



The Honorable Tom Ridge

The Honorable Tom Ridge is the president and CEO of Ridge Global LLC. As the company's chief executive, he leads a team of international experts that help businesses and governments address a range of needs throughout their organizations, including risk management and global trade security, strategic business generation, technology integration, event security, crisis management, campus security and other issues that encompass a diverse portfolio.

Following the tragic events of September 11th, 2001, Tom Ridge became the first Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and, on January 24, 2003, became the first Secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. The creation of the country's 15th Cabinet Department marked the largest reorganization of government since the Truman administration and another call to service for the former soldier, congressman and governor of Pennsylvania.

During his tenure, Secretary Ridge worked with more than 180,000-plus employees from a combined 22 agencies to create an agency that facilitated the flow of people and goods, instituted layered security at air, land and seaports, developed a unified national response and recovery plan, protected critical infrastructure, integrated new technology and improved information sharing worldwide. Tom Ridge served as Secretary of this historic and critical endeavor until February 1, 2005.

Before the events of September 11th, Tom Ridge was twice elected Governor of Pennsylvania. He served as the state's 43rd governor from 1995 to 2001. Known for his commitment to high standards and results, Governor Ridge delivered on his promise to make Pennsylvania "a leader among states and a competitor among nations." Governor Ridge's aggressive technology strategy helped fuel the state's advances in economic development, education, health care and the environment.

Born August 26, 1945, in Pittsburgh's Steel Valley, Ridge was raised in a working-class family in veterans' public housing in Erie. He earned a scholarship to Harvard, graduating with honors in 1967.

After his first year at The Dickinson School of Law, he was drafted into the U.S. Army, where he served as an infantry staff sergeant in Vietnam, earning the Bronze Star for Valor, the Combat Infantry Badge and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry. After returning to Pennsylvania and to Dickinson, he earned his law degree and was in private practice before becoming assistant district attorney in Erie County.

Tom Ridge was elected to Congress in 1982. He was one of the first Vietnam combat veterans elected to the U.S. House of Representatives and was overwhelmingly re-elected by Pennsylvania voters five times.

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An engaging and dynamic speaker, Secretary Ridge regularly addresses audiences throughout the world on issues, such as security, terrorism, global engagement, leadership, technology and more. Additionally, the first U.S. secretary of Homeland Security serves on the boards of the Institute for Defense Analyses, the Center for the Study of the Presidency and Congress and other private and public entities, and since 2005, has served as chairman of the National Organization on Disability. Secretary Ridge continues to contribute to matters concerning our nation's veterans and, along with Gen. Tommy Franks (Ret.), serves as national co-chairman of the Flight 93 Memorial Fundraising Campaign.

Throughout his public and private sector career, Tom Ridge has received numerous honors, including the Woodrow Wilson Award, the Veterans of Foreign Wars' Dwight D. Eisenhower Award, the John F. Kennedy National Award, the Ellis Island Medal of Honor, the American Bar Association's John Marshall Award, the National Guard's Harry S. Truman Award, the Pennsylvania Wildlife Federation's Conservationist of the Year Award, U.S.-Mexico Chamber of Commerce's Good Neighbor Award, the American Cancer Society's prestigious National Medal of Honor, the Mister Rogers Award, the Champion of Public Television Award, the Intrepid Freedom Award and the Esperanza Leadership Award. Secretary Ridge has also been awarded honorary degrees and awards from many national and international academic institutions.

Tom Ridge and his wife, Michele, reside in Washington, DC, and have two children.