

Smith: This woman is a dynamo. Believe me. I've been there many, many times and what she has accomplished since she has been there has been a miracle. Her enthusiasm, her hard work, her creativity, she is a fantastic person.

If it wasn't for a superstar diplomat who charmed all of Paris, America might have lost the War of Independence. Benjamin Franklin believed that necessity never makes a good bargain, that God helps those who help themselves. Thomas Jefferson maintained his lasting respect and admiration for Benjamin Franklin and concluded his notes for his eulogy with a confession. I'm being presented to anyone as the minister of America, the common place question used in such causes was, it is you sir who replaced Dr. Franklin. Jefferson generally answered, no one can replace him, sir. I am only his successor.

It is my personal pleasure to introduce a man who knows a lot about Benjamin Franklin. Walter Isaacson is the president and CEO of the Aspen Institute. He has been chairman and CEO of CNN and the managing editor of Time Magazine. He is the author of Benjamin Franklin An American Life. A fascinating wonderful story and is currently writing a biography of Albert Einstein due to be published in April of 2007. He is a graduate of Harvard College and of Pembroke College of Oxford University where he was a Rhodes Scholar. He lives with his wife and daughter in Washington, D.C. And we are thrilled that he is our speaker tonight.