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> [Remarks by Acting Director Coke Morgan Stewart at the 2025 National Inventors Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony](#)

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May 8, 2025

Remarks by Coke Morgan Stewart

Acting Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and

Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office

2025 National Inventors Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony

Thursday, May 8, 2025, 7 p.m.

The Anthem, Washington, D.C.

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen.

On behalf of the United States Patent and Trademark Office, it is my distinct pleasure to welcome you to the 2025 National Inventors Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony.

I want to extend a sincere appreciation and a heartfelt thank you to our partners at the Hall of Fame. You do such a wonderful job planning and organizing this annual induction ceremony. It is truly a magnificent event.

And to our 2025 inductees, your incredible accomplishments are more than worthy of this splendor.

Before we begin tonight's celebration, I'd like to take a moment to say that it is an honor for all of us to be in this room not only with you but with all those who have devoted so much of their lives to your success. We all know that it takes a team to succeed, and especially a supportive family willing to encourage — and assist you — in the pursuit of your dreams.

We also honor those who are here on behalf of the historical nominees. As is often the case, it is only after someone is gone that we realize how important they were — with a growing appreciation of their legacy.

All of our inductees have helped create a more hopeful and prosperous future for billions of people everywhere in the world. As we approach the 250th anniversary of the founding of our country, I cannot help but marvel at how our founders had the foresight to establish a patent system that would encourage, accelerate, and reward the “introduction of new and useful inventions.”

George Washington himself asked Congress to establish the Patent Act of 1790. He signed the first patent that very same year. Thomas Jefferson served as one of the first patent examiners in his role as Secretary of State. Ever since the creation of this unique system to protect the rights of inventors, the United States has been the world’s greatest innovation powerhouse. Almost 70 years after the first patent grant, President Abraham Lincoln stated in his usual eloquence that, and I quote: “The patent system... added the fuel of interest to the fire of genius.” His simple and astute observation remains as true today as it was almost 170 years ago. Indeed, these very words are etched into the stone above the Department of Commerce headquarter building in Washington, D.C.

As President Trump stated in his World IP Day Proclamation just two weeks ago: “Our economy is the greatest in the world because we incentivize individuals to dream big, take risks, and make the impossible possible.” He continued: “Through the promotion and protection of IP, we are empowering musicians, writers, authors, scientists, and inventors to focus on what they do best.”

Tonight, we celebrate those who created an array of novel inventions in a variety of fields: transportation; recreation; pharmaceuticals; chemistry; architecture; and advanced medical treatments and technologies. As much as your inventions have changed how things are done, they have also changed people’s minds as to what is possible. As a new member of the National Inventors Hall of Fame, you now have a unique platform to inspire others to the highest levels of achievement. You join a prestigious group of 656 visionary pioneers in the Inventors Hall of Fame.

Tonight, we are also honored to be joined by a special guest who is another prolific inventor: the United States Secretary of Commerce, Howard Lutnick.

Our esteemed Secretary Lutnick enjoyed a highly successful career as a businessperson and philanthropist before being sworn in as the 41st Secretary of Commerce. After graduating from Haverford College, he joined Cantor Fitzgerald — a brokerage and investment bank — and was elevated to President and CEO at just 29 years old.

Secretary Lutnick may be best known for his rebuilding of Cantor Fitzgerald following the tragic September 11th terrorist attack on the World Trade Center buildings, which claimed the lives of 658 of the firm’s employees. After 9/11, Cantor became a national role model for how to support employees during the aftermath of a crisis. To date, Cantor has provided over \$180 million to help the families of employees killed on that day.

What many do not know about Secretary Lutnick is that he has helped to transform the way trading takes place on Wall Street through his patented inventions. In fact, he is the named inventor on hundreds of patents in the fintech space. His first patent was granted in 1999 for an automated auction protocol processor. He also has been recognized for his efforts to establish the eSpeed electronic trading platform.

As a member of the President's cabinet, Secretary Lutnick is now engaged not only in the renewal of the American economy, but also of the American intellectual property system.

Thank you so much Secretary Lutnick for being here, and for being a proponent of innovation — and of our nation's inventors.

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Event photos

See pictures from the 2025 NIHF Induction Ceremony at The Anthem in Washington, D.C. Select an image to expand it.



Acting Director of the USPTO Coke Morgan Stewart (Photo by Jay Premack/USPTO)



Secretary of Commerce Howard Lutnick (Photo by Jay Premack/USPTO)



Left to right: inductee and co-inventor of Optical Coherence Tomography David Huang, Acting Director Stewart, Deputy Commissioner for Patents Robin Evans (Photo by Jay Premack/USPTO)



Past NIHF inductees with the 2025 class (Photo by Jay Premack/USPTO)

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