

**Remarks by FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski
Presenting The Media Institute's
2012 American Horizon Award
To John Riccitiello
November 14, 2012**

Thank you, Dick Wiley. So I just had dinner with Dick and he asked me the same question everyone else is asking – am I staying or am I going as Chairman.

I don't know why people keep asking me that question. Clearly they should be asking Nate Silver.

In any event, thank you to my colleague Commissioner Rosenworcel for her terrific remarks this evening. Congratulations to Bob Pittman on receiving tonight's Freedom of Speech Award. I also want to recognize his presenter – and fellow – Mississippian Senator Roger Wicker.

On this occasion, I'm reminded of a quote from Mississippi's greatest writer, William Faulkner, who said, "Man will not merely endure, he will create music television. And then go into radio."

You might want to double check, but I'm pretty sure that's right.

Finally, thank you to Patrick Maines and The Media Institute for this opportunity to present the American Horizon Award to my friend, John Riccitiello.

Before I talk about John, a few words about The Media Institute and its mission to promote free speech, quality journalism, and a vibrant communications sector. Thomas Jefferson once said, "Our liberty depends on the freedom of the press, and that cannot be limited without being lost."

There is truly no more fundamental right or value in our democracy than free speech. This is something I've believed passionately for many years – literally decades.

I got my start as a student journalist, working for the *Columbia Spectator* in college, then starting a competing newspaper.

I also worked in those days for Fred Friendly, a great man, Edward R. Murrow's producer and then President of CBS News. A hero of journalism and a mentor I was very lucky to have. He helped instill in me the belief that a vibrant media is central to a vibrant America and a vibrant world – a belief that only gets stronger as I get older.

Of course Jefferson also said, "The Price of Freedom is eternal vigilance." And I want to thank The Media Institute for your vigilance in helping preserve these fundamental freedoms.

Now, for the main reason I'm here – John Riccitiello.

John is receiving the American Horizon Award, which is given annually to a distinguished person who promotes the vitality and independence of American media and communications.

I asked Patrick Maines what exactly that means. He said, it's pretty much an award for great innovators in the sector who are kicking some tail.

I'd say that certainly applies to John Riccitiello.

Of course, John is the CEO of Entertainment Arts, the world's leading developer and publisher of interactive entertainment.

And I'm going to come clean about something right now. My oldest son is 21-year-old. And I'm not ashamed to admit that I raised him on video games – and yes, I played with him. A lot. And I was good. I was very good.

What John may be upset to hear is that I was a Nintendo guy. Donkey Kong. Super Mario. Particularly Super Mario Kart. But here's the part of the story John will like. The arc of history bends toward justice. Children are rebellious. My son would eventually shun all Mario games in favor of the Madden NFL franchise, which, of course, is EA.

My son and I were eventually able to reconcile our differences, so I hope John can also forgive me.

My son, of course, is hardly the only convert to EA.

Under John's leadership, EA has grown to become a \$4-billion a year business.

And I know John is particularly proud of the fact that under his leadership EA's annual digital sales passed \$1 billion last year and have been increasing at a 40% annual rate over the past five years.

John is a visionary executive who embraces new technologies to unleash new economic opportunities.

John spent time as a creative leader in private equity. He was a founding partner and managing director of Elevation Partners.

John was also a top executive at Sara Lee, Haagen Dazs, PepsiCo, AND Wilson Sporting Goods – by the way affirming the adage that the top two ways to make money are selling things that make you gain weight, and selling things to help you lose weight.

Throughout his career, John Riccitiello has driven world-leading innovation. He is a business leader and a thought leader.

It's my pleasure to present The Media Institute's American Horizon Award to John Riccitiello.