

Translation

The Federal Republic of Germany

The Federal Chancellor

**Message from Federal Chancellor Merkel on the occasion of the awarding of the
General Lucius D. Clay Medal**

Dear German-American Day participants, guests of the Federation of German-American Clubs e.V., ladies and gentlemen,

I am very grateful to have been chosen as the recipient of the Lucius D. Clay Medal. Lucius D. Clay is a name that carries a special meaning for us Germans and especially for Berlin. It will forever be associated with the Berlin airlift, a symbol of the unwavering desire for freedom. Many Americans and other Western Allies put their own lives on the line to ensure the survival of a free Berlin. It was the airlift that enabled West Berlin to resist the totalitarian threat. We, Berliners and all Germans, will never forget this.

Former opponents became supporters of each other, allies and ultimately friends. This is also and especially thanks to the many thousands of American men and women in uniform who, through their service in Germany, guaranteed our country's peace and freedom for decades. And they didn't stop at that: they also built and reinforced bridges of partnership and friendship.

The first partner organizations were founded as early as 1946. Just two years later, the Federation was born – in my opinion this was a key moment for the establishment of friendly relations between Germans and Americans. Today, in addition to its social involvement, the Federation focuses in particular on student exchange and youth programs. This enables many young people on both sides of the Atlantic to gain first-hand experience of the other country's society and culture. These programs cultivate friendships and experiences that are invaluable for mutual understanding.

I am very grateful to the Federation of German-American Clubs for the constant work it does to fill our close transatlantic partnership with life. Today's award ceremony takes place at a time when Germany is celebrating the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, a shining moment in our country's history. Many people played a role in tearing down the Wall and helping to achieve freedom. But what is certain is that it would not be possible for us to celebrate overcoming the barriers of concrete and barbed wire if the United States had not stood by our country's side for decades.

Like any good friendship, the one between our countries requires constant care. Ultimately, it is important to continually strive to fulfill our common responsibility on global issues by combining our efforts. It is therefore good to know that our varied cooperation is based on the solid and reliable foundation of shared values.

On this note, I would like to wish you a successful and happy German-American Day. I send my warmest regards!