

## Hon. Tyrone Brown's Remarks for Presentation of MMTC's Lifetime Achievement Award for Former FCC Commissioner and Acting Chairwoman Mignon Clyburn



Congratulations, Mignon!

Madam Chair, Commissioner Clyburn, Dear Friend, what is to be said about you? I shall say this:

You and Colin Kaepernick have lot in common. Think about it.

You each come from strong families, you the natural way and he by adoption. Obviously, both were families that saw some value in a certain kind of stubbornness. As obvious, they were also families that instilled strong moral direction.

Both you and Kaepernick have taken deep into your hearts the sublime teaching, presaged in the Old Testament and expanded in the New, which is "Whatever you do unto the least of these my brethren and sisters, you do also unto me."

Chair Clyburn, both you and Kaepernick have embraced this teaching. You both have focused laser-like on our prison system — on the men and women, teens and elders, most of them Brown or Black, who should never have been sent to prison or who, rehabilitated, should be returned to their communities and families.

Your determined campaign to reach out and back to these people, to help them stay in touch with home without having to subsidize the prison system, is not as loud as Kaepernick's protest against the system. Still, both you and he remind very fortunate people, like you and him, of connectedness and the need to speak out for those who, whether through fault or circumstance, are much less fortunate than you.

Actually, during your five years of federal government service, we have watched you become a master of speaking out for the underdog.

Madam Chair, I will take the comparison with Kaepernick just one step further. Can you see yourself joining him on the sideline, taking that knee? I can. Then, part way through the Anthem, you would say, "Colin, let's not take ourselves too seriously. Let's stand now and celebrate America as a place where there is freedom to advocate in public for those who got left behind, all of them. Let's keep on keeping on to help perfect America as a place where the least among us is not forgotten."

Mignon, we know that in all you do from here, your communications campaign on behalf of inmates will not flag. The effort is an important part of who you are. We who have watched your work this far are inspired and improved by your example.

*Hon. Ty Brown serves as consulting counsel for Wiley Rein LLP. He is a former Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Commissioner and widely-respected entrepreneurial strategist, having represented a range of telecom clients. An expert in regulatory issues affecting telecom providers, his practice focuses on matters before the FCC, on communications start-ups, and on communications public policy.*