise Glück | Nobel Prize in Literature |
| 2009 | Nadine Gordimer | Nobel Prize in Literature |
| 2009 | Wole Soyinka | Nobel Prize in Literature |

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|---|---|---|
| 2005 | Edward Albee | Three Pulitzer Prizes for Drama |
| 2005 | Toni Morrison | Nobel Prize in Literature |
| 2004 | Norman Mailer | National Book Award for Lifetime Achievement |
| 2004 | John Updike | Two Pulitzer Prizes for Fiction |
| 1997 | Joyce Carol Oates | National Book Award |
| 1988 | August Wilson | Pulitzer Prize for Drama |
| 1986 | Herman Wouk | Pulitzer Prize for Fiction |
| 1977 | Alex Haley | Pulitzer Prize for *Roots* |
| 1971 | James A. Michener | Pulitzer Prize-winning Novelist |

**Artists and Architects**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2024 | Cindy Sherman | Conceptual Artist and Photographer |
| 2017 | Lord Norman Foster | Architecture Gold Medal |
| 2014 | Jeff Koons | Contemporary Art Phenomenon |
| 2004 | Santiago Calatrava | Architecture Gold Medal |
| 2000 | Maya Lin | Artist and Architect |
| 1995 | Frank O. Gehry | Architecture Gold Medal |
| 1991 | Philip C. Johnson | Dean of American Architects |
| 1986 | Robert Rauschenberg | Internationally Honored Artist |
| 1977 | R. Buckminster Fuller | Inventor of the Geodesic Dome |
| 1971 | Louis I. Kahn | Architecture Gold Medal |
| 1961 | Thomas Hart Benton | Painter and Muralist |
| 1961 | Yousuf Karsh | Portrait Photography |

**Scientists**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2024 | Emmanuelle Charpentier, Ph.D. | Nobel Prize in Chemistry |
| 2019 | James P. Allison, Ph.D. | Nobel Prize in Medicine |
| 2017 | Jennifer A. Doudna, Ph.D. | Nobel Prize in Chemistry |
| 2017 | Venki Ramakrishnan, Ph.D. | Nobel Prize in Chemistry |
| 2014 | Robert J. Lefkowitz, M.D. | Nobel Prize in Chemistry |
| 2014 | Frances H. Arnold, Ph.D. | Nobel Prize in Chemistry |
| 2008 | Shinya Yamanaka, M.D., Ph.D. | Nobel Prize in Medicine |
| 2000 | Baruch S. Blumberg, M.D., Ph.D. | Nobel Prize in Medicine |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2000 | Frederick Sanger, Ph.D. | Two Nobel Prizes in Chemistry |
| 1987 | John Bardeen, Ph.D. | Inventor of the Transistor |
| 1987 | Francis H. C. Crick, Ph.D. | Nobel Prize in Medicine |
| 1986 | James D. Watson, Ph.D. | Discoverer of the DNA Molecule |
| 1979 | Linus C. Pauling, Ph.D. | Nobel Prizes in Chemistry and Peace |
| 1975 | Wernher von Braun, Ph.D. | Rocket Engineer |
| 1976 | Jonas Salk, M.D. | Developer of the Polio Vaccine |
| 1972 | Glenn T. Seaborg, Ph.D. | Discoverer of Plutonium |
| 1971 | Norman E. Borlaug, Ph.D. | Nobel Prize for Peace |
| 1969 | Charles H. Townes, Ph.D. | Inventor of the Maser and Laser |
| 1966 | Harold C. Urey, Ph.D. | Nobel Prize in Chemistry |
| 1966 | John Archibald Wheeler, Ph.D. | Theoretical Physicist |
| 1965 | Maria Goeppert Mayer, Ph.D. | Nobel Prize in Physics |
| 1961 | Luis Walter Alvarez, Ph.D. | Nobel Prize in Physics |
| 1961 | Charles Stark Draper, Ph.D. | Aeronautics and Engineering |
| 1961 | Clarence L. (Kelly) Johnson | Aircraft Design Engineer |
| 1961 | Edward Teller, Ph.D. | Father of the Hydrogen Bomb |

**Explorers**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2007 | Richard E. Leakey | Paleoanthropologist and Conservationist |
| 2004 | Sally K. Ride, Ph.D. | First American Woman in Space |
| 1987 | Dame Jane Goodall | Primatologist and Anthropologist |
| 1981 | Admiral Alan B. Shepard, Jr., USN | First American in Space |
| 1974 | General Chuck Yeager, USAF | First Man to Break the Sound Barrier |
| 1973 | Neil Armstrong | First Man on the Moon |
| 1973 | Sir Edmund Hillary | Conqueror of Mount Everest |
| 1968 | Captain James A. Lovell, Jr., USN | Conquest of Space |
| 1964 | Colonel John H. Glenn, USMC | First American to Orbit the Earth |

# The Academy Honor Delegates

2003: International student delegates of the American Academy of Achievement at United States Supreme Court after a dinner hosted by Awards Council members Justice Sandra Day O'Connor and Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

The outstanding scholars, scientists and social entrepreneurs selected to attend the International Achievement Summit are chosen from among the most distinguished young people in the world. The graduate student attendees are selected through a roster of prestigious international fellowship and scholarship programs, such as the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Medical Research Fellowship, the Rhodes Scholarship Trust, the

Truman Scholarship Foundation, White House Fellows Program, the Paul and Daisy Soros Foundation Fellowship, the Marshall Scholarship, Gates Cambridge Fellowship, and the Catherine B. Reynolds Foundation Fellowship Program for Social Entrepreneurship.

U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg receives the Golden Plate Award of the Academy of Achievement from Awards Council member Barbra Streisand at the Academy's 1995 Summit in Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia; Chief Justice John G. Roberts, Jr. and Awards Council member Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg speak with Academy delegates during an evening symposium and dinner at the United States Supreme Court at the 2007 International Achievement Summit in Washington, D.C.; Awards Council members Justices Anthony Kennedy and Ruth Ginsburg present the Academy of Achievement's Gold Medal to Justice Sonia Sotomayor at the 2012 Summit in Washington.

The faculty of colleges and universities around the world also nominate student delegates for the International Achievement Summit. The student delegates have distinguished themselves not only in their academic or artistic pursuits, but also in their record of service to their schools and communities as well as to various international charitable organizations. Their interests span the full spectrum, from the sciences to law, medicine, the humanities and entrepreneurship. In addition, the Academy of Achievement invites several student delegates who have demonstrated great promise in the performing arts to participate in the Summit activities.

Awards Council member Justice Anthony Kennedy addresses the American Academy of Achievement delegates at the United States Supreme Court during the introductory dinner of the 2010 International Achievement Summit.

## Who Governs the Academy?

The Board of Directors, composed of Patrons of the Academy and representatives of the Awards Council, oversees all financial aspects of the Academy's operation. Each year, the Academy's Board of Directors reviews — and considers for its approval — a detailed budget. Additionally, an annual independent audit is presented to the entire Board.

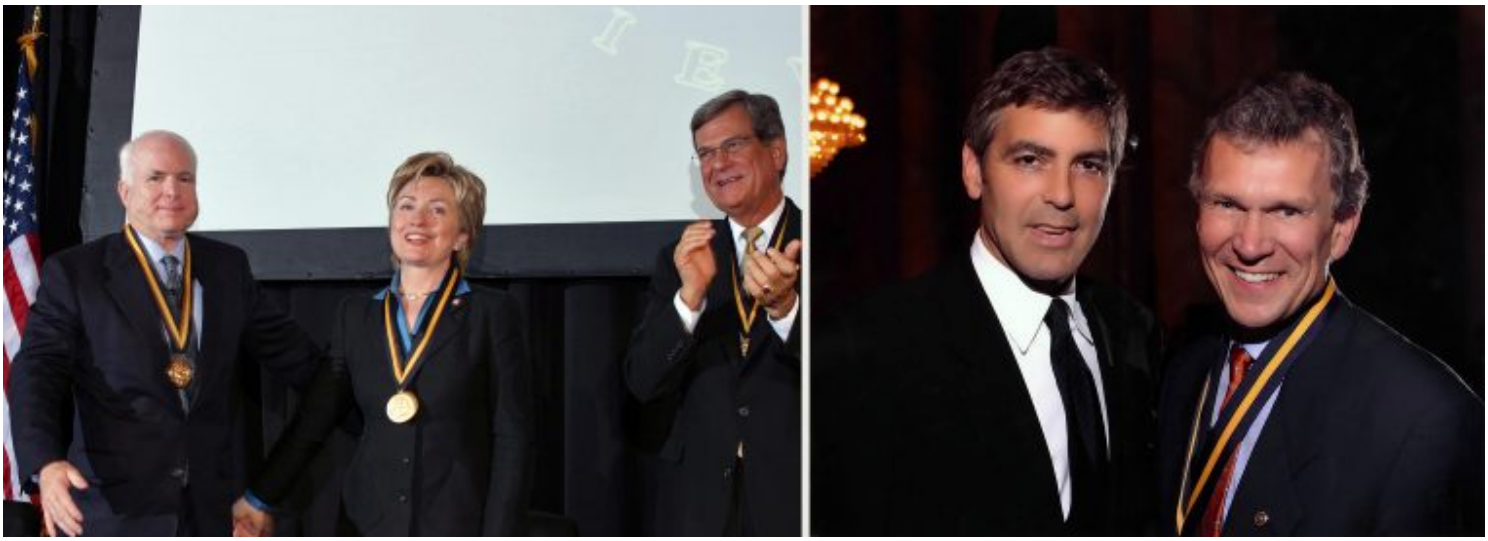
## Who Sponsors the Academy?

Wayne R. Reynolds, Summit Host Catherine B. Reynolds, and the 2017 delegates at Claridge's Hotel in London, England, prior to the opening reception and dinner during the 52nd annual International Achievement Summit.

The principal underwriter of the American Academy of Achievement's International Achievement Summit is The Catherine B. Reynolds Foundation. The Foundation, which has sponsored the International Achievement Summit since its inaugural gathering in Budapest, has also generously provided funding for a number of other Academy educational initiatives, including this website. A more complete listing of Academy Patrons and sponsors may be found on this website.

## NonProfit Status & Deductibility of Contributions

The Academy is a nonprofit organization within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code. All contributions to the Endowment Fund and to the Academy itself are tax-deductible under federal law.



Left: U.S. Senators John McCain, Hillary Clinton and Trent Lott receive their Academy of Achievement Gold Medals at a symposium and awards ceremony held at the U.S. Capitol during the 42nd International Achievement Summit in Washington, D.C. Right: Actor George Clooney and Senator Tom Daschle chat after the summit symposium and awards ceremony at the U.S. Capitol during the 2003 International Achievement Summit held in Washington, D.C.

## The Achievement Television Network

The lives of legendary achievers have endlessly fascinated the public. We marvel at George Washington's selfless commitment to his country, Thomas Edison's vision, Helen Keller's courage. Such heights, young people often believe, could only have been scaled by someone of unparalleled genius, or persons born to privilege, or those favored by sheer luck. However, the lives and words of these heroes reveal a different story. Few were born rich. They were no more lucky or unlucky than their contemporaries. They were individuals like us, beset by the same challenges that human beings have faced throughout the ages. Their greatness lies not in accidents of birth or good fortune, but in how they met and overcame the extraordinary challenges they faced in their own lives.

Neil M. Gorsuch, Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, addresses the Academy members and Marshall Scholars at historic Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire, England, during the 2017 International Achievement Summit.

Founded on the belief that great achievers can motivate and educate others by serving as inspiring role models, Achievement TV introduces a revolutionary concept by bringing individuals who have shaped the history of our time directly into the classroom. Achievement TV is an electronic forum that allows students to meet and learn from the outstanding visionaries and leaders of the last half-century. In their own words, these famous achievers tell of their experiences, struggles, dreams and personal paths to success, and engage in a unique, lively and innovative dialogue with the young people before whom each show was taped. All students, from those deemed “at-risk” to those in advanced placement classes, can discover heroes whose words and deeds will encourage them to strive for excellence in their studies and in their lives. Achievement TV programs are broadcast on numerous educational channels.

Awards Council member General Colin L. Powell at the 1991 Banquet of the Golden Plate ceremonies in New York City with Academy of Achievement inductees: fashion designer Oscar de la Renta and journalist Barbara Walters.

## Museum of the American Dream®

The American Academy of Achievement has created a museum in Washington, D.C. featuring interactive, multimedia displays telling the life stories of many of the Academy's members and their personal paths to success. Drawing upon its archives of exclusive, first-person source material, amassed over the past five decades, the Academy has created an exciting and unique exhibition.

Golden Plate Awards Council members and 2006 Summit Hosts Steven Spielberg and George Lucas welcome the Academy delegates and members to the 45th annual International Achievement Summit in Los Angeles, California.

Through state-of-the-art technology, visitors are brought into contact with the Academy honorees who have helped shape our times. In their own words, these leaders and visionaries share the path to their achievements, as well as candid insights into their own personal and professional lives. The contributions of these individuals to humanity's progress during the past century, and their spirit of innovation and ingenuity, will be preserved in the Academy's museum to inspire the creative thinking of future generations.

# Online Resources

Music impresario and Golden Plate Awards Council member Quincy Jones inducts famed musician and activist Bono into the Academy during the introductory dinner of the 2002 International Achievement Summit in Dublin.

The one-on-one video interviews of more than 200 Academy honorees are featured on the Academy of Achievement's website, www.achievement.org, alongside multimedia curriculum modules and a podcast center of selected symposium presentations from the annual International Achievement Summit. The website also hosts a collection of biographies and historic photographs of these Academy members. Visitors can access our online library and discover which books influenced the early lives of our honorees.

Legendary Writers: Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist John Updike addressing Academy students and delegates at a symposium during the 2004 International Achievement Summit in Chicago, Illinois; Awards Council member and famed operatic soprano Kathleen Battle presenting the American Academy of Achievement's Golden Plate Award to Toni Morrison, the recipient of the Nobel Prize in Literature, at the Banquet of the Golden Plate gala ceremonies during the 2005 International Achievement Summit in New York City; Admired novelist and social critic Gore Vidal addressing Academy delegates and members during the 2006 International Achievement Summit in Los Angeles.

The curriculum module topics feature Academy members talking to students about their personal insights and life experiences on a wide range of topics, including civil rights, social advocacy, creative writing and leadership. The Academy of Achievement's website receives 200 million hits per year from educators and students around the world. Our mission is to bring the personal stories of exceptional men and women to all who aspire to make a difference in their own lives.

Left: Members of the Awards Council: award-winning actress Helen Hayes, pioneer TV newscaster Lowell Thomas, and famed attorney Leon Jaworski at the American Academy of Achievement's 1974 Banquet of the Golden Plate Award ceremonies in Salt Lake City, Utah. Right: Council member Helen Hayes presents the Golden Plate Award to screen legend Jimmy Stewart at the 1974 Banquet of the Golden Plate Award ceremonies in Salt Lake City, Utah.

In 2011, the Academy of Achievement published a library of more than 500 exclusive audio and video symposium presentations from its annual Summits on Apple Podcasts. The Academy has continued to add to this collection, which now spans more than 30 years, from 1981 to 2017. Academy of Achievement podcasts are available to the public on Apple Podcasts, free of charge, under the Creative Commons License. In 2015, the Academy launched a podcast series, *What It Takes*, on iTunes. The podcast presents the life stories and reflections of Academy members who have had a huge impact on the world, and insights you can apply to your own life. *What It Takes* has received millions of downloads on Apple Podcasts.

Left: The Honorable John J. Sirica, Watergate trial judge and Time magazine's Man of the Year, with General Dan Shomron, paratroop commander of the Entebbe Airport rescue of 103 high-jacked hostages and later the Chief of Staff of the Israeli Defense Forces, on the head table at the 16th annual Banquet of the Golden Plate ceremonies in Orlando, Florida. Right: Academy guests of honor: sports journalist Howard Cosell, Alex Haley, the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Roots: The Saga of an American Family*, and the Emmy Award-winning actor Edward Asner at the 1977 Banquet of the Golden Plate during the American Academy of Achievement Summit held in Orlando, Florida.

## The Academy in the News

Learn more about the American Academy of Achievement in these stories from domestic and international news media:

*Rolling Stone India*, June 25, 2026
*U.S. Department of the Treasury*, June 24, 2026
*HH Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa Official Website*, June 24, 2026
*The Presidential Office of Ukraine*, September 23, 2024
*Kenyans.co.ke*, September 23, 2024
*Washingtonian*, November 22, 2022
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*NPR*, October 8, 2020
*The Buchtelite*, September 22, 2020
*Inc.*, September 16, 2020
*The Atlantic*, July 26, 2020
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*Radio.com*, May 8, 2019
*British Vogue*, October 20, 2017
*Fast Company*, August 8, 2013
*Washington Post*, October 28, 2012
*Daily News*, June 3, 2005
*Chicago Tribune*, June 14, 2004
*CBS 60 Minutes*, August 21, 2003

*Washington Post*, May 4, 2003
*The Sunday Times*, June 9, 2002
*Irish Times*, June 3, 2002
*San Antonio Express*, May 5, 2001
*The Elks Magazine*, September 2000
*The Boston Sunday Globe*, August 20, 2000
*The Elks Magazine*, September 2000
*Wall Street Journal*, July 23, 1999
*The Elks Magazine*, September 1998
*The Baltimore Sun*, May 23, 1997
*Express*, July 3, 1996
*The Elks Magazine*, November 1994
*Great Falls Tribune*, June 27, 1993
*Las Vegas Review-Journal*, June 28, 1992
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*The Elks Magazine*, October 1991
*The Morning Call*, August 1, 1991
*Hattiesburg American*, July 28, 1991
*The Burlington Free Press*, July 1, 1991
*San Francisco Chronicle*, June 26, 1989
*The Hartford Courant*, July 1, 1988
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*The Tennessean Showcase*, July 13, 1986
*The Washington Post*, June 30, 1986
*Rocky Mountain News*, June 30, 1985
*Coronado Journal*, July 14, 1983
*Washington Post*, July 13, 1982
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*The Arizona Republic*, June 30, 1974
*The Desert Sun*, April 27, 1974
*The Missoulian*, May 14, 1974

*Desert News*, June 20, 1973
*Desert News*, June 18, 1973
*The Morning Call*, June 6, 1973
*The Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 27, 1971
*Evening Journal*, June 16, 1971
*Dallas Morning News*, June 25, 1970
*Dallas Morning News*, June 16, 1968
*The Californian*, September 11, 1961
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