

Mark A. Riccobono, President National Federation of the Blind



Born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Mark Riccobono was diagnosed with glaucoma and aniridia at age five. Nonetheless, Mark attended public schools, graduating with honors while active in debate and track.

Mark earned a bachelor's degree in business administration at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He became a member of its Iron Cross honor society and was the founding president of the Wisconsin Association of Blind Students. During senior year, Mark was elected president of the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) of Wisconsin.

After graduation, Mark joined the Sears executive trainee program, and spent his free time advocating for the blind. Then he was appointed to the Wisconsin State Superintendent's Blind and Visual Impairment Education Council, and made the first director of the Wisconsin Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired, an agency responsible for statewide services to blind children. Afterward he took a position in Baltimore with the NFB and earned a Master of Science in Educational Studies from the Johns Hopkins School of Professional Studies in Business and Education.

Mark served as the executive director of the NFB Jernigan Institute—the only research and training institute developed and directed by the blind. In 2010-2011, Mark served as an appointed member of the Federal Commission on Accessible Instructional Materials (AIM) in Postsecondary Education. And in January 2011 at the Daytona International Speedway, Mark navigated a car equipped with nonvisual technology for 1.5 miles, demonstrating the first time a blind individual has driven a street vehicle in public without the assistance of a sighted person. In early 2011, the University of Wisconsin Alumni recognized Mark's accomplishments by naming him as one of their Forward Under 40 Award recipients. In 2010-2011, Mark served as an appointed member of the Federal Commission on Accessible Instructional Materials (AIM) in Postsecondary Education.

On July 5, 2014, the National Federation of the Blind elected Mark to serve as its president. The election took place at the national convention of the National Federation of the Blind, held in Orlando, Florida.

Mark and his wife, Melissa, have three children, Austin, Oriana, and Elizabeth.