**Larry Irving becomes the first African American inducted into the Internet Hall of Fame**

***Irving recognized by the Internet Society for his pioneering work identifying and addressing the digital divide***

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – September 27, 2019 – Today, Larry Irving becomes the first African American to be part of the elite ranks of notable individuals inducted into the Internet Hall of Fame. He joins internet luminaries, such as Vint Cerf, Marc Andreessen and Tim Berners-Lee, honored for their significant contributions to the advancement of the global internet. The Internet Hall of Fame is inducting Irving, who is widely credited for coining the term “digital divide”, for his impact on increasing internet access among unserved and underserved populations. The digital divide has been and continues to be referenced by virtually every governmental, corporate, philanthropic and non-profit organizations across the planet that is concerned about increasing access to the internet and improving user competence in navigating the web.

Irving served for almost seven years as Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information and Administrator of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), where he was a principal advisor to President Bill Clinton, Vice President Al Gore and Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown on domestic and international telecommunications and information technology issues.

“Focus on the digital divide unquestionably has contributed to the growth and development of the internet as new and diverse populations have come online because of efforts to bridge the divide,” commented Chris Lewis, President and CEO at Public Knowledge. “The reports Larry commissioned as NTIA Administrator were the first, and remain some of the most notable and impactful, analyses of consumer access to the internet. In his introduction to a 1999 report, Larry was among the first to note that ‘[t]he divide between those with access to new technologies and those without is now one of America's leading economic and civil rights issues.’ That formulation has been repeated numerous times by others in the intervening two decades both inside and outside the United States, and it laid a foundation for examining emerging technologies, specifically algorithmic decision making and artificial intelligence.”

Clayton Banks, Co-Founder and CEO of Silicon Harlem noted, “Certainly others in the Clinton-Gore Administration did important work, but Larry was the most visible and effective Administration official, other than Al Gore, in developing and communicating internet policies. Larry led the focus on the digital divide and has remained steadfast in his concern about the issue and the impact of lack of connectivity for half the planet’s population for the past quarter century.”

Irving was a member of the Obama-Biden transition team in 2008-2009 and was one of the architects of that administration’s early technology initiatives, including their broadband technology initiative (BTOP) that focused on connecting community anchor institutions to broadband networks to assist consumer access and connectivity. He also helped craft the Obama-Biden administration's broadband “mapping” strategy, designed to determine the presence and quality of broadband in discrete communities, particularly in rural and exurban communities.

After leaving government, Irving assisted and consulted with tech companies seeking to address the digital divide, including working with AOL to develop strategies for increasing online subscribership among minority audiences. He also assisted Cisco open markets in Bulgaria and Romania by crafting programs in conjunction with the U.S. Embassies and Ambassadors to discuss the importance of internet connectivity. Irving also worked with the Global Internet Policy Initiative (GIPI) and assisted the program’s efforts to bridge the digital divide, including by aiding their work in India.

For his enduring efforts to help close the digital divide, Irving was:

* Presented with the *James Madison Award*, the American Library Association’s highest honor
* Honored by minority and civil rights groups:
	+ Congressional Black Caucus *Technology Champion*
	+ Minority Media Telecommunications Council *Everett Parker Award*
	+ National Association of Minorities in Communications *Mickey Leland Humanitarian Award*
	+ Rainbow Push Coalition *Trailblazer Award*
* Honored by community organizations:
	+ Silicon Harlem *Charles B. Rangel Award*
	+ Indigenous Broadcast Center of Anchorage, Alaska
* Honored by the consumer advocacy group Alliance for Public Technology with the *Susan Hadden Award*
* Honored by the National Association of Telecommunications Professionals
* Named one of the “50 most influential people in the year of the Internet” (1995) by *Newsweek Magazine,* which dubbed Irving “the Net’s Conscience”

Irving was born in a public housing project in Brooklyn, NY, raised in a working-class family in Queens, NY, and earned an undergraduate degree from Northwestern University, as well as a law degree from Stanford University.

Larry Irving will be honored at the Internet Hall of Fame 2019 Induction Ceremony on September 27, 2019 in San Jose, Costa Rica. The ceremony can be viewed via livestream:  <https://livestream.com/internetsociety/ihof2019>. More details on the 2019 Internet Hall of Fame inductees, including their biographies and photos, can be found at [www.internethalloffame.org](http://www.internethalloffame.org). You can follow the Internet Hall of Fame on Facebook and on Twitter at @Internet\_HOF (#ihof2019).

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About The Irving Group

The Irving Group is a consulting firm based in Washington, D.C. providing strategic advice and assistance to international telecommunications and information technology companies, foundations and non-profit organizations. Larry Irving launched the company in October 1999.

About the Internet Hall of Fame

The Internet Hall of Fame ([www.internethalloffame.org](http://www.internethalloffame.org)) is a recognition program and virtual museum that celebrates the living history of the Internet and the individuals whose extraordinary contributions have made the Internet, its worldwide availability and use, and its transformative nature, possible. The Internet Hall of Fame was launched by the Internet Society in 2012.

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