

1 UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

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3
4 REMARKS OF THE HONORABLE JANET RENO,
5 ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES

6 AT THE

7 GRADUATION CEREMONY OF THE
8 UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
9 PARALEGAL TRAINING INSTITUTE

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11
12 Monday, September 12, 1994

13 The Great Hall

14 Department of Justice

15 Headquarters Building

16 Constitution Ave and

17 9th Street, N.W.

18 Washington, D.C.

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(5:22 p.m.)

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO : Thank you. And Ms Stevens, thank you for that beautiful rendition of the Star Spangled Banner.

It is a great honor for me to be here today with the 13 graduates of the Paralegal Program. This is the Department's first paralegal graduation ceremony and I join your family, your colleagues in congratulating you and telling you how proud we all are of you.

It's special for me to walk in here today and see what I suspect by age and size are families, and I'm so glad that you all are here today, because it is families that make something like this possible. You can't do it unless people understand. You can't do it unless people are keeping a meal for you or working with you or helping you in some way, or resolving child care problems.

So to the families, all the families who make this possible, thank you.

It's also very heartwarming for me today to see your colleagues here from your components in the Department of Justice, and that's what I want the Department of Justice to be, a true partnership, not lawyers telling paralegals what to do, but paralegals and

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1 lawyers and support staff working together for a common
2 purpose of achieving justice for all in this country.

3 It is special to hear Ms. O'Neil speak today and
4 she should be a symbol to us all that we can constantly
5 pursue educational goals throughout our entire life to
6 make a difference.

7 Today I stood in Central Park in New York City
8 at noontime to help the President of the United States
9 swear in some 190 AmeriCorps volunteers who will
10 participate in the National Service Program throughout the
11 State of New York in this coming year. Most of them were
12 young people, spirited, noisy, loud, happy, elated young
13 people who wanted so to make a difference in their
14 community.

15 But there were some very elderly people there
16 who were putting public service first. And then you see
17 people much younger, like Ms. O'Neil, still putting public
18 service first, still striving for new goals, still
19 striving for new horizons. And it makes me think that at
20 80 years old I think I want to go to medical school and
21 develop a program for mentally retarded children. That's
22 my next goal, and you have given me inspiration to
23 remember that we can always change and move ahead.

24 You all are leaders. You're leaders of a
25 Department that I care very much about. I am so proud of

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1 the people in this Department, so proud of their
2 commitment to justice, so proud of their commitment to
3 this Nation and trying to do what's the right thing.

4 So when I suggest that you are leaders, it is
5 something special. But you are. You're the first
6 graduates of this program. You've shown people that it's
7 possible. You've shown that you can work, that you can
8 put the hours in, and that you can achieve. And I think
9 you've set an example for the whole Department as to what
10 we might be able to do in the future.

11 Education is such an important aspect of our
12 development as productive citizens and the continuing
13 development of human resources at the Department of
14 Justice is essential to the enhancement of employee skills
15 and improved organizational performance. It inspires me
16 to know that some of you in the graduating class paid your
17 own way in continuing your development, and I recognize
18 the personal sacrifices all of you made in attending
19 classes at night after a hard day's work so that you might
20 further your career and contribute to our mission through
21 your added knowledge and skills.

22 And ladies and gentlemen, I know what it's like
23 from observing somebody who was very close to me. As
24 State Attorney in Dade County, my aide for a long time
25 decided that she was going to go to law school at night

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1 We asked how that was going to be possible, how she could
2 possibly do it, and I watched her for four years do that.
3 She is now a senior prosecutor in the Dade County State
4 Attorney's Office, and I watched her, and I can just
5 imagine what you have been through in terms of fulfilling
6 your responsibilities in the Department, fulfilling your
7 responsibilities to your family, and at the same time
8 achieving this success.

9 The profession you have chosen is a challenging
10 and rewarding one. Paralegals in the Department make
11 great contributions every day, and I see the results. It
12 is so exciting to see a good report on my desk, and I'll
13 ask the lawyer who helped prepare it, this is an excellent
14 report, and that lawyer will say. My paralegal really
15 worked on it, they put it together.

16 All so often you can see the excellence in the
17 work that paralegals do. Every day you provide essential
18 support and assistance to attorneys in litigation, in
19 important cases which have an impact on the lives of all
20 Americans.

21 I think we learned from your success and your
22 experience. The Federal Government now has greater
23 flexibility to train employees because of new legislation
24 contained in the Federal Work Force Restructuring Act of
25 1994. The legislation fulfills an important National

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1 Performance Review recommendation, to remove restrictions
2 on employee training, to help develop a multi-skilled
3 Federal work force.

4 Under the new law, Department components can
5 fund training in support of their missions and performance
6 goals and are no longer limited by workers' official
7 duties. By broadening the purpose of training and
8 targeting it to strategic business plans, components can
9 make education a more responsive tool for leadership
10 development, for retraining, cross-training, and continual
11 professional education and technical training.

12 It is both a challenging time and a very
13 exciting time in this Nation's history as we watch
14 ourselves diversify our interests, our skills, and our
15 understanding of the potentials for the future. Today we
16 do face an accelerating rate of change and an increasing
17 demand for productivity and customer service. The new
18 training flexibilities provide enhanced means to meet
19 these challenges, and I urge all our components to tap
20 them to their full potential so that we might support our
21 employees, our most precious possession.

22 There is in each of our lives an opportunity to
23 excel. You 13 have done just that, and you've
24 demonstrated that you were able to give your best semester
25 by semester, pursuing your educational goals while at the

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1 same time fulfilling your commitment to the Department of
2 Justice.

3 What's most important about this Nation is its
4 people. What's most important about this Department is
5 its people. I look forward to working with you to create
6 an environment where people can excel, where people can
7 take great pride and pleasure in serving the American
8 people to make this a better Nation.

9 You have been an example for us all and I
10 congratulate each one of you.

11 (Applause and end of remarks at 5:30 p.m.)
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