

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

WOMEN'S BAR ASSOCIATION  
OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
ANNUAL MEETING

KEYNOTE ADDRESS  
THE HONORABLE JANET RENO  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES

Wednesday, May 26, 1993  
9:28 p.m.

Pension Building  
Washington, D.C.

ALDERSON REPORTING COMPANY, INC.  
1111 FOURTEENTH STREET, N.W.  
SUITE 400  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005  
(202) 289-2260  
(800) FOR DEPO

## P R O C E E D I N G S

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

MS. RENO: Thank you very much. A little over three months ago, my life started to unfold before my eyes, in the fastest action anybody could ever have reviewed, all of their life in such detail, including where I lived from my junior year in college on.

And you come to understand more than you can ever realize when you have all your life compressed into two weeks of betting and three weeks of a confirmation proceeding, how precious and how wonderful the people are who have touched your lives every step of the way.

Those of you in this audience tonight, just think about it tomorrow, when you see a young lawyer getting started. Just think about it when you see a lawyer thinking about career changes, and understand how terribly important you are to that person.

In those five weeks, I remembered being at the Tobacco Road Inn of North Kendall Drive in what is now Kendall in Miami, in my cutoff dungarees and an old T-shirt dragging off my pony, and coming up to seeing the only lady lawyer I knew in town sitting under the rose apple tree in our front yard. Dixie Hurlong Chastain, a probation officer, because people wouldn't let her be a lawyer, really.

And I would ask my mother, could I be a lawyer

ALDERSON REPORTING COMPANY, INC.  
1111 FOURTEENTH STREET, N.W.  
SUITE 400  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005  
(202) 289-2260  
(800) FOR DEPO

1 like her? And my mother would discourage me.

2 But Judge Chastain never did. And she went on,  
3 being my mother's age, to never give up and to ultimately  
4 become a circuit judge, and a wonderful juvenile court  
5 judge, who I had the opportunity to appear before, both as  
6 a lawyer and as a prosecutor. And she made such a  
7 difference in my life.

8 And Corrine Gautier Davis, a lady who never  
9 graduated from college that became the greatest social  
10 worker I ever knew, and in 1958, not only was responsible  
11 for one category of people, but was responsible for almost  
12 every category of the fragile, unable to take care of  
13 themselves, groups of people, that ever existed in Miami.  
14 And she taught me how to reach out and care and trust  
15 people to become self-sufficient if you only gave them  
16 half a fighting change.

17 And my American history teacher in high school,  
18 who can still greet me with open arms and remember the  
19 arguments I used to give her and the challenges that she  
20 used to give me.

21 And friends from my childhood, and young ladies  
22 that I have mentored, and my speech teacher, who has made  
23 all the difference.

24 And my mother, who taught me you can do anything  
25 you really want to if it is the right thing to do.

ALDERSON REPORTING COMPANY, INC.  
1111 FOURTEENTH STREET, N.W.  
SUITE 400  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005  
(202) 289-2260  
(800) FOR DEPO

1           At 54, you'd think maybe you have met all the  
2 mentors in your life and the people that are going to  
3 change your life. But I came to Washington on a cold  
4 February the 8th, and I started meeting a whole new group  
5 of people.

6           Don't ever let anybody tell you that the Beltway  
7 is cynical. I have never had such a warm, wonderful  
8 welcome as so many of you have given me. And I will, no  
9 matter what happens, always be eternally grateful to you  
10 all.

11           But I heard about this person, and I couldn't  
12 really pronounce the name. I got it tongue-twisted. I  
13 did it "Gorelnick" and "Gorrelick" and I did it every  
14 which way -- and I didn't know what a Jamie Gorelick was.  
15 I just heard that she was going to head my confirmation  
16 team. I didn't know what a confirmation team was!

17           (Laughter.)

18           MS. RENO: This lady swept in one day, dressed  
19 to the nines, took command, ordered people around like she  
20 was a general, but did it in such a gracious way and I  
21 kind of sat there and looked, and they told me that that  
22 was a Jamie Gorelick.

23           (Laughter.)

24           MS. RENO: And she got everything ordered, and I  
25 suddenly began to learn a smidgen about antitrust, and a

1 little bit about tax, and she got Peggy Richardson over  
2 there and I learned more about tax, and she got somebody  
3 else in, and I learned about this and that and other  
4 things that I haven't heard about for a long time!

5 And we had difficult problems, and we wondered  
6 how they would be resolved, and she took command and in  
7 24 hours had them resolved, and everything marshalled with  
8 the help of some wonderful people in this audience, such  
9 as Merrick Garland and Carol Lee.

10 And then I said something, and she cried, and  
11 she got tears in her eyes. And that to me is a symbol of  
12 the people I have met in Washington, people who can  
13 organize, and care, and get things done, but care enough  
14 to cry.

15 And we have got to remember that, because we get  
16 so hardened sometimes and so cynical sometimes and we  
17 forget that we are all just people who care so much about  
18 others.

19 These last three months have been reminders to  
20 me of how wonderful public service is. I can still  
21 remember my first year of law school, going to Sanders  
22 Theater to hear one of my heroines speak, Eleanor  
23 Roosevelt. And she was so wonderful and her voice was  
24 still so clear and so magnificent.

25 And I went up to her afterwards, and I said,

ALDERSON REPORTING COMPANY, INC.  
1111 FOURTEENTH STREET, N.W.  
SUITE 400  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005  
(202) 289-2260  
(800) FOR DEPO

1 "Mrs. Roosevelt, I think you are perfectly wonderful."  
2 And I will never forget her looking at me and saying,  
3 "Why, thank you, my dear. Those words mean so much to  
4 me." And she seemed to mean it.

5 The opportunity to serve is one of the greatest  
6 opportunities that can be extended to any lawyer. And the  
7 opportunity to serve now is so extraordinary. But I think  
8 we have to use our ability to organize, our ability to get  
9 things done, our ability to be sensitive and to care, and  
10 to break through this mentality that seems to pervade so  
11 much of government, of gridlock, of stopping things, of  
12 stopping progress.

13 Sometimes it's a nonpartisan issue. But let's  
14 just get to the common sense of the issue. Let's  
15 appreciate public service. Let's make it spirited. Let's  
16 make it wonderful. Let's be valiant, good, loyal  
17 adversaries. Let's enjoy it. Let's make it fun.

18 But let's get things done as we do it.

19 (Applause.)

20 MS. RENO: A little over thirty years ago, I  
21 went home in the summer between my second and third year  
22 of law school to apply for a job at a law firm. They  
23 wouldn't give me a job because I was a woman. Fourteen  
24 years later they made me a law partner. And now, I have  
25 become the Attorney General.

ALDERSON REPORTING COMPANY, INC.  
1111 FOURTEENTH STREET, N.W.  
SUITE 400  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005  
(202) 289-2260  
(800) FOR DEPO

1 (Applause.)

2 MS. RENO: And we should think that we have come  
3 a long way, not to sober this beautiful evening, not to  
4 throw cold water on it, but to take heart from it and to  
5 take spirit from it and to go forward from here and to do  
6 something about it.

7 Let us understand that with all our progress and  
8 all this magnificent evening, if you had told me when I  
9 didn't get that job in that law firm that I would ever  
10 walk into this room in Washington, D.C. and see this many  
11 women lawyers around in this many positions, I wouldn't  
12 have believed it.

13 But let us also understand that out there and  
14 across America more women and children are living in  
15 poverty than any other age group or category. More women  
16 and children are living in poverty in proportion to the  
17 population than ever in the history of America. And we've  
18 got to do something about that.

19 As we congratulate ourselves on where we have  
20 come and what we have become, let us understand that there  
21 are children who after school and in the evenings are  
22 unsupervised, and adrift and alone and fearful. And they  
23 are getting into trouble and they are being hurt. And we  
24 have got to do something about that.

25 And let us first just begin with ourselves and

ALDERSON REPORTING COMPANY, INC.  
1111 FOURTEENTH STREET, N.W.  
SUITE 400  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005  
(202) 289-2260  
(800) FOR DEPO

1 in our law firms, in our departments, in everything we do,  
2 let us say yes, we can go to law school. Yes, we can  
3 become Attorney General of the United States. But, yes,  
4 we can put our families first and make a difference.

5 Let us start talking in terms that are bold and  
6 creative, and start talking about a workday that ends at  
7 2:00 or 3:00 o'clock in the afternoon, so that both  
8 parents can leave work and go home to their children.

9 (Applause.)

10 MS. RENO: I first proposed that to a meeting of  
11 the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce about three years  
12 ago. I thought I might be laughed out of the chamber.  
13 People looked at me quizzically first, and then their  
14 faces just broadened into the warmest, most accepting  
15 smiles that you could imagine.

16 We can accomplish far more in 8:00 to 2:00 or  
17 8:00 to 3:00 today than we could on May 26, 1891 when we  
18 had gaslights and no computers. How many of you pick up  
19 the phone at the office and at 3:00 o'clock have someone  
20 say, "May I speak to my mother? I can't get in." Or, "I  
21 can't find this," or "I'm concerned about that."

22 We can accomplish everything we need to do and  
23 still give us time to be with our families and to raise  
24 our children. We can still make the difference in their  
25 lives with quality time, if we put our children first.

ALDERSON REPORTING COMPANY, INC.  
1111 FOURTEENTH STREET, N.W.  
SUITE 400  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005  
(202) 289-2260  
(800) FOR DEPO

1           Each one of us, as employers, can give our  
2 employees the time to go participate in their children's  
3 school programs, so that we can have homeroom mothers and  
4 PTA presidents and other people on the school grounds  
5 during the day without principals wondering where their  
6 resources are going to come from to help organize the  
7 school.

8           Each of us can understand, and if the other  
9 person doesn't understand, we can tell them what nurturing  
10 and bonding is all about, and how important it is to hold  
11 and talk to that newborn baby, and make a difference.

12           If they won't understand otherwise, take them to  
13 a neonatal unit and let them see that crack baby that has  
14 been there for six weeks, not touched or talked to, except  
15 when changed and fed, and then let them see the difference  
16 between that baby and one severely deformed through birth  
17 defects who has had one or both parents with him around  
18 the clock. And they will begin to understand the  
19 difference there.

20           But let us put this world back in human terms.  
21 Not in terms of machines, not in terms of billable hours,  
22 not in terms of goals and outcomes, but in terms of real  
23 human beings, real people.

24           (Applause.)

25           MS. RENO: But it will be more than just our

ALDERSON REPORTING COMPANY, INC.  
1111 FOURTEENTH STREET, N.W.  
SUITE 400  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005  
(202)289-2260  
(800) FOR DEPO

1 programs in our offices. We have got to reach out to  
2 families and children for whom the very threads of society  
3 have fallen away and become unraveled so that the child  
4 stands there too often alone.

5 And we have got to make sure that everybody  
6 understands that it's not just one point in a child's life  
7 when he becomes delinquent or when he becomes so abused or  
8 neglected that he gets declared dependent, it is this  
9 child's whole life that matters.

10 Some of you in this room have heard it. But we  
11 have got to join together and develop in this nation in  
12 everything we do, a national agenda for children that says  
13 that parents will be old enough, wise enough and  
14 financially able enough to take care of their children,  
15 and that we can do something about teen pregnancy in  
16 America, that every woman in America who is pregnant will  
17 have prenatal care.

18 Why should I stand here and tell you this?  
19 Because you've got to go out and tell the world how  
20 incredibly important it is for everything that we do for  
21 the rest of our lives for that health care to be delivered  
22 at that time.

23 We can't depend on just the doctors. We have  
24 got to convey their message to the rest of the world that  
25 zero to three is the most formative time in a child's

ALDERSON REPORTING COMPANY, INC.  
1111 FOURTEENTH STREET, N.W.  
SUITE 400  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005  
(202) 289-2260  
(800) FOR DEPO

1 life. Fifty percent of all learned human response is  
2 learned in the first year of life, and no child  
3 development expert has ever disputed that fact with me.

4 The concept of reward and punishment and a  
5 conscience is developed during the ages of zero to three.  
6 What difference does it make what punishment we provide at  
7 18, 19 and 20 if they haven't developed the concept of  
8 punishment in the early and formative years?

9 Let's make our investment in children up front,  
10 make our investment in educare and good preventative  
11 medical care. Something is terribly wrong with a nation  
12 that says to a 70-year-old person, you can have an  
13 operation that extends your life expectancy by three  
14 years, and yet we don't provide medical care to a child of  
15 the working poor who does not have health care benefits at  
16 work, but does not make so little money that they are  
17 eligible for Medicaid.

18 Let us look at truancy prevention. Let us think  
19 if we can send man to the Moon, certainly we can develop  
20 programs in our public schools that can teach people how  
21 to resolve conflict peacefully, before they start tearing  
22 themselves apart on the streets of our community in five  
23 and six years.

24 Let's think in bold, new terms of public  
25 education that links summer work experience with school

1 work experience, and school educational experience, so  
2 that people learn a skill and graduate with a skill that  
3 can enable them to earn a living wage.

4 Let us challenge our youngsters to public  
5 service. I remember my mother's stories of the Civilian  
6 Conservation Corps during the Depression. And I see the  
7 monuments they built across this nation.

8 And I think of my aunt. This past Saturday I  
9 went to Sweetwater, Texas, to Avenger Field, to celebrate  
10 the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Women's Air  
11 Force service pilots. Two hundred ladies between the ages  
12 of 70 and 80 who had flown bombers and towed targets and  
13 ferried bombers were there to celebrate the 50th  
14 anniversary of the founding of the WAFs at Avenger Field,  
15 where they took their basic training.

16 And on May 22nd, my aunt arrived 50 years before  
17 to Avenger Field and learned to fly. And she, when she  
18 came home from the war, was to me one of the greater  
19 heroines, as was her sister, who came home as an Army  
20 nurse from North Africa, where she had gone behind  
21 Patton's army.

22 And then I watched John Kennedy send our young  
23 people halfway around the world. Let us join together in  
24 a national service corps that sends our youngsters to the  
25 streets of our community to rebuild America and make

ALDERSON REPORTING COMPANY, INC.  
1111 FOURTEENTH STREET, N.W.  
SUITE 400  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005  
(202)289-2260  
(800) FOR DEPO

1 America strong.

2 (Applause.)

3 MS. RENO: But I remember my afternoons after  
4 school, when I'd slide off that pony and go talk to the  
5 judge under the rose apple tree.

6 More often than not, though, it was not the  
7 judge. It was my mother, who worked in the home, who  
8 taught us to bake cakes, to play baseball, to appreciate  
9 Beethoven's symphonies.

10 She didn't like Dickens, and I am still trying  
11 to like Dickens.

12 (Laughter.)

13 MS. RENO: She spanked us hard and she loved us  
14 with all her heart. And there is no child care in the  
15 world that will ever be a substitute for what that lady  
16 was in our life. And I look now at so many women  
17 struggling to match profession and children.

18 Ladies and gentlemen, we can do both. Both for  
19 the fathers and mothers of this land, and we can remember  
20 the last two verses from the Book of Malachi: "And  
21 behold, I shall send you the prophet Elijah before the  
22 coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord, and he  
23 shall return the heart of the father to the children, and  
24 the children's hearts to their father, lest I come down  
25 and smite the Earth with a curse."

ALDERSON REPORTING COMPANY, INC.  
1111 FOURTEENTH STREET, N.W.  
SUITE 400  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005  
(202) 289-2260  
(800) FOR DEPO

(Applause.)

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10
- 11
- 12
- 13
- 14
- 15
- 16
- 17
- 18
- 19
- 20
- 21
- 22
- 23
- 24
- 25

ALDERSON REPORTING COMPANY, INC.  
1111 FOURTEENTH STREET, N.W.  
SUITE 400  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005  
(202) 289-2260  
(800) FOR DEPO