



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

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REMARKS OF THE HONORABLE JANET RENO,
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES,

AT THE

TWENTY-SECOND ANNUAL TAX DIVISION

AWARDS CEREMONY

Fifth Floor Theater

National Archives Building

7th and Pennsylvania, N.W.

Washington, D.C.

10:28 a.m.

Monday, October 5, 1998

P R O C E E D I N G S

GENERAL RENO: Thank you, Loretta.

Thank you all for that warm welcome. But it is I who owe you a great debt of gratitude, because if I look good it's because of you. It's because, in a time where public service is questioned and where people wonder why anybody goes into public service, you represent this country in such a wonderfully fair but firm way.

Some people say: Janet, just what do you get involved in public service? You get figuratively beat up, cussed at. This is an extraordinary nation. In this time of public service I've had an opportunity to visit so many different communities, rural and urban, different people, different places. It is a very great country. It wants so for its government to represent it well. You do that.

And it is an extraordinary time, because in prosecution and particularly in tax collection, those are the two functions of government where people sometimes bridle at what their government does, and yet find it so critically important that its government does those two functions well. You handle both matters and do it with distinction.

So I have a special mission while I am Attorney General and when I leave this office and that is to let the people of the United States know how many dedicated men and women work with them and for them all across this country in the Justice Department and in the Tax Division.

You do an incredible job. I watch the people of the Justice Department and how late they work and the energy they put into what they do, and it's really, really impressive.

Everybody else has mentioned the families, but I've got to mention the families. When I look at some of the work schedules around here, I think the families are nothing but heroes or heroines. So I thank you.

But I want to do everything I can to make this Department a family-friendly Department. I got a wonderful letter the other day from somebody in Immigration saying: You had talked about alternative work schedules and nothing happened, and I wrote a letter and you followed through, and it's working, and we take a pride in what we're doing.

Somehow or another, we can meet our obligations to the people of this country, we can meet our obligations to our family, and we can have time to smell the roses. And I want all of you to have that opportunity.

Awards ceremonies such as this one provide us an opportunity to reflect on our past accomplishments --

(Baby shouts.)

GENERAL RENO: Did I time that?

(Laughter.)

GENERAL RENO: This has been a challenging year, but you've done it and you've continued to perform with distinction. This celebration, however, is also a chance for us to look at the future as we assess where we've come from. We have a chance to meet new challenges and achieve new heights.

That is why I am particularly excited and honored to introduce for the first time the Assistant Attorney General's Award for Excellence and Teamwork. This award recognizes a vision made real, a vision made real because a lot of people tried and a lot of hurdles were overcome.

Loretta Argrett presented the Tax Division with a challenge, a challenge to think differently about the way we work and to create a rewarding and exciting work environment in which people were eager to learn and to grow. As part of this new work environment, she believed that we would increase in efficiency and become more productive. She believed that this could be made possible through teamwork -- not just one person, but people working together.

Today we will recognize and reward three groups of individuals who have put these principles into practice and who exemplify the concept of teamwork: the concept of teamwork, communicating with each other, looking at each other, listening to each other, and not talking past each other; training, learning how to do the job the right way at first and not make mistake after mistake because we didn't get the training; and delegation to engage diverse categories of employees to accomplish the division's mission.

Let me be the first to congratulate these groups for their excellence in teamwork. Let me join in congratulations to all those who are recognized today and let me tell all of you in the Division how very, very proud I am to work with you. It is a great honor for me.

(Applause and end of Attorney General's remarks.)