

Search the site 

# William H. McRaven

Chancellor, The University of Texas System



## William H. McRaven Biography

University of Texas System Chancellor William H. McRaven, a retired U.S. Navy four-star admiral, leads one of the nation's largest and most respected systems of higher education. As the chief executive officer of the UT System, Chancellor McRaven oversees 14 institutions that educate 217,000 students and employ 20,000 faculty and more than 70,000 health care professionals, researchers and staff.

Since he became chancellor in January 2015, Chancellor McRaven has recommitted the UT System and its institutions to improving the lives of Texans and people all over the world through education, research and health care.

McRaven's ambitious vision for the UT System includes eight "Quantum Leaps," that address many of the most significant challenges of our time, including building the nation's next generation of leaders through core education in leadership and ethics; leading a brain health revolution by accelerating discoveries and treatments for neurological diseases; elevating higher education's role in national security; driving unprecedented levels of collaboration between higher and K-12 education; and increasing student access and success.

Prior to becoming chancellor, McRaven was the commander of U.S. Special Operations Command during which time he led a force of 69,000 men and women and was responsible for conducting counter-terrorism operations worldwide. McRaven also is a recognized national authority on U.S. foreign policy and has advised presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama and other U.S. leaders on defense issues. And his book, "Spec Ops: Case Studies in Special



Chancellor Bill McRaven

Office of the Chancellor

**Biography**

Chancellor's Vision and Quantum Leaps for the UT System

Vision and Quantum Leaps Downloadable Document

Speech (text only)

Video of Board Presentation

Visuals (PowerPoint that accompanied speech)

One-on-One Blog

Speeches

Chancellor's Messages

History of the Office

Former Chancellors

Deputy Chancellor

Contact Information

Speaker Request Form

News Center



Operations Warfare: Theory and Practice,” published in several languages, is considered a fundamental text on special operations strategy.

McRaven’s military legacy goes beyond strategy and warfare. As commander of U.S. Special Operations Command, McRaven spearheaded the creation of the Preservation of the Force & Family initiative to ensure the mental, spiritual and physical well-being of those who serve, as well as their families. His wife, Georgeann, has dedicated much of her career to playing a leadership role with military families and wounded warriors.

McRaven has been recognized for his leadership numerous times by national and international publications and organizations. In 2011, he was the first runner-up for Time magazine’s Person of the Year and was named Texan of the Year by the Dallas Morning News. In 2012, Foreign Policy magazine named McRaven one of the nation’s Top 10 Foreign Policy Experts and one of the Top 100 Global Thinkers. In 2014, Politico magazine named McRaven one of the Politico 50, citing his leadership as instrumental in cutting through Washington bureaucracy.

He also has received the Republic of France’s Legion d’Honneur, the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association’s National Award and the National Intelligence Award.

More recently, in 2015, the Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum selected McRaven to receive the Intrepid Freedom Award for his distinguished service in promoting and defending the values of democracy. Also in 2015, he was presented with the Distinguished Service Award from the FBI Agents Association, which represents more than 13,000 active and retired FBI Special Agents.

Born in North Carolina, the son of an Air Force colonel, McRaven spent most of his childhood in San Antonio where he graduated from Roosevelt High School.

McRaven graduated from The University of Texas at Austin in 1977 with a degree in journalism and received his master’s degree from the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey in 1991. In 2012, the Texas Exes honored McRaven with a Distinguished Alumnus Award.

He met his wife, Georgeann, while they were students at UT Austin, and they have three grown children.

## Education

### **Master’s Degree – Naval Post Graduate School, Monterey, Ca. 1991**

Developed a military theory for why special operations succeed against seemingly overwhelming odds. Graduate thesis based on this theory was subsequently published by Random House in 1995 under the title, SPEC OPS. SPEC OPS continues to be one of the most widely read books on special operations in the military.

### **Bachelor’s Degree – The University of Texas at Austin 1977**

Journalism

## Significant Awards

Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum’s Intrepid Freedom Award (2015)

FBI Agents Association Distinguished Service Award (2015)

2012 University of Texas Distinguished Alumnus Award recipient

The National Defense University’s American Patriot Award

The Republic of France’s Legion d’Honneur

Business Executives for National Security's Eisenhower Award

Union League of Philadelphia's Lincoln Award

USO's Man of the Year for 2013

Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs' Distinguished Service Award

Office of Strategic Services (OSS) Society's Donovan Award

Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association's National Award

The National Intelligence Award

### **Policy Expertise**

An acknowledged expert on U.S. defense policy. Foreign Policy Magazine's Top 10 Experts on National Security

Worked on the National Security Council Staff 2001-2003 as the Director of Strategy and Policy, Office of Combatting Terrorism

Served as primary author of the President's first National Strategy for Combatting Terrorism

Drafted and was the primary author of the National Security Presidential Directive-12 (U.S. Hostage Policy)

Drafted the counter-terrorism policy for President George W. Bush's National Security Strategy

Provided advice to the following U.S. leaders on defense issues: U.S. President, Secretary of Defense, Secretary of State, Secretary of Homeland Security, Attorney General, Director of the FBI, Director of the CIA, Director of National Intelligence, Director of Defense Intelligence, Director of the DEA, and Administrator of USAID

Advised foreign Heads of State in Afghanistan (Karzai), Iraq (Maliki), Jordan (King Abdullah), and Yemen (President Salah) on U.S. counter-terrorism policy

Worked extensively with leaders on Capitol Hill, specifically with the House and Senate Armed Services Committees and the House Appropriations Committee (Defense) to shape policy issues regarding educational initiatives for Special Operations Forces men and women, health and welfare of special operations families, and operational employment of U.S. Special Operations Forces around the world

Established the NATO Special Operations Headquarters which brought together Special Operations Forces personnel from 22 countries to help develop and refine allied counter-terrorism policies and operations

Met with hundreds of Congressional Delegations and Staff Delegations to discuss U.S. defense policy in Iraq, Afghanistan, North Africa, East Africa, and the Levant

### **Major Lectures and Speaking Engagements**

McRaven has lectured and given speeches all around the world. Most recently his 2014 University of Texas at Austin Commencement Address received great acclaim and has been viewed more than 3.5 million times on YouTube

Served as a guest speaker at Harvard, Yale, Columbia and Georgetown universities

Lectured at the Naval Academy, West Point, the Army War College, the Naval War College and the Air Force War College

Led dozens of workshops and conferences focused on terrorism, piracy, criminal networks, human smuggling and poverty

Led senior-level forums on Africa, South America, Asia-Pacific, Southwest Asia and the Middle East

### **Major Publications**

Author of the book SPEC OPs, which has sold over 60,000 copies and has been published in several languages

Contributing author for the book The Force of Choice from the Canadian War College

© 2016 The University of Texas System.  
601 Colorado Street, Austin, Texas 78701-2982. (512)499-4200