

## **Michael Guest**

Michael Guest is co-founder of, and senior adviser to, the Council for Global Equality. Formed in 2008, the Council is a coalition of 19 human rights organizations that advocates a stronger and more consistent U.S. government and corporate voice on behalf of the equality and fair treatment of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals in the United States and overseas.

Before joining the Council, Mr. Guest enjoyed a 26-year career as a Foreign Service Officer in the U.S. Department of State. Overseas, he served with distinction as America's first openly gay, Senate-confirmed U.S. Ambassador (to Romania, 2001-04); Deputy Chief of Mission in the Czech Republic (1996-99); and Deputy Political Counselor in France (1991-94). In Washington, his senior assignments included as Dean of the Department's Leadership and Management School (2005-07); Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, then Acting Assistant Secretary, for Legislative Affairs (1999-2001); and Deputy Executive Secretary (1994-96). Mr. Guest ended his career in December 2007 after having sought, without success, to end discriminatory policies toward partners of gay and lesbian Foreign Service Officers in foreign postings – policies that the Obama Administration has since redressed.

As U.S. Ambassador to Romania, Mr. Guest played a critical role in shaping that country's successful preparations for NATO membership – drawing on earlier efforts, as Deputy Chief of Mission, to focus the Czech Republic's preparations for joining the Alliance. His extensive background in European security policy also includes service as Deputy Director for Political Affairs in the Office of European Security and Political Affairs (1989-91), where he was responsible for political discussions at NATO; organized U.S. participation in and strategy for the then-Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE); and served on the U.S. delegation in negotiations that eventually gave rise to Germany's reunification.

Both in Romania and in the Czech Republic, Mr. Guest laid substantial public and program emphasis on American values, and on instilling the rule of law in Europe's new democracies. This was a particular focus in Romania, where Mr. Guest spoke eloquently and often against corruption and political interference in judicial decisions, and was a forceful proponent of government accountability, freedom of the press, and media responsibility.

Mr. Guest was awarded the Department's Superior Honor Award five times, as well as the Department's Meritorious Honor Award. In 2003, he was awarded the Department's prestigious Charles E. Cobb Award for Initiative and Success in Trade Development. In 2006 he received the Christian A. Herter Award, given by the American Foreign Service Association to a Senior Foreign Service Officer in recognition of intellectual courage, initiative, and integrity in the context of constructive dissent.

Mr. Guest resides in Washington with his partner of 15 years, Alexander Nevarez. In addition to his work on behalf of the Council for Global Equality, he served on President Obama's State Department Transition Team in the fall of 2008.