STATEMENT OF HON. JANET RENO ATTORNEY GENERAL

OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

DIVERSITY IMPERATIVES FOR A NEW CENTURY

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Attorney General Reno: I want to thank you. I want to thank you for sending America wonderful lawyers. For seven and a half years, I have had a special vantage point upon which to view your work in contact with many lawyers across this land in so many different capacities.

This has been a wonderful challenge for me to try to use the law in these seven and a half years to make America freer, safer, healthier and to give its people in any way I can a more positive future. In seeing lawyers in action, I say what I have said several times in these last years. I have never been so proud to be a lawyer in America. Thank you for sending them out with stars in their eyes and a touch of idealism mixed with excellence in their scholarship.

You have done so much in preparing them for traditional roles that lawyers occupy, transactional lawyers, as I prefer to describe the roles, protectors or advocates and defenders, problem solvers and peacemakers. But the new lawyers come a little subdued because I think they're

worried that their idealism will become tarnished and that will begin to wear off.

I think they come to law school thinking they can change the world and they begin to wonder, halfway through law school. They want to be the vision and the spirit that brings America together, that provides permanent solutions to large problems and small. You who teach in the law schools of America have a rare opportunity in this moment; an opportunity to lead the way, to shape America. How?

First of all, to bring disciplines together. Lawyers are not going to involve the great problems of this nation working in isolation. They will solve their problems working with public health specialists and lawyers together, and better that we learn in law school than have to learn over the last 35 years as I have been learning from public health experts about what to do about children.

Information technology and the law are absolutely critical partners. Better that we learn in law school and at the university than we learn by trial and error as we prepare America for the cyber age.

Lawyers, though, are the common denominator. There is no other profession that links through the various disciplines and the various problems that we confront as do lawyers. Your preparation of lawyers in that spirit can make such a difference. We must do more in terms of problem-solving and peacemaking. Problem solving in terms of the grand vision but problem-solving in terms of that lady who can't get that landlord to fix the toilet and her world is falling apart.

I suggest to you that you've got to teach our young lawyers how to finance what they do. I have never seen course work in appropriations processes and I would give anything for it in these last seven and a half years.

(Laughter.)

Attorney General Reno: And if you can figure it out, you

will confirm my faith in American law school professors.

(Laughter.)

Attorney General Reno: But not just the appropriations process. I sued a housing authority, I get a judgment against the housing authority, they say they can't afford it, Your Honor, we don't have any money, it's a matter of money. We've got to teach lawyers about vacancy rates and if we reduce vacancy rates, we will increase income and we will be able to devote attention to infrastructure and, if we don't have enough money, we can learn how to get grants to get the money to improve the infrastructure, to develop user-friendly capacities within the housing authority that can make a difference. Lawyers too often don't know how to translate that judgment into action because they don't know the money issues involved.

But most of all, you're here today to engage in what I think is one of the most important efforts afoot in America today: To bring all Americans to the legal profession, to legal education and to bring access to the law to all Americans. Make no mistake, what you do here to achieve diversity in legal education, in the legal profession of all the courts of America and access to justice for all Americans can have a profound impact on this nation for many years to come.

And you're already beginning to have an impact. Last January, I opened it up, after I had finished speaking, to the questions and to answers to my questions. If you were the attorney general of the United States, what would you do to improve diversity and improve support for American legal education? I think the first person that answered said, why don't you write to U.S. News and World Report.

(Laughter.)

(Applause.)

Attorney General Reno: Eric Holder, my distinguished deputy attorney general, and I did write to U.S. News and World

Report and they did not publish the letter so I'm going to read it.

"To the editor, the first academic year of the new century is nearly upon us. We believe that in the future, U.S. News and World Report can even before assist students by including a schools commitment to diversity in your annual law school rankings. Currently when you determine the rankings of law school, you give weights to other factors. We believe that your criteria would be even further enhanced if you were to consider factors such as law school student body diversity and faculty diversity, the quality of its loan forgiveness program, how well a law school trains its students to provide increased access to legal services for disadvantaged communities.

"One of the most important lessons we have learned in our services as attorney general and deputy attorney general and throughout our legal careers is the extraordinary value of diversity in the legal profession. Diversity makes the profession more effective. Diversity among judges and lawyers help the justice system look like the communities it serves, a factor that can increase public confidence in the even-handedness and accessibility of our legal system. Diversity in a law school can bring a range of real world issues and viewpoints into the classroom and, as some studies have shown, increase the number of attorneys who graduate and serve minority and other underserved communities.

"As Justice Lewis Powell stated 22 years ago, the nation's future depends on leaders trained through wide exposure to ideas and morays of students as diverse as the nation of many peoples. By including diversity in your annual law school ranking system, we believe you will perform a valuable service to our nation's law students, law schools and legal profession in the 21st Century."

We got an answer.

"Dear Madam Attorney General, thank you for your thoughtful letter from you and the Attorney General Holder about the U.

S. News law school rankings. In our frequent conversations with officials of both graduates and undergraduate institutions, we regularly hear the view that diversity is an important component of the education process. For that reason, we do rank undergraduate institutions on the diversity of their campuses and publish these diversity rankings.

"We understand that such information is useful to students. We are discussing whether it makes sense to publish a separate table for select graduate schools similar to the diversity listings in our undergraduate guide. We will take your thoughts to heart as we work towards an answer."

While they're working towards an answer, I think we should prepare the answer for them and this is my answer.

Let us act. Let us let all America know why diversity is critical. And I would like to suggest at least four reasons that I think we should put in form and substance that can make it understandable for all America.

The first, we must not take our democracy for granted. As I have cited to some of you, on the east wall of the Justice Building in Washington is the following inscription: The common law is the will of mankind issuing from the life of the people framed through mutual confidence and sanctioned by the light of reason. To be real, to mean something in a democracy and in a rule of law, the law must include the will of all the people. It must issue from the lives of all the people. It must be framed by the mutual confidence of all the people.

But in this great country, too many people are left out, left out of the profession and excluded from access to the law and to necessary legal services.

The results: Anger, frustration, a lack of confidence in the law and a conclusion that the law is ineffective and that it does not work.

Over 100 years after Abraham Lincoln warned that a house

divided against itself cannot stand, certain segments of our society are isolated and less inclined to think of themselves as engaged in a common struggle. This is a sad reality but one we must acknowledge and confront. Whether you look at hate crimes, racial profiling or the treatment that minorities face in the workplace or on the streets or the obvious and sometimes voluntary segregation in our cities and suburban neighborhoods, it is evident that many people in our country on both sides of the racial divide still do not believe that the law speaks for them.

How do we escape this legacy? How is progress possible? I believe that one of the ways to overcome racial divisiveness is to focus on equality and diversity in our schools, our law schools and in all our educational opportunities. It is in these places that we plant the seeds of positive change.

How can we believe that we are truly preparing our students for the future? We must restore confidence in the law by making sure that the law issues from the life of all the people, not just a few. When there is a legal solution, we must try to solve all the people's problems or otherwise risk having a system in which our people feel defeated, hopeless and disenfranchised.

One of the great joys of my office has been to welcome ministers of justice from emerging democracies around the world or to greet those of established democracies, but then to read in the paper shortly thereafter that the democracy is in turmoil because too many people have been left out in the voices of government and in the opportunities for its people.

We must not take democracy for granted. We must cherish it. We must understand that in a flash, what we hold so dear can be at risk, as we have seen in other nations. And we must make sure that the voices of all our people are heard. That can best be done by making sure the voices of all of the people are heard in the legal profession and in access to justice.

Secondly, America must be able to compete in a diverse world. The need to find and implement solutions to diversify legal thinking and to diversify this profession becomes even more urgent when you consider the rapidly changing demographics of the United States. Within the next few decades, this country will boast one of the most diverse populations in terms of race, ethnicity, language and culture in the world. What an exciting opportunity and what a wonderful time to participate. What a challenge this will be to make sure that we leave nobody behind and that we, as a nation, are not left behind because of our inability to compete in a diverse world.

We cannot prepare our students for life professionally and personally if our schools do not include a cross-section of students that bare a resemblance to the world around us. If our diverse and often divided democratic republic is to survive and flourish, we must cultivate common spaces where citizens from every corner of society can come together to learn how to live together, to do business together, to learn how others think and feel.

Education depends on dialogue, not just between student and teacher but between classmates. Exposure to differing perspectives is both enlightening and stimulating. It encourages students to question and to challenge themselves and to challenge others. As students develop mutual respect, they learn to communicate across cultural barriers and they negotiate their differences.

Thirdly, our nation must be at full strength if we are to maintain this nation as one of the great nations of the world. We import skills as we fail to use the wisdom and the strength of all Americans because we do not give them opportunity. We search for overseas markets as we ignore potential consumers who could be empowered by lawyers who solve their problems and make their dreams come true if only we had enough lawyers in the profession representing all America.

Fourth, experience in a diverse world makes us all better lawyers and better people. The prosecutor who is interested in securing justice can do it best by building rapport and

understanding with the victim, witnesses, with the juror, with all with whom he comes in contact with. The business lawyer must do the same as his client expands into a new market. Diversity builds understanding. It builds trust. It builds communication. It builds community. It builds a spirit that is America and that is its strength.

Thus, the next question is, how do we move forward? First, we need to move beyond our tendency to favor people who remind us of ourselves. When that happens, we perpetuate a closed system, a limited system and we lose out on the real value of this nation: The value of diversity. Diversity which makes us more understanding, more empathetic and therefore more effective.

Secondly, we can't achieve diversity unless we move beyond the hang-ups our country has about affirmative action. Affirmative action is nothing more or less than what we have all experienced at some time in our life. I am a product of affirmative action. My father was a newspaper reporter who knew the sheriff who gave me a summer job the summer I graduated from high school.

(Applause.)

Attorney General Reno: My affirmative action was a grandfather who was a lawyer who told my mother to stop discouraging me when she said ladies didn't become lawyers. My affirmative action was a chief judge who told me father who said, "I'll let you go to law school if Judge Weishardt says that it's okay." He took me down to Judge Weishardt and Judge Weishardt said, "Henry, this town has too many lawyers but what it needs more than anything else is good lawyers. If she can be a good lawyer, let her go to law school."

Too many people don't have a grandfather who was a lawyer, a father who knows the sheriff or a father who can take you to the chief judge. There is affirmative action for them in other forms.

In recent years, many of you have been involved in court

and in the nationwide debate on the issue of affirmative action in higher education. The Department of Justice has filed amicus briefs in a number of cases including a recent case involving the University of Michigan's affirmative action program to promote diversity.

I continue to believe that our federal constitution allows race to be used as a factor in university admissions in a program that is carefully designed to use race only as much as is necessary to meet the university's goals of diversity and/or to remedy past discrimination.

(Applause.)

Attorney General Reno: Without consideration of racial diversity in higher education admissions, we will likely have college or university classrooms with far fewer minority students. William Bowen and Eric Bach have estimated that if selective colleges and universities no longer considered race and/or ethnicity in their admissions, the number of black undergraduates would shrink from approximately 7 percent to 2 percent or less.

This severe reduction in educational opportunity on the college level would translate into even fewer minority judges, law professors and practitioners in our future. We are all the beneficiaries of affirmative action but we need more people to help others along the way. In the same way that we were guided. And I think we need to start much earlier in the life of our populus.

I wonder why we wait until the university and until law school to start fussing about affirmative action when we should have started a lot earlier in zero to 3 and building the foundation of human life that gives a solid foundation in learning, a solid foundation in the concept of reward and punishment and the conscience. That's where vision comes in.

Teach your law students that they can create, in communities, programs and initiatives that give the children of that community and indeed this nation a healthy

start, a safe start and a start where people read to them and give them the foundations upon which to grow as strong and constructive human beings.

You have sent some wonderful lawyers out into this field in America. I've watched them. They care so much and they are doing so much. Encourage others to know that they can make a difference using the law the right way.

As many of you are aware, in 1999, President Clinton issued a call to action to the legal community. He asked us to diversify this profession and to work on ways to improve the quality and quantity of legal services in underserved communities. He directed Eric Holder, the deputy attorney general, to monitor this effort and a working group of lawyers from America took on the task to responding to the president's call.

A year and a half later, after a lot of hard work in which some of you here were directly involved, Lawyers for One America has issued a report that contains a variety of best practices and model programs that each sector can incorporate in order to reach these goals.

The report also sets forth recommendations, some of which are directed to the legal education community. These include the recommendation that you strengthen your affirmative action programs, rely less on LSAT scores and reach out to younger students and guide them into the pipeline to a legal career. I applaud everyone who was a part of this effort and encourage others to take a close look at this report.

What I understand is one of the most promising outcomes of the Lawyer for One America effort is a program that is currently being developed that has as its mission mentoring and providing scholarships to minority children who have an interest in entering the legal profession. The most interesting and notable aspect of this project is that it intends to target children of all ages starting with children in elementary school. The idea is to take interested children by the hand throughout their

educational careers and give them the access to skills and opportunities that they will need in order to choose law school and law as their ultimate career.

Now, I understand that engineers have been doing this for 20 years with some great success. We're better than engineers.

(Laughter.)

Attorney General Reno: But as I was preparing to come here, I noticed that I don't have someone for you to contact to find out more about it, and maybe you already know enough about it but I don't think it even has a name yet. But I think we should find out more about it and use the experience of engineers, use the experience of others to reach out and make a difference. And if the program doesn't get off the ground, why don't you get your alumni in a particular community organized to do something about it? Each one of us can make a difference.

I don't know how many of you have students/children who are in elementary school or remember when you did or have been there recently. But you go to an elementary school and you see the enthusiasm in the kindergarten. You see the excitement in the first and second grade. The third and fourth, they're beginning to drift off. They're beginning to act out. You can see the signs.

And then you see what can be done if you tutor them. If you're a mentor, you can keep them on the straight and narrow. And then by the time the sixth and seventh grade rolls around, if you've been going to the same elementary school over the past seven years, you see those that have gotten into trouble. And sometimes it breaks your heart more than others because he was so bright and he is so sharp and he would make such a lawyer or a doctor.

We've got to reach out through organized efforts in our colleges, universities and law schools, to join with community groups, with groups such as the National Urban League to develop partnerships that give them opportunity.

I get fussed at a little bit when I raise this next issue. If we're going to identify the best people for law school, we're going to have to take time to look beyond test scores and things that are easily assessed, to look into the spirit and the mind and the heart of the applicants to our law schools. Problems are not going to be solved by test scores alone. Problems will be solved for clients by people who have had experience, who have the heart, who have been through the crucible of human existence and come out with the knowledge and understanding that sometimes staggers the imagination.

(Applause.)

Attorney General Reno: When you focus only on numbers, you miss a tremendous amount of talent. You miss an opportunity in the same way potential law school applicants miss opportunities if they look just at rankings. It takes time and real effort to try and figure out who is going to make the most of an educational opportunity, who is going to excel in the corporate practice or who is going to make a fair and effective judge but it is time well spent.

And when I refer to judges, being a judge is very special. We need diversity on the bench but we need to do something with our courts. And again, I think law schools can lead the way.

Over 10 years ago, we established a drug court in Miami with a judge who cared and knew what he was talking about, a caseload that was small enough so that he knew the people and not just by numbers or by files, with resources sufficient to match the needs for treatment, for follow-up job training and placement. Five of us worked together to establish that drug court. It was a battle. We had it evaluated to make sure that it was working. We got back good evaluations.

There are now over 400 drug courts in the country operating on somewhat the same theory of a carrot and stick approach of treatment, support, job training and placement but more certain sanctions every step of the way if you failed to

live up to the terms of the court.

Just think of what we can do with a diverse bench in America, with people who understand the mental health and what can be done to treat it, dealing with people who have mental problems, what can be done with juvenile delinquents if we have courts with the time to spend on the children and with resources to match the children's problems, what we can do with abuse and neglect.

And just think of what law schools could do across this country if you organized on a regional basis to have the best law school or one law school assigned to teaching juvenile court judges and another assigned to teaching domestic violence judges. Law schools can do a lot more in terms of preparing our judges for the multiplicity of problems and the legal issues that they confront.

A lawyer who is interested in trust building and serving people and solving their problems can't be identified just by test scores. That's why diversity is part of the assessment of what kind of skills is really important. What more can we do?

We can focus on what is becoming a forgotten, though they will not let themselves be forgotten because they act out in anger, but a segment of our population that has talent, that has skill, that has so much to offer this nation if we will provide it the key and unlock the door and let them back in. Young men ages 18 to 35 who are coming back to communities across America.

Total number of prisoners coming back from our prisons and our jails each year for the next four or five years will be 500,000 people a year. Coming back to the apartment over the open air drug market where they got into trouble in the first place. Back to the apartment over the open air drug market where they first dreamed of being a lawyer and wanted to be a lawyer to right wrongs and to make a difference but got in with the wrong crowd because there was not supervision or people were struggling to make ends meet because they did not have equal opportunity.

25 percent of young African-American men in America today have been in some form of custody, prison, jail, probation. They have served their time. We're developing re-entry courts that will help them re-enter and re-entry partnerships that will help them re-enter society with a chance of getting off on the right foot, of building partnerships that bring them back, partnerships with churches, with NGOs, with community groups, with a police officer who has reached out, but partnerships that help them make the transition back to the community.

Two weeks ago, I was walking in an area of Washington, looking at different types of architecture and how communities change and three men on the corner saw me, saw first the detail and then said, "Uh-oh." Then they saw me and they said, "Hello, Ms. Reno." And one of them bicycled over to me and he said, "I just got out of prison after 19 years. Will you buy me a sandwich?"

I said, "I'm sorry, sir, I left my purse at home."

He said, "I love you anyway."

I said, "Tell me what to do to keep you from going back."

He said, "Don't worry about me, I'm too far gone. See that building across the street that's all run down? Get somebody in there and get it rehabed and get these kids off the street so they don't follow me in the same way."

I refuse to give up on that man. I think we can make a difference. And for many of these people, we can make a difference by telling them that their dreams can come true, for Winston Churchill said, "There is a treasure in the heart of every man if you work and look long enough to find it." For so many, there are broken dreams that can be repaired.

The next thing I think you can do, and you're already doing so much, is to teach diversity training. So many people come out into the real world in the practice of law and get their egos bruised unexpectedly through diversity training

in the real world when a colleague tells them what for and they just don't understand and would they please get a little bit more sensitive and sympathetic to situations. Think of what law schools can do if you had diversity training in law schools, diversity training with respect to so many different issues. You could make such a difference.

But the real reason for doing all of this is that diversity makes us all such much better people. You go to a black church and someone sings "Steel Away" as you have never heard it sung before and there is no moment like that that you will ever have again.

You are blamed by an entire community for the results in a trial, the McDuffy case, and the community erupts in anger, calls for your resignation and tells you that you must leave office to prevent further deaths. That Sunday night, I told them that I could not leave office because that would be to give in to anarchy and the way you remove people from office was to boot them out in an election, and I had to qualify for office in a month and that would be the way to get me out of office. Nobody ran against me. My mother said it was because nobody wanted the job.

(Laughter.)

Attorney General Reno: But shortly thereafter, I went to my first meeting at the Kaleb Center in Liberty City and for five hours people hollered at me and fussed at me. And then they came up to me as they were leaving during the course of the evening, because I was not going to be the first one out, and they would pat me on the shoulder. And then the next time I would see them, they would talk softly to me. And then they would call me and give me a piece of their mind because I had done something wrong. The police chief said I went to more meetings. He said, "If there are two people, Janet will go talk to them," because I learned.

And then I could walk the length of the Martin Luther King parade and have people say, "Child support, child support" and mothers say, "What's child support? Why are they saying that?"

I say, "I collect child support." Remember the rap song? They wrote a rap song about me.

She said, "There is a boo."

I said, "I'm probably prosecuting him."

And when I went with the President to dedicate a new church to replace one burnt out by arson and we drove down the little dirt road past the site of the burnt down church where only an old wonderful priest stood and then came to the brand-new church. And after we had finished dedicating it, we came down off the dais and a lady burst through the rope line saying, Janet, Janet, how are you? I haven't seen you since Miami. Hurricane Andrew drove us up here. She said, "You got me child support and I've never forgotten it.

" And she said, "And these are the two you got me child support for"(looking up).

(Laughter.)

Attorney General Reno: Two grown men doing well, leading a good and positive life.

But then there are more disappointments. And in the hours and weeks that led up to April 22nd of this year and in the weeks that have followed, a community that I love is in part at odds with me. And it is so frustrating not to be able to go home and start talking again and going to meetings and being hollered at and fussed at by some wonderful people and trying to build bridges again.

Because of the people in my community, I hope, at least I feel I've got to be a better person for their contribution, for their helping to forge better understandings. We can do so much more if we work together, if we listen to the music of each other, if we listen to the sounds of where we came from and together build America. You who lead our law schools have one of the greatest opportunities of anybody right now to take that idealism that has walked through your door this first September and give that idealism

substance. Give it the tools but let it go out and let it go out armed with the knowledge of the diversity of America and the strength and the wonder that it can bring to that idealism. Teach them to trust the people, to trust all the people. Thank you.

(Applause.)

Attorney General Reno: I've got to ask you a question. Can I?

Mr. Olivas: Yes, of course.

Attorney General Reno: If you were the attorney general in the United States, what would you do? I would be happy to try to answer questions but I would love to hear any answer to that question.

Mr. Sylver: My name is Peter Sylver. I'm the dean for admissions of Hofstra Law School and I wouldn't presume to kind of decide what you're going to do with your next phase or role in your professional career but I don't have a question. I just have an invitation. I'm in the middle of the first days of a dean search.

(Laughter/applause.)

Mr. Sylver: So I would just love to invite you to come and join us in this effort.

Attorney General Reno: I've been like Scarlet and I'm thinking about that tomorrow so I don't run into any ethical issues. But I will tell you this. I think the law school deans I've known have the hardest job of anybody I know, even attorneys general.

Ms. Yu: Diane Yu, Chair of the Section of Legal Education. What is going to happen within the Attorney General's office to the Lawyers for One America report now that it's out? Is there some hope for some continuity or is it going to be spread out to other agencies?

Attorney General Reno: I resolved on the way out, as I was trying to find out what the continuity was, that I'm going to make sure as soon as I get back that there is continuity to it. And anybody that has any suggestions, let me know. But there is an awful lot in there as I skimmed through it and I just want to make sure.

Sustainability is one of the keys to everything that we do because we come up with great reports and there is a tendency to put them on a shelf. I'm identifying the reports that I think are useful and they're going to be on a shelf right by my desk, one that I can easily get to, because they can have such a profound impact and we cannot forget it.

Ms. Magee Andrews: Hi. My name is Rhonda Magee Andrews. I teach at the University of San Francisco. I recently had a conversation with a new colleague, who happens to be white, teaching at USF, just coming on board. And he remarked to me that he used to be very active on racial issues and is still very interested and committed but is fairly pessimistic right now when he looks around and sees kind of where we are today.

I'm wondering how it is that you have kept from being pessimistic about sort of the prospects for real change given some of the ways that I think we can validly critique the results, if you will, of the our civil rights movement and struggle of the '60s.

Attorney General Reno: One of the reasons I think I have kept my optimism is maybe I'm a damn fool. But basically I served as state attorney of Miami for 15 years during some of the most tumultuous times. There is a tendency for people to go into an office and stay one term, maybe two terms and then move on and you get some great press at the outset but then you get the slightest narrows of your mistakes because you can't blame it on the guy before you.

But you also see the victories, the small, gentle victories, the great victories. You're stopped by the guy on the escalator in a downtown office building and he says,

"I want to thank you."

"What for, sir?"

"You arrested me."

I said, "Sir, I didn't arrest you."

(Laughter.)

Attorney General Reno: "You're right, he said, but your prosecutors gave me the opportunity for treatment after I had a terrible drug problem, my family had left me, I lost my job, I had hit rock bottom, I couldn't afford any treatment and I got arrested and they got me into treatment. I've been drug free for two years, I've got my family back and I can't thank you enough."

Those times just give you another nine miles an hour.

The little girl who comes in to thank you because the prosecutors have been so kind to her in a sex battery case in which she was the victim. Those are the things that just keep you going.

To see an office change and minority lawyers come on board as a result of your recruiting efforts and also because of the efforts of some heroic deans who really fought hard and recruited hard back in the early '80s and to see the difference that they made in that office and now to see them as prominent lawyers downtown with downtown firms, to see them prominent members of the bench. You see the successes, and I think that's why community is so important.

You have sometimes two steps forward and three steps back. My mother told me that I should get into public service before she decided that my sister and I should be disco dancers rather than a county commissioner and a state attorney because she didn't like electoral politics. She always encouraged me to go into public service to make this world a better world.

When I was 13, I had the opportunity to spend a year with my uncle who was with the Allied High Commission Forces in Germany. We drove by Dachau you before it was open to the public and I had heard descriptions but it became vivid because there it was and that it could happen in my lifetime. And I realized that probably one of the most horrible, evil people in the history of the world lived during my lifetime.

I then had the chance to see England and to see Stonehenge and Bath 2,000 years old almost and Winchester Cathedral a thousand years old and I thought, hmm, I don't know anything that's going to last this long. And I thought to myself, things probably aren't getting any better but unless you try real hard, they're going to get a lot worse. And I think that's what keeps me going.

But most of all, what keeps me going are the people and you learn the tragedies. You somehow learn to cope with them. Oklahoma City is one where we reached out, where we came to know the survivors and to know the victims who survived. I have on my shelf right by me in the office the picture of a little one year-old girl who was the granddaughter of one of the employees in the U.S. attorney's office who was killed and JC is part of my life.

If you trust the people and if you believe in people, you can overcome ever so much.

Mr. Olivas: We'll take one last question from the back there.

Ms. Weaver: Madam attorney general, I work with diversity services at American University and one of the things we find all the time, not only with our students of color but our students who went into public service, is their debt burden and how that prevents them from really doing what it is that's in their heart.

So my question to you is, what is either DOJ or other federal agencies doing to create a federal loan assistance program to help those students who want to get into public

service get their loans forgiven?

Attorney General Reno: We're trying to work through that issue with Congress. I don't like to call it loan forgiveness because I think of Roy Black with the public defender's office and I wouldn't like to think of his loans as being forgiven forever. So I like to think of loan deferral in some formula or something but I very much support it and we have been trying to work through it. I don't think we're going to succeed in this year but I'm going to continue to advocate for it because I was one of those that had a debt burden that took an awful long time to overcome.

Mr. Thomas: Attorney General Reno, my name is James Thomas and I've been the admissions director at Yale for a long time.

(Laughter.)

Mr. Thomas: If I were attorney general -- you've given us some wonderful ideas about diversity training in the law schools. Well, I might suggest as attorney general that we give diversity training to every new administration right after inauguration.

Attorney General Reno: I think that's a wonderful idea because we've been struggling with it and we're doing the dumb thing of having diversity training just as we're leaving in the Justice Department. But it's fascinating what people are learning as a result. And I think that's a good idea. I'll carry that back. Thank you all.

(Applause.)

(Whereupon, at 10:30 a.m., the speech was concluded.)