

**Media Institute Freedom of Speech Award
Introduction of Dr. Jeffrey Herbst
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by
George B. Irish**

It is a distinct honor to present the Freedom of Speech Award to my colleague and friend, Dr. Jeffrey Herbst.

I have had the opportunity to work with Jeff in his role as President and CEO of the Newseum, where he joined after serving as the President of Colgate University. Prior to Colgate, Jeff served as provost and executive vice president for academic affairs and professor of political science at Miami University. He previously held posts at Princeton University, where he also graduated in 1983. He completed his master's degree and PhD from Yale University. Among many scholarly achievements, he is the recipient of two Fulbright Scholarships for research in Africa and his book, States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control, received the Gregory M. Luebbert Prize for the best book in Comparative Politics and was a finalist for the best book in African Studies by the African Studies Association.

While many of you likely know of Jeff's rise to prominence in championing freedom of speech in recent years, in reality, he has been doing this for the majority of his career, starting with focusing on the challenges to creating stable, successful nations in sub-Saharan Africa. Among many academic explorations, Jeff closely examined the South African experience transitioning from apartheid. He has deep experience studying emerging, racially divided democracies, and he developed a deep appreciation for, and vigilance of, the rights we have in the United States that so many nations in varying stages of development do not enjoy. In that sense, Jeff's early academic contribution laid the path that has most recently brought him to a position of great influence on college campuses.

In partnership with the Knight Foundation, Jeff and the Newseum led eye-opening research on high school and college students' attitudes toward free speech. The findings have led to a more robust understanding of the state of free speech as perceived by youth in America. Jeff and the Newseum used this data to redouble efforts to productively educate young generations on the critical role of protected speech in a thriving democracy. Sharing the

message that in America, as Justice John Marshall Harlan's stated, "one man's vulgarity is another's lyric."

In his April 2017 white paper, "Addressing the real crisis of free speech on campus," Jeff advocates persuasively for restoring a climate that enshrines all fundamental freedoms, especially freedom of speech, in the face of increasing censorship amid young generations. Jeff has been a voice defending those who protect free speech on college campuses when it has been stifled, and encouraging students and faculty to champion freedom of speech. In a recent op-ed in the Chronicle of Higher Education, he argues that: "Allowing others to speak and then challenging them in a forthright and open manner with more persuasive ideas is the way to win in the long-term." He reminds us that we risk undermining exactly what has historically made higher education in the United States so coveted – the free exchange of ideas, civil discourse and the ensuing furthering of human understanding.

For all of these efforts and many more than I could discuss in a few short minutes, I am certainly convinced that Dr. Herbst epitomizes what the Freedom of Speech award recognizes.