



**Remarks by the Director of National Intelligence  
Mr. Mike McConnell**

**Wade Hampton High School – “Legion of Honor”  
Induction Ceremony**

**Wade Hampton High School  
Greenville, South Carolina**

**November 2, 2008**

---

DIRECTOR McCONNELL: Well, thank you so much. It’s really quite an honor to come back. I feel very privileged – once I was privileged to walk across the stage to graduate, it’s a privilege now to be back. I was thinking about what I might say today, but the thought that came to my mind was for every successful man, there are some very surprised classmates.

(Laughter.)

And the first thing I noticed coming is – I was handed a copy of the program, and I looked on the back and there’s my picture and I said, “My goodness, what a haircut.”

(Laughter.)

That was somewhere before the Beatles and after Elvis, and I think we were searching. I have had the privilege to serve now for sometime in the field of intelligence. It is something that we work diligently and hard everyday. In my formative years, I was fascinated with Teddy Roosevelt. And one of the things that Roosevelt said, and I will paraphrase, something to the effect that: ‘The opportunity to do hard work, for work that is worth doing, is life’s true purpose.’

I found that for me early in my time in the Navy. When I started to understand the globe and the situation around the world, the Cold War, and the period of history that we are in – so I decided to focus on that as a career. I have been blessed to have an opportunity to serve at some critical moments and to the senior decision makers of the Nation.

As we are today – post 9/11 – just some seven short years ago, we have not suffered a similar attack. That is not because people aren’t trying. My community and the community of military, and law enforcement, and intelligence officials around the globe are working every day to prevent another attack on the United States. And we have been successful dozens of times.

It is, for me, a great privilege and pleasure to brief the President six days a week. But I do have to share with you that no matter how many times that I have gotten up at four o’clock in the morning, I am still not used to it.

(Laughter.)

I am looking forward in a few more years to hopefully coming back to South Carolina and joining my family and my grandchildren. I just had the opportunity this weekend to visit with my granddaughters down in Charleston, and it was a delightful visit.

Thank you for inviting me back. It's a real pleasure. Thank you all for doing this. I think it's a great idea and I look forward to participating in future years with similar inductees. Thank you so much.

(Applause.)

(END)

---



*Director McConnell with "Legion of Honor" Recipients*