

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.



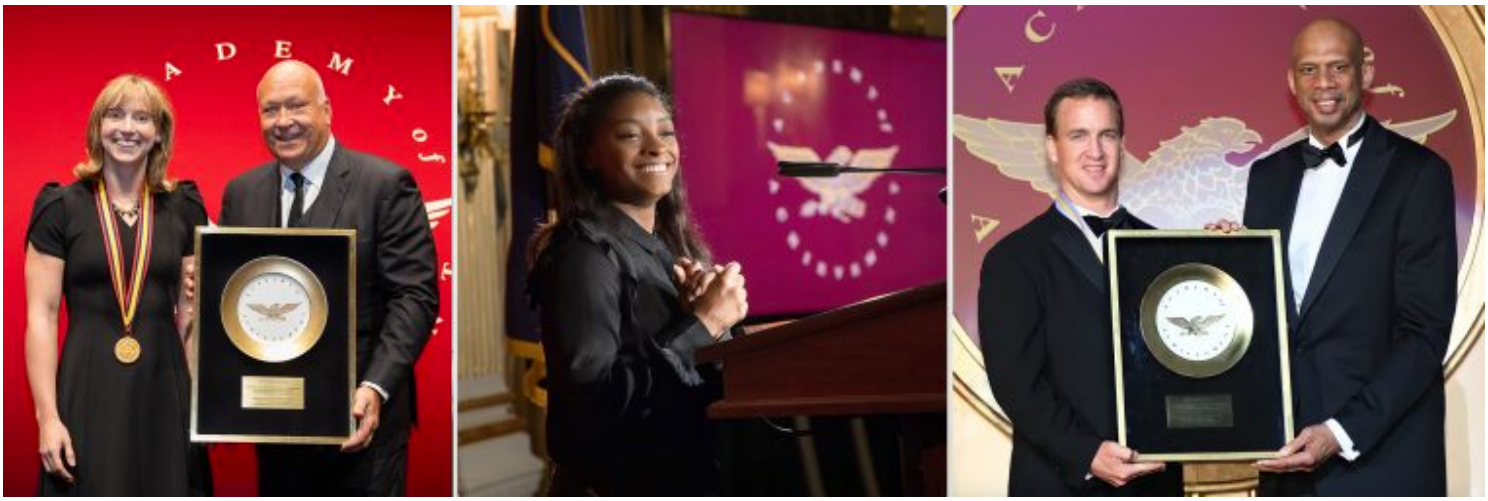
1986, The American Academy of Achievement's 25th-anniversary Summit at historic Mount Vernon, Virginia: (Left) Screen legend Shirley Temple Black with 3-time Heavy Weight Boxing Champion of the World Muhammad Ali at a reception. (Center) Neil Armstrong, the first man on the moon and Academy Class of 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.

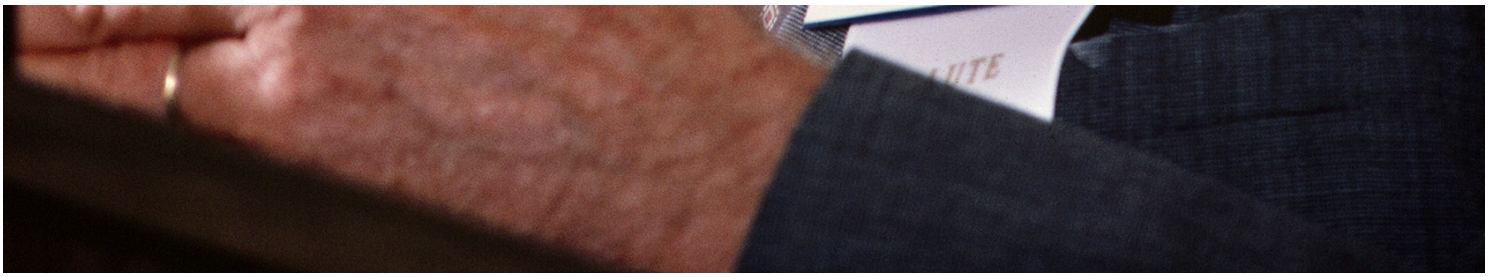
The International Achievement Summit



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.

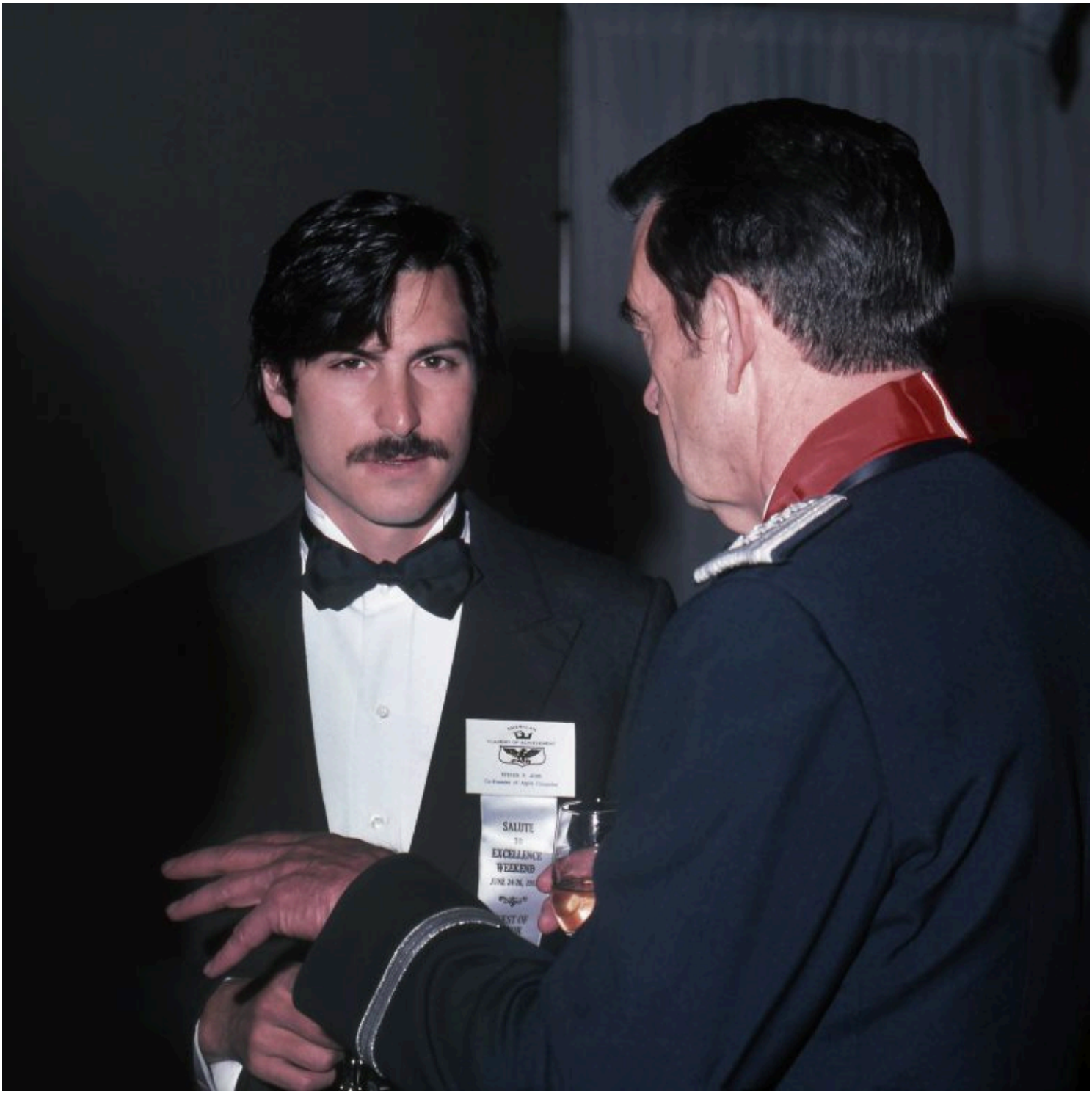
A sense of electricity grows throughout the program, as the delegates — through direct personal contact with past and present Academy honorees — are reminded of the shared history of human progress, and of the common heritage of individual leadership and initiative, which know no national boundaries. 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
1989	Arthur Rock	Venture Capitalist
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
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	Hall of Fame Football Coach
2024	Billie Jean King	Tennis Hall of Fame
2024	Katie Ledecky	Swimmer and Olympic Gold Medalist
2022	Allyson Felix	Olympic Champion

2017	Simone Biles	Gymnast and Olympic Gold Medalist
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
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
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

2026	Terence Tao, Ph.D.	Fields Medal for Mathematics
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
1990	Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar, Ph.D.	Nobel Prize in Physics
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
1976	Jonas Salk, M.D.	Developer of the Polio Vaccine
1975	Wernher von Braun, Ph.D.	Rocket Engineer
1975	Carl Sagan, Ph.D.	Astronomy and Literature
1972	Glenn T. Seaborg, Ph.D.	Discoverer of Plutonium
1971	Har Gobind Khorana, M.D.	Nobel Prize in Medicine
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?

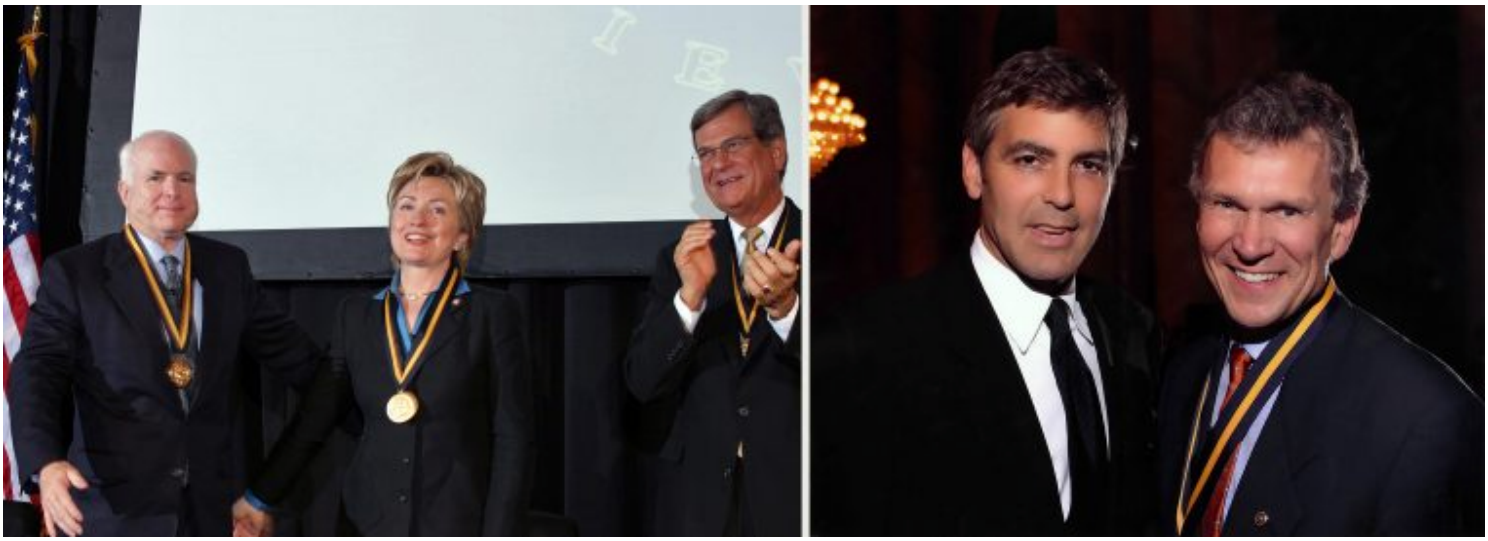


Wayne R. Reynolds, Summit Host Catherine B. Reynolds, and the 2017 delegates at Claridge's Hotel in London, England, prior to the opening reception and dinner during the 52nd annual International Achievement Summit.

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:

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U.S. Department of the Treasury, June 24, 2026
HH Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa Official Website, June 24, 2026
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The Elks Magazine, September 2000
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The Baltimore Sun, May 23, 1997
Express, July 3, 1996
The Elks Magazine, November 1994
Great Falls Tribune, June 27, 1993
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Dallas Morning News, June 16, 1968
The Californian, September 11, 1961
Monterey Peninsula Herald, September 11, 1961

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