

# AmCham Annual General Meeting and Reception

## January 17, 18h10

*Seul le prononcé fait foi.*

Good evening everyone,

It is my sincere pleasure to host, once again, and for the last time, AmCham's Annual General Meeting. I would like to recognize the efforts of the AmCham staff, board members, and working committee volunteers for all of your contributions to furthering U.S.-French relations and urge you, despite the global trend to look inward, to continue the important work of increasing trade and investment between our two countries, and building prosperity on both sides of the Atlantic.

I want to recognize your President, Robert Vassoyan, for his leadership. My last year as Ambassador coincided with Robert's first year as President of AmCham. Since then, with our mutual shared values of promoting economic growth and jobs, the relationship between the Embassy and the AmCham has only grown stronger. I can think of the many times we've been together over the past year working to advance the interests of both U.S. and French businesses. Some examples include: at my Residence last June and October, with your Executive Chairman John Chambers, promoting French start-ups and innovation in France; at the Quai d'Orsay with Foreign Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault to discuss U.S.-French economic interests and highlight our countries' commercial ties; and hosting a lunch to promote Women in Business in honor of International Women's Day last March at my Residence. Bravo, to you Robert.

I would also like to take a moment to recognize in particular Caroline Ryan, who provides the critical day-to-day leadership of the executive staff. Caroline, I have watched with admiration how you have built the AmCham during my time here. Your work, the work of your staff, and those on the volunteer Committees really sets AmCham apart as the voice of both American business in France and French business in the United States. Under your leadership you have been able to grow AmCham membership, and especially Patron membership, substantially over the past year. You know well that the U.S. and French private sectors play a vital role in both our economies.

Throughout my tenure here, it has been my personal goal to focus on increasing jobs, promoting investments and combatting global climate change. We know the problem is not yet solved, but I was proud to be here when the global climate change deal, one of the most complex multi-lateral processes ever undertaken, was adopted by the United Nations in December, 2015 with the private sector playing a huge role.

In my final year as Ambassador, we hosted a number of executives from both French and American firms, to take part in my #JobsForAll internship program which creates opportunities for young people from diverse backgrounds. In my experience, a diverse workforce makes a company more vital and more competitive. I'd like to thank the many AmCham members and others represented in the audience today for their support of the #JobsforAll Program.

It was Benjamin Franklin, whose birthday happens to be today, who in his assignment as our first diplomat approached the French with an idea of an alliance after we gained our independence. As you look ahead in 2017, new administrations in both France and the United States mean that priorities will of course change, but our alliance will remain strong. And I have no doubt that the partnership between AmCham, our leading business partner, and the Embassy will remain a key pillar of the relationship as economic growth and job creation come to the fore.

As many of you know, I'm returning to my home in New York, but I look forward to hearing about your successes in the years to come. It's hard to describe in words my profound feelings of gratitude towards France and the French people after spending almost two and a half years here as Ambassador. As one of my esteemed predecessors in this role, and third President of the United States, Thomas Jefferson, once remarked, "Every man has two countries, his own and France." That is certainly true for me. As I return to my home and my family, please know that you will always have a true friend and champion in me. I am quite sure that this is not "Adieu," but simply "Au revoir!"

And with that, I invite you to stay here at the beautiful Talleyrand and enjoy drinks and hors d'oeuvres, in celebration of the American Chamber of Commerce and your many achievements.