
Thomas Oppel



Chief of Staff to the Secretary of the Navy Office of the Secretary of the Navy

Mr. Thomas Oppel is the Chief of Staff to the 75th Secretary of the United States Navy, Ray Mabus. In his position Mr. Oppel is responsible for overseeing the development, execution and completion of the Secretary's policies, goals and objectives throughout the Department of the Navy. When President Obama asked Secretary Mabus to develop a long term recovery plan for the Gulf Coast following the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, Mr. Oppel served as chief of staff for that effort as well.

Promoted to Senior Executive Service in June 2010, Mr. Oppel brings to his position with the Department of the Navy more than 30 years of experience in communications and management, including serving as Senior Advisor to Secretary Mabus during his term as Governor of Mississippi and as Communications Director in his two gubernatorial campaigns.

Before founding his own communications firm in 2003, Mr. Oppel was a partner in a Washington-based media consulting firm that helped elect more than a dozen Democratic U.S. Senators and more than two dozen other candidates to congressional, state, county and municipal offices. Among their many victories were Senators Robert Byrd of West Virginia, Max Cleland of Georgia, Ernest "Fritz" Hollings of South Carolina, and Bob Kerrey of Nebraska.

Prior to joining that firm, Mr. Oppel was an independent consultant providing management and communications strategy for dozens of campaigns and causes. He also served as press secretary for Mike Espy's successful campaign to become the first African-American elected to Congress from Mississippi in 100 years.

Mr. Oppel covered politics for nearly a decade for several newspapers in New England and the South and for United Press International. He began his career as a public school teacher.

A graduate of Seton Hall University, he earned a bachelor's degree in English Literature, a minor in psychology and a teaching certificate in secondary education. He completed the course work at Dartmouth College toward a Masters in Liberal Studies. He is a member of the National Defense Industrial Association, the Academy of Political Science and the American Political Science Association.

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