

Contact: Ananda Leeke, Chief Social Media Officer
aleeke@mmtconline.org (202) 261-6543

MMTC Remembers the Life and Legacy of Charles D. Ferris (1933 – 2024)

WASHINGTON, DC (February 28, 2024): On February 16, 2024, Charles D. (“Charlie”) Ferris, former chairman of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), made his peaceful transition at home, after a brief illness.

The Multicultural Media, Telecom and Internet Council (MMTC) expresses our deepest sympathies to the family, staff, constituents, and friends of former FCC Chairman Charles Ferris.

Statement of MMTC President and CEO Robert Branson

“Last week, America lost a great patriot and extraordinary statesman of the civil rights movement. Charlie Ferris probably set a record for the number of minority media and telecom lawyers he recruited, trained, and mentored. Many of whom are still active and all remember Charlie with great fondness.

Charlie was the G.O.A.T. of media diversity, having shepherded the Tax Certificate Policy through to unanimous adoption in 1978. The policy conferred a modest capital gain tax deferral on broadcasters and cablecasters who sold properties to minority entrepreneurs. The Tax Certificate Policy was by far the most impactful diversity policy ever adopted by the FCC. Charlie personally called the three major broadcast networks and the National Association of Broadcasters to secure their endorsements. The Policy quintupled minority broadcast ownership during its time in effect, 1978 – 1995.

Charlie was a vigorous enforcer of the FCC’s EEO rules as well. As FCC Chairman from 1977-1981, minority employment in broadcasting grew by over 20%.

Before heading to the FCC, Charlie enjoyed a long career as a senior staff manager for Senator Mike Mansfield. In that capacity, Charlie was the administration’s staff leader on the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the 1965 Voting Rights Act, and the 1968 Fair Housing Act.

All of us who work to promote diversity and equal opportunity in media and telecom will always remember Charlie and his incredible civil rights legacy.”

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About MMTC:

The Multicultural Media, Telecom and Internet Council (MMTC) is a non-partisan, national nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting and preserving equal opportunity and civil rights in the mass media, telecom and broadband industries, and closing the digital divide on behalf of its members and constituents, including owners of radio and television broadcast stations, programmers, prospective station owners, and others involved in the TMT industries. MMTC is generally recognized as the nation’s leading advocate for minority advancement in communications. MMTC’s vision is to achieve a fully connected, educated, healthy, and empowered society in which all communities thrive. Visit MMTC’s website [here](#).