Thank you Cheryl. It’s wonderful to be introduced by one of my very first and very best hires. It gives me great pride to see a woman that I had the privilege of mentoring devote her career to ensuring that the most vulnerable Americans can benefit from open and diverse media and communications networks. You were one of the first to equate media justice with social justice, and we owe you a debt of gratitude for it.

Thank you to UCC’s Office of Communication for presenting me with the Everett C. Parker Award. I can think of no greater honor for someone in the field of public interest communications policy advocacy.

I want to extend congratulations to my long-time friend Helen Brunner and to my new friend Kevin Sampson. Helen is one of the most unsung heroes of our field - her roles as a funder of the field and coordinator of campaigns around net neutrality, privacy and Lifeline were essential to the victories we achieved when I was at the FCC. And Kevin, I’m awed by your many roles as a writer, producer, critic and founder of the DC Black Film Festival.

There are so many people to thank for this award, and a lot of you are in this room. Special thanks go to my family - my wife Lara, daughter Yossi and mom Roma. They all put up with the 11 PM phone calls, the press releases sent from my computer at the dinner table and the trips to glamorous destinations like Westminster, Maryland, Anaheim, California, and most recently Akron, Ohio. But I did get to see LeBron James’ house!

I want to dedicate this award to Marvin Sohn, my dad, who as many of you know, passed away in June. Unlike his only daughter, Marvin was a man of few words. But he and my mom always supported my work, no matter how long the hours or how poor the pay. I miss him a lot, but I know that he’s looking down with a twinkle in his eye and pride in his heart.

I’ve spent just over 30 years working to ensure that all Americans benefit from accessible, affordable and open communications networks that promote democratic values. But none of that would have been possible without Everett Parker’s accomplishments. As this audience knows well, Everett worked hand-in-hand with the Rev. Martin Luther King and the civil rights community to challenge the broadcast license of WLBT-TV, a Jackson, Mississippi station that broadcast racist propaganda
and refused to cover the civil rights movement. That successful challenge led to a DC Circuit Court of Appeals decision giving citizens the right to challenge broadcast licenses, which in turn resulted in ordinary Americans having the right to participate in all measure of FCC proceedings.

The influence of this 1966 decision, *UCC v. FCC*, went even further. When I went to work at the Ford Foundation, I spent several weeks in its dusty basement archives looking through the history of the Foundation’s involvement in funding communications law and policy advocacy. While there, I found a note from then-Chief Judge of the DC Circuit, Warren Burger, who wrote the UCC decision and who later became Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. The note, with the UCC decision attached, was sent to new Ford Foundation President McGeorge Bundy, who had previously been National Security Advisor for Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson. The note was simple and in Burger’s handwriting. It said: “I think this might be of interest to you.”

Shortly thereafter, the Ford Foundation became the first major funder of communications law and policy advocacy. Thanks to Everett Parker’s efforts, a new field was created, along with the resources needed to protect the public interest in communications.

I was fortunate to know Everett and to work with him for many years. I always enjoyed guest teaching his classes at Fordham and grabbing a bite afterwards at an Italian restaurant on Arthur Avenue in the Bronx. I was always amazed by his humility. After all, here was a man who through great intelligence, strength of will and the power of persistence started a brand new field of public interest advocacy. He was a great mentor, and over the course of my career, I’ve tried hard to emulate him.

In these difficult times, when much of what we have worked for so hard and for so long is being dismantled, we should all strive to be like Everett. His was an uphill battle too, also during a dark time in our country’s history. Nevertheless, he persisted, as we will too. I look out into this audience and I see so many of you who embody the work and spirit of Everett. I’m so heartened by the new faces in the field who want to fight for social justice and see communications policy as an essential part of that fight. It’s all of you who give me the hope and the belief that the pendulum will swing back in our favor. That because of your work, to paraphrase liberally from Dr. King, the arc of the moral universe will once again bend towards media and social justice.

Thanks again to OC, Inc. for this tremendous honor.