



Life In Brief

Born: March 23, 1963

Birthplace: Birmingham, AL

Marital Status: Married

Education:

- JD, Georgetown University Law Center, 1993
- BA, Government, College of William and Mary, 1985

Family:

Two children

Work History:

- President and CEO, The Internet & Television Association (NCTA), 2011-Present
- Senior Advisor, Providence Equity Partners Inc., 2005-2011
- Federal Communications Commission
 - Chairman, 2001-2005
 - Commissioner, 1997-2001
- Chief of Staff, Antitrust Division, Department of Justice, 1996-1997
- Legal Associate, O'Melveny & Myers LLP, 1994-1996
- Law Clerk, Honorable Harry T. Edwards, Chief Judge of the US Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia, 1993
- Policy Advisor, Secretary of Defense Richard B. Cheney, 1988-1990
- Armored Cavalry Officer, US Army, 1985-1988

Quick Summary

An accomplished communications policy expert with private and public sector experience, Powell

works as a prominent lobbyist for the communications industry; pushes for internet deregulation and expanding broadband access

- Son of Army General and former Secretary of State Colin Powell, he followed in his father's footsteps and enlisted; after his service in the Army, served as a policy adviser to then-Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney
- Later, he became chief of staff of the Antitrust Division in the Department of Justice, where he advised the Assistant Attorney General on policy development, criminal and civil investigations, and mergers, garnering experience in the legal and regulatory fields; credits this seminal time as teaching him the joys of telecommunications subject matter and guiding his telecommunications career
- Appointed by President Bill Clinton to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in 1997 and elevated to chairman four years later by President George W. Bush; served as FCC chair for four years, resigning in 2005
- His FCC tenure witnessed the rapid transformation of communications as the internet, smart phones, and wifi networks all became mainstream; stated his FCC priorities as spectrum policy, broadband access, consumer protections, and ensuring business competition
- Leverages his leadership positions at Broadband for America, the FCC, and NCTA to improve broadband access; as President and CEO of The Internet & Television Association (NCTA), the principal trade association for the communications industry, Powell launched a new initiative to expand broadband to underserved communities to improve remote learning during COVID-19
- Has taken a public stance in light of racial justice movements; joined media groups in signing a letter to push back against President Trump's September 2020 executive order that banned





racial sensitivity training to federal contractors, viewing it as a “personal” issue for NCTA

Approach and Motivations

A driven, adaptable, and methodical decision-maker who credits his tough-love mentor with influencing his business approach; as FCC Chairman, leveraged his philosophical passion and his rapport with Republicans to push policy priorities

- Sees his parents as mentors who taught him “right, wrong, and responsibility,” simple, distilled values that he finds widely applicable to his everyday life
- Views his tragic Army accident and subsequent hospitalization, as a defining moment in his career since everything he had “expected and planned for” was irrevocably changed; reminds him that life is “random” and it is most important to “be prepared to adapt” and follow new paths
- Credits Judge Harry Edwards with teaching him the “most foundational lessons,” including holding oneself to the highest standard without compromise and learning how to lean into struggles; says his clerkship taught him how to divorce emotional reactions from legal analysis, commit to rigor, and recognize that fear and intimidation can mobilize you to achieve your goals
- Self-identifies as a pro-market moderate Republican pushing for deregulation; stated, “if you take the prices out of the market, it’s not a market. It’s a government-controlled environment, and the government never does it well”
- During his tenure as FCC chairman, he leveraged close relations with Republicans to influence policy and support legislation, such as the late Sen. John McCain’s (R-AZ) Telecommunications Ownership Diversification

Act of 2002 to open up the telecom business to newcomers

- Leverages his “philosophical passion” to direct policy initiatives that go beyond politics and instead are focused on being a “responsible corporate citizen,” citing the NCTA’s K-12 Bridge to Broadband Initiative as an example

Policy Position and Areas of Focus

Broadband access: Promotes US broadband growth and its beneficial educational impacts

- As FCC chairman, he opened up markets in broadband over powerline, believing that these new technologies would allow small companies to better compete with corporations and improve consumers’ services; coined the term “digital migration” to explain his vision of transitioning from a “slow convention analog world to a digital world”
- In March 2020, the NCTA launched the Broadband Network Performance Dashboard to inform the public and policymakers on the growth of traffic during the pandemic and how cable broadband operators are meeting the challenge
- In September 2020, the NCTA partnered with EducationSuperHighway and launched the K-12 Bridge to Broadband initiative to help increase students’ home connectivity and improve remote learning by better identifying unconnected student households and offering discounted broadband for qualifying low-income students

Deregulation and Net Neutrality: Encourages relaxed federal internet regulations and is outspoken against regulations classifying broadband under telephone laws

- As chairman of the FCC, Powell outlined the four “internet freedoms” or “net neutrality”





principles “to stop interference and manipulation of internet traffic,” including freedom to access content, to run applications, to attach devices, and to obtain service plan information

- Stated “I do think the internet should largely not be regulated”; believes the government’s tactic of regulating the communications industry based on “buckets” has proven unsuccessful and inaccurate because “internet protocol and broadband...starts to collapse those distinctions in the market”
- Disagreed with the FCC’s 2015 net neutrality regulation that reclassified broadband as a Title II service, referring to the old telephone network and laws and created a “utility-style regulation”; argues this decision impedes investment, stifles innovation, and increases prices, suggests that the FCC should create a new legal authority to regulate internet
- Fears the recent push towards state regulation of the internet, believing that it will result in incongruous, fractured systems that will be “harmful to the overall harmony of the infrastructure”

Professional Affiliations

- Board, Mayo Clinic
- Vice Chair, America’s Promise Alliance
- Board, The William and Mary Foundation

