

FACT SHEETPRESIDENTIAL MEDAL OF FREEDOM

The Presidential Medal of Freedom is the highest civil award of our Government. It may be awarded only by the President of the United States to persons who have made exceptionally meritorious contributions to the security or national interests of the United States, to world peace, or to cultural or other significant public or private endeavors.

The announcement of awards of the Medal of Freedom is made annually on the Fourth of July but such awards may be made at other times, at the discretion of the President. President Kennedy announced the first awards in 1963. President Johnson made the first presentations in a ceremony at the White House on December 6, 1963.

There are two degrees of the award: The Presidential Medal of Freedom with Distinction, the higher degree, and the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

The Medal of Freedom has been awarded to 140 persons.

President Truman named 9 persons for the award.

President Eisenhower named 13 persons for the award.

President Kennedy named 31 persons for the award, but presented the Medal to only 1 person.

President Johnson named 58 persons for the award, and presented an additional 30 persons named by President Kennedy with the Medal.

President Nixon named 28 persons for the award.

President Ford has presented the Medal to one other person:  
Ambassador David K. E. Bruce, in February of 1976.

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April 1, 1976