

Hon. George Mitchell Citation

May 24 , 2006

The Honorable George J. Mitchell ***Doctor of Humane Letters***

Former United States Senator from Maine and Senate Majority Leader, chair of Northern Ireland's historic peace talks, judge, prosecutor, presidential envoy, mentor, hero, you George J. Mitchell, son of immigrant parents, are honest, fair, and ethical. You demonstrate these traits in public service, the law, politics, and in your daily life.

Born in Waterville, Maine, you were raised by parents who emphasized the importance of education. You graduated with a bachelor's degree from Bowdoin College in Maine, and entered the U.S. Army Counter Intelligence Corps. After receiving an LLB from Georgetown University Law Center, you were a trial lawyer for the Department of Justice and executive assistant to Senator Edmund Muskie of Maine. You practiced law in Maine and were appointed U.S. Attorney for Maine and eventually were named a district judge.

In 1980 you were appointed to the U.S. Senate to complete Senator Muskie's term of office. You were reelected in 1982 and 1988, the last time with 81 percent of the vote, the largest margin in Maine's history, and elected Senate Majority Leader the following year. As Senate Majority Leader you reminded us that politics is a noble calling, by navigating partisan waters to push through laws to broaden voter registration, giving 20 million people access to the Family and Medical Leave Act, protecting the basic rights of disabled Americans, and preserving the environment with the landmark Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act. You left the Senate of your own choosing and accepted a new role offered to you by the British and Irish Governments, chairman of the peace negotiations in Northern Ireland.

Just this March, Commissioner of Baseball Bud Selig announced the launching of an open-ended, independent inquiry, to be led by you, into alleged steroid use in America's Pastime.

You once said, "I believe there is no such thing as a conflict that can't be ended. Conflicts are created and sustained by human beings. They can be ended by human beings. No matter how ancient the conflict, no matter how much harm has been done, peace can prevail." Staying true to your beliefs, you negotiated the "Good Friday" peace agreement over two years with the governments of Great Britain and Ireland, and 10 political parties in Northern Ireland, ending the civil war that had spanned three decades. President Clinton awarded you the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian honor the U.S. government can give, for negotiating the end of sectarian war in Northern Ireland, at the White House during the 1999 St. Patrick's Day observance.

Currently you are chairman of the Global Board, of the law firm of DLA Piper, and chairman of the board of The Walt Disney Company.

For your significant contributions to the United States, the island of Ireland, and the global peace process, Pace University proudly confers upon you the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters, honoris causa, with all the rights and privileges pertaining thereunto.