The Honorable Anthony “Tony” Coelho

The Honorable Anthony “Tony” Coelho (LMU ’64) has spent his entire adult life helping to advance the lives of people with disabilities. He calls this his “ministry” while those in the disability community call him their “voice” and “champion.”

Diagnosed with epilepsy when he was 22 years old, Mr. Coelho’s ministry is marked by significant milestones: primary author and sponsor of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) — the most important piece of civil rights legislation in the last 30 years; advocating for the ratification of the U.N. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; and convincing President Bill Clinton to establish the Office of Disability Employment Policy at the U.S. Department of Labor. Mr. Coelho continues to advocate for civil rights for individuals with disabilities by convincing President Barack Obama to issue an executive order enforcing Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 requiring federal contractors and subcontractors to hire people with disabilities as they have been doing since 1973 for women and minorities.

Mr. Coelho is a former six-term United States Congressman from California, elected in 1978 and serving until 1989. He served on the Agriculture, Interior, Veterans Affairs, and Administration Committees during his tenure, specializing in disability rights. In 1986, Mr. Coelho was elected House Majority Whip, the third most powerful position in the House of Representatives.

After leaving Congress, Mr. Coelho joined Wertheim Schroder & Company, Inc., an investment-banking firm in New York, where he served as a Managing Director and then as President and CEO of Wertheim Schroder Investment Services, a firm that he grew from $400 million to $4 billion in managed investments. He formed ETC w/TCI, an education and training technology company in Washington, D.C., where he served as Chairman and Chief Executive Officer. Currently, he serves on a number of corporate boards of directors and is the founding partner of a national public affairs firm.

A native of California, Mr. Coelho earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science in 1964 from Loyola University in Los Angeles (now Loyola Marymount University), where he served as Student Body President during his senior year. Mr. Coelho has served as a member of Loyola Marymount University’s Board of Trustees and received an Honorary Doctorate in 1987. Mr. Coelho currently serves on the Board of Directors of both the Epilepsy Foundation and the American Association of People with Disabilities — two Boards he has previously Chaired.