Dr. Charles Wessner Named Officer of the French Order of Merit

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Dr. Charles Wessner, Director of the Program on Technology, Innovation and Entrepreneurship at the National Academy of Sciences, was promoted to Officer of the National Order of Merit on September 14, 2012. Dr. Wessner is a close and long-time friend of France and he is recognized nationally and internationally for his exceptional expertise on innovation policy.

The National Order of Merit was created by President Charles de Gaulle in 1963 to reward outstanding services rendered to France on the basis of personal merit. It is one of France’s highest decorations.

In terms of expertise on innovation policy - and achievements - Dr. Charles Wessner has served in multiple capacities, starting with the executive branch of the U.S. Government, at the Treasury and later at the Department of Commerce. In between, Dr. Wessner held several key positions at the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in Paris for nearly 11 years.

In 1994, Dr. Wessner went on to share his knowledge at the National Academy of Sciences, where he has published many authoritative reports on innovation policy, the latest being “Rising to the Challenge: U.S. Innovation Policy for the Global Economy.”

From France’s perspective, Dr. Wessner’s help has been invaluable in establishing and promoting links between our two countries. At a time when the French-American relationship was strained, back in 2003, Dr. Wessner organized a major conference in Paris, attended by our then-Minister of Industry, Nicole Fontaine.

Our government authorities and entrepreneurs have benefited greatly from Dr. Wessner’s international comparative analyses.

Dr. Wessner’s links to France go way back, starting with his undergraduate exchange studies at Sciences Po, and his 11-year stint in the City of Lights, and most importantly, of course, his wife, one of our compatriots.

Ambassador’s Speech: http://www.ambafrance-us.org/spip.php?article3894