

Mark Fowler's Introduction of Mike Marcus

4 April 2008

Good morning, Thank you for opportunity to introduce Mike Marcus to this audience today.

During my tenure as chairman, we faced a number of difficult and contentious issues including reforming telephone rates, facilitating telecommunications competition, and extending First Amendment protection to all media. The electronic press, the press that uses air and electrons, must be as free as the press that uses paper and ink. There are no policy reasons to regulate the content of the electronic media, only excuses.

In any case, all of these momentous issues drew the attention of the industry, academics, Capitol Hill, and the press.

In comparison to those issues, our consideration in 1985 of rules that would reduce the regulatory barriers facing radio system innovators did not gather much attention. The proposed policy was new—radio systems operating at the relatively high power level of 1 watt could be brought to the market without an FCC rulemaking or the grant of an FCC license. In a limited sphere, it would be as easy to develop and sell new radio equipment as it would be to develop and sell a new toaster—well as easy as a toaster with an antenna. As with any policy change, there were many who feared change and suggested going slow or abandoning the effort.

Despite these naysayers, Mike Marcus persisted. I clearly recall the meeting with Mike in which he convinced me that I should put the adoption of these new policies before the entire Commission for an up or down vote. I did so, and the Commission adopted the new Part 15 rules.

The rest is history. Today, billions of dollars of equipment operating under these rules are sold each year. Most portable computers sold today incorporate WiFi radios. Looking back, it is clear that adoption of these rules was one

of the significant achievements of the Reagan FCC —though I doubt if anyone thought so at the time.

Mike Marcus knows better than anyone else the details of the development of the FCC's modern unlicensed wireless policy and is ideally suited to kick off today's conference.

Mike truly was a man ahead of his time. He still is. So, here's Mike.