

Stephen McConnell Case Doctor of Laws

Steve Case is a businessman and philanthropist, and was recently described by CNBC as “one of the nation’s greatest entrepreneurs.” In 1985, Case co-founded America Online, which helped drive the worldwide adoption of a medium that has transformed business and society. Focusing on communication features such as chat rooms, instant messaging and forums, AOL was one of the pioneers of the concept of social media. . Case later negotiated what remains the largest merger in business history between AOL and Time Warner, and served as chair of the combined company until 2003. In 2005, he returned to his entrepreneurial roots and launched Revolution, an investment firm that seeks to partner with entrepreneurs in building businesses that give people more choice, control and convenience in important areas of their lives. Through Revolution, Case has invested in more than two dozen companies, including LivingSocial and Zipcar.

A resident of the Washington, DC area for more than 25 years, Case is also an ardent supporter of entrepreneurs in the nonprofit and public policy arenas. In 2011, President Obama appointed him chair of the Startup America Partnership, a private sector initiative aimed at spurring the growth of entrepreneurial ecosystems across the United States. Case also served on the President’s Council on Jobs and Competitiveness, where he chaired the efforts focused on entrepreneurship, and currently co-chairs the National Advisory Council on Innovation and Entrepreneurship.

Believing in the mantra of “to whom much is given, much is expected,” Case also has deep philanthropic roots. In 1997, he and his wife Jean created the Case Foundation, which unites the principles of entrepreneurship, innovation and technology to make philanthropy and giving more effective. The Case Foundation has invested in hundreds of organizations, initiatives and partnerships over the past 15 years. In addition, the Cases joined The Giving Pledge, started by Bill Gates and Warren Buffett, and publicly reaffirmed their commitment to give away the majority of their wealth.

Case’s honors include the National Mentoring Partnership Leadership Award, the Junior Achievement U.S. Business Hall of Fame and appointment as a Citizen Regent of the Smithsonian Institution. Case is no stranger to Carolina, having visited the campus in 2011 to speak and participate with Chancellor Holden Thorp in the first national forum of the National Advisory Council on Innovation and Entrepreneurship.

For outstanding accomplishment in the fields of entrepreneurship and business, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is pleased to confer on Stephen McConnell Case the degree of Doctor of Laws *honoris causa* and to invite him to deliver the 2013 Commencement Address.