



IFES supports citizens' right to participate in free and fair elections. Our independent expertise strengthens electoral systems and builds local capacity to promote sustainable democracy.



About Charles T. Manatt

Ambassador Charles Taylor “Chuck” Manatt served as chairman of the International Foundation for Electoral Systems’ (IFES) Board of Directors from 1993 to 1999 and was a distinct leader, with unwavering commitment to spreading democracy around the world and helping those who are less fortunate. He touched the lives of many, mentoring and befriending people at every stage of his distinguished career and with a keen interest in nurturing future political and business leaders.

“Chuck invented social networking before technology and tools were imagined,” said IFES President and CEO Bill Sweeney. “He was one of the architects of the global democracy movement. His creations include the National Endowment for Democracy, the Democratic Party of the United States and IFES.”

In recognition of his achievements, IFES presents the annual Charles T. Manatt Democracy Awards honoring three individuals, a Republican, a Democrat and a member of the international community. The awards emphasize IFES’ belief that the work of empowering people transcends political parties and national borders and pay tribute to outstanding men and women who share a common commitment to freedom and democracy, much like Manatt.

In 1997, during his tenure as chairman of IFES’ Board, Manatt said that “IFES has been a leader in assisting new democracies in every corner of the globe.” His statement was true then, as IFES helped young democracies in Eastern Europe, and remains true today in the aftermath of the Arab Spring in the Middle East and North Africa.

Manatt was heavily involved in establishing the National Endowment for Democracy, where he served as vice chairman, and was the founding chairman of the National Democratic Institute, the Endowment’s Democratic affiliate.

In 1999, former President Bill Clinton appointed Manatt as the U.S. Ambassador to the Dominican Republic, where he emphasized election administration reform and greater cooperation between the Dominican Republic and the United States’ criminal justice systems.

“Chuck’s legacy spans the globe — he laid the foundation for the democracy-building movement around the world and was instrumental in IFES’ early years,” said former IFES Chairman Peter G. Kelly. “He had the exceptional ability to work across the aisle in the U.S. and leaves behind friends from all walks of life. He believed that investing in the next generation of leaders was the right thing to do and devoted his time and resources to make it a reality.”

In addition to democracy building, Manatt dedicated his career to politics, law, banking and farming.

At the national level, Manatt was co-chair of the 1992 Clinton-Gore presidential campaign, chair of the Democratic National Committee (1981-1985), chair of the National Finance Council of the Democratic Party, and chairman of the Western States Conference Democratic Party. At the state level, he was chairman of the California/Southern California Democratic Party and served on the National Committee of the California Democratic Party.

Manatt was founder of the law firm Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, LLP. He began his legal career focusing on banking and financial services, and his practice expanded to include international, administrative and corporate law.

He was founding co-chairman of ManattJones Global Strategies, providing strategic guidance and advocacy assistance to clients with an interest or presence in the international marketplace.

Manatt was honored many times for his professional achievements, including being named in *The Best Lawyers in America* and being awarded two honorary Doctor of Jurisprudence degrees.

He owned extensive farmland in his native Iowa. “Learning to earn, earning to live, living to serve,” the creed of Future Farmers of America, of which he was a member as a young man in Iowa, guided Manatt’s life as a public servant.

