

## About the Honorable J. William Middendorf II

**J. William Middendorf II** was prepared for tough decisions and leadership early in his career. He was a naval officer in World War II and by the age of 40 had founded a company with a seat on the New York Stock Exchange.

He could have settled for business success, but he decided instead to pursue a career in public service. This led him into a series of high-level Administration positions where he helped to shape America's national security during the most consequential moments of the Cold War.

At a time when the Soviet navy was threatening to overtake the naval power of the United States, Middendorf worked to maintain America's competitive edge. As Secretary of the Navy under Presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford, he supported the development of vital programs, most notably the Trident missile for Ohio-class submarines, the Aegis

missile defense system, and the F/A-18 combat jet.

Middendorf continued to advance national security as Ambassador to the Organization of American States, where he resisted the expansion of Soviet and Cuban influence in Latin America. He was also a tireless advocate for economic freedom in Latin America and later travelled with a Heritage delegation to urge post-Communist leaders in the former Soviet Union to adopt free-market economics.

His decision-making, relationship-building, and statesmanship on the international stage have enhanced America's security and stability during a volatile period in our history. Throughout his brilliant career, he has been devoted to his family and has pursued lifelong interests in art and music. He also has been a proud member of The Heritage Foundation Board of Trustees since 1989.