

Coleen Rowley



FBI Whistleblower

Coleen Rowley brought several of the pre 9/11 lapses to light and testified to the Senate Judiciary Committee on some of the endemic problems facing the FBI and the intelligence community. Coleen Rowley grew up in a small town in northeast Iowa. She obtained a B.A. degree in French from Wartburg College in Waverly, Iowa and then attended the College of Law at the University of Iowa. She graduated with honors in 1980 and passed the Iowa Bar Exam that summer.

In January of 1981, Ms. Rowley was appointed as a Special Agent with the FBI and initially served in the Omaha, Nebraska and Jackson, Mississippi Divisions. In 1984, she was assigned to the New York Office and for over six years worked on Italian-organized crime and Sicilian heroin drug investigations. During this time, Ms. Rowley also served three separate temporary duty assignments in the Paris, France Embassy and Montreal Consulate.

In 1990, Ms. Rowley was transferred to Minneapolis where she assumed the duties of Chief Division Counsel, which entailed oversight of the Freedom of Information, Forfeiture, Victim-Witness and Community Outreach Programs as well as providing regular legal and ethics training to FBI Agents of the Division and additional outside police training.

In May of 2002, Ms. Rowley brought several of the pre 9/11 lapses to light and testified to the Senate Judiciary Committee on some of the endemic problems facing the FBI and the intelligence community. Ms. Rowley's memo to FBI Director Robert Mueller in connection with the Joint Intelligence Committee's Inquiry led to a two-year-long Department of Justice Inspector General investigation. She was one of three whistleblowers chosen as Person of the Year by TIME magazine.

In April 2003, following an unsuccessful and highly criticized attempt to warn the Director and other administration officials about the dangers of launching the invasion of Iraq, Ms. Rowley stepped down from her (GS-14) legal position to resume her position as a (GS-13) FBI Special Agent. She retired from the FBI at the end of 2004 and now speaks publicly to various groups, ranging from school children to business/professional/civic groups, on two different topics: ethical decision-making and "balancing civil liberties with the need for effective investigation."

Ms. Rowley authored a chapter in a book published in 2004 by the Milton Eisenhower Foundation entitled, *Patriotism, Democracy and Common Sense: Restoring America's Promise at Home and Abroad*. She is also now an avid blogger on the [Huffington Post](#).

In February 2005, a majority of Minnesota congresspersons and senators nominated Rowley to serve on the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board, but she was not selected by the Bush Administration. This Board was mandated by 2004 Federal Intelligence reform legislation implementing the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission.