

The Protocol School of Washington®

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PROTOCOL RULES AT THE TOP OF THE PECKING ORDER

“In today’s casual world, most people have little day-to-day practice with the formal communication that is *standard operating procedure* in high government, international business, the military, organized religion, and academia.” says Robert Hickey, Deputy Director of the Protocol School of Washington®, and author of the new book – *Honor & Respect: The Official Guide to Names, Titles, and Forms of Address*. “Communicating with these high officials requires precision, but the rewards are worth the effort.”

The book provides the basics for business people to start conversations and build relationships with those at the very top of the pecking order. *Library Journal* calls it “the most extensive guide to honorifics and titles available.” The National Council for International Visitors calls it “a must-have reference for all organizations.” It includes rules for *more officials* in *more organizations* that any other book ever available in English. The U.S. State Department, Harvard Law School, and British Embassy already use it. So do The Boeing Company, The Kennedy Center, American Airlines, The Waldorf-Astoria, and ExxonMobil.

The world may be flat, but among VIPs, how you do things still matters in this new world where all are connected. “When you call the office of a high official and ask for the correct way to address a letter, the staff will say ‘well, you see it done many ways’” says Hickey. “However the individual who holds the office is always very knowledgeable of how their name and office are traditionally written or what holders of their office are called in conversation.”

Hickey says the most frequently asked question he receives on his website (<http://www.formsofaddress.info>) is how to address a former elected official. In the U.S. anyone elected is addressed as *the Honorable* for life. So address an envelope to a *former* mayor as “*The Honorable (full name)*.” But in conversation use “*Mr. (or Ms.) (last name)*.” Hickey says “there is only one mayor at a time. While it flatters the former mayor to call him or her ‘*Mayor (last name)*’, it isn’t respectful to the current mayor.”

The second most-frequently-asked question is: how do you address a retired military officer? In retirement, officers of the rank of *Colonel* in the Army, Marines, or Air Force, and *Captain* in the Navy or Coast Guard continue to be addressed by their rank, but the details and circumstances are what make the difference.

An official letter to a retired Army General is addressed to *General (full name), USA, Ret.* A social letter, such as a holiday card, is addressed to *General (full name)* without the branch of service, “*USA*”, or the “*Ret.*” for “*retired.*” Correct style dictates there is no need to define the *active duty* vs. *retired* status on an unofficial document. However if the General takes a civilian job, and especially if they interact with active-duty personnel, he or she professionally becomes *Mr./Ms. (name)*. Colleagues might occasionally as a call him or her *General (name)* to honor their service, but it’s strictly a courtesy and is unofficial in the professional arena.

The new book, *Honor & Respect* includes complete formulas for correspondence, invitations, place cards, introductions, and even what to call the person when in conversation. In its 576 pages, officials in the following areas are detailed:

- Private citizens, professionals, and academics
- Government officials both elected and appointed
- Tribal officials for Native American Tribes (never before in print)
- Military officers: including enlisted personnel, as well as officers
- Religious officials: Every major religious group (many for the first time in print)
- Royalty, nobility, diplomats, and international officials

Honor & Respect (ISBN 978-0-615-19806-4) is available at Amazon.com. For further information on the book or on any issue relating names, titles, and forms of address visit <http://www.formsofaddress.info>. (Honor & Respect Official Website)

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