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5 THE AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION

6 GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC SECTOR LAWYERS DIVISION

7 LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD LUNCHEON

8 FOR ATTORNEY GENERAL JANET RENO

9

10 AUGUST 3, 1996

11 THE HILTON HOTEL

12 INTERNATIONAL BALLROOM

13 1751 HOTEL PLAZA BOULEVARD

14 ORLANDO, FLORIDA

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2 ACCEPTANCE OF AWARD AND REMARKS BY

3 ATTORNEY GENERAL JANET RENO

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5 ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: Thank you all so very

6 much. You have done me such a great honor and I am

7 very, very touched. You give me a lot to live up to

8 and you motivate me to go back to Washington and try

9 even harder.

10 As I listened to the remarks today, it made me

11 think that it's not me that did it, but it's people

12 who have touched my life, and they are here today.

13 I can remember talking to a candidate for the

14 United States Senate and questioning whether he could
15 really get elected. He looked at me, standing at
16 Douglas Road and the Tamiami Trail, after he had been
17 walking a long distance, and he said, "I'm going to
18 get elected."

19 And it made me understand what politics was all
20 about, that you could be a Lawton Chiles, that you
21 could walk and talk and stand for what was right and
22 get elected.

23 He is also the person that asked me to chair his
24 committee on the delivery of social services. And I
25 said, "What do you want a prosecutor doing that for?"

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1 He said, "Just try it. You'll learn."

2 And that experience has added so immeasurably to
3 my perspective in Washington.

4 Judge Kogan has been on the other side in some of
5 my bitterest disappointments. He has ruled for and
6 against me. It is a wonderful feeling to go to this
7 conference of state chief justices and sit there and
8 look across at a man who has been such an important

9 part of your life in defining what justice is and
10 setting an example for me and for all of us in the
11 State Attorney's office.
12 I can still remember the young legal advisor who
13 came to Tallahassee to help me work on criminal code
14 revision when I worked for Senator Pettigrew. I
15 didn't know anything about prosecution; I hadn't been
16 involved in the criminal justice system. And he took
17 me by the hand and taught me what was wise and what
18 wasn't. And Bob Butterworth has touched my life in
19 so many different ways.

20 Chesterfield is the person that made me really
21 believe that I might be able to do something, because
22 he told me that he was going to appoint me to the ABA
23 IJA, Institute of Justice Administration's Commission
24 on Juvenile Justice. It's the first time I had
25 thought, "Maybe I really can do something." But then

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1 I arrived in New York for the first meeting, I was
2 the youngest one there, there were these

3 distinguished people around me, and I thought, "What

4 has Chesterfield done this for?"

5 Then he walks in, comes up to me, gives me a big

6 kiss and says, loud enough for everybody to hear,

7 "Hello, Doll Baby."

8 And Chesterfield has been in there supporting and

9 loving me all the way, and I just am so glad you're

10 here today.

11 Martha reminded me of something. When I was

12 State Attorney, she came to see me. She came to see

13 me not on behalf of the client that was paying money;

14 she came to see me on behalf of justice and wanted us

15 to review a case in which we had obtained a

16 conviction.

17 She believed in her pro bono effort. She was, to

18 me, the example of what lawyers should be about. And

19 she continued to be the advocate -- eloquent,

20 magnificent advocate. And so when people tell me in

21 the State Attorney's office or tell me in the

22 Department of Justice that they don't have enough

23 time to do pro bono work, I say, "Let me tell you
24 about a lady who had an awful lot to do and still had
25 time to care to seek justice."

5

1 Pat recalls the same moment I do, sitting in
2 front of our fire on a very cold night on January the
3 3rd, 1978. Governor Askew had called me that
4 afternoon. He started off by talking about the State
5 Attorney's job. Didn't offer me the job, just kept
6 talking about it. Then, finally, he said, "Well, I
7 want you to take it."

8 And I can remember looking at Pat and thinking,
9 "This will be the last time," and I thought for maybe
10 four years, eight years, "that I will be a private
11 person and won't have to worry about picking up the
12 Miami Herald to see what they said about me that
13 night."

14 It was a special moment, and it's again a
15 reminder of what friendship is all about.

16 For all of you in this room, I hope that you
17 reach out and touch those that are coming after us in

18 the same way the people in this room have reached out
19 for me and helped me along the way. It is so
20 important that we remember each other and give each
21 other the support and the back-up needed to move
22 along in this life.

23 This award means so much to me, but I can't take
24 credit for it. The credit for the award goes to the
25 public servants that I have known in my life, to the
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1 lady who headed the placement division of the Dade
2 County Welfare Department in 1958, who was
3 responsible for the developmentally disabled, for
4 those in nursing homes who are indigent, for so many
5 different fragile people who could not help
6 themselves, and she taught me what service was all
7 about.

8 Credit for this award goes to the men and women
9 in the Dade County State Attorney's office. I told
10 the Senate Judiciary Committee in March of 1993 that
11 I wouldn't be here without them. And that is

12 certainly true. That any group of people could
13 handle such an astonishing volume of cases over a
14 fifteen-year period and still get me through a Senate
15 hearing, they had to be good.

16 And credit for this award goes to the men and
17 women of the Department of Justice. They consider
18 issues so sensitive and with such impact that it
19 staggers the imagination and converts vanity to
20 prayer. They handle dollar amounts that I never
21 dreamed of handling and they do it with the calm
22 brilliance and with the dedication to what is right.

23 For all of the people who have served with me in
24 public office, I accept it in their name and thank
25 them from the bottom of my heart for the wonderful

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1 service they have given Dade County and this nation.

2 I think public service is indeed the greatest

3 calling of all. Granted, you can get cussed at,

4 fussed at, end up on the front page of the Washington

5 Post, spend all day before a Senate or a House

6 Oversight Committee answering some of the dumbest
7 questions that anybody could create. You can suffer
8 extraordinary and bitter disappointments, you can
9 lose a case, you can fight the case all the way to
10 the Supreme Court, only to lose it by a one-vote
11 margin. You can handle a land use plan that you
12 struggled with for ages, overturned by an incoming
13 county commission.
14 But there is no calling more rewarding. And it
15 is not rewarding for the name or the fame or those
16 things that happen to you. It's rewarding as best
17 evidenced by something that happened to me this past
18 June.
19 I was with the President in Greeleyville, South
20 Carolina. We had just come down an old dirt road to
21 a place where a church had stood before it was burned
22 a year ago. All that was left in the clearing was a
23 beautiful old oak tree, and we came on down the road
24 to the new church and the President spoke and then we
25 walked off the platform, and this lady came rushing

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1 up to me and gave me a big hug, and she said, "I'm
2 from Miami. I came back home after Hurricane
3 Andrew." But she said, "You got me child support,
4 and I always remembered you and your mother walking
5 the length of the Martin Luther King parade, and I
6 always ran out and gave you a big hug then."
7 And she said, "I want you to see the children
8 you got child support for and how big they've
9 become," and these two young men stood up almost to
10 my height.
11 That's what public service is all about.
12 It's all about the man who stopped me in a bank
13 building in Dade County and said, "I want to thank
14 you."
15 I said, "What for, sir?"
16 He said, "For arresting me."
17 I said, "You're the first person that ever
18 thanked me for arresting them."
19 And he said, "You and your prosecutors did the
20 prosecuting. They convicted me, but you gave me a

21 chance. Your prosecutor was responsible for getting
22 me into drug treatment. I had lost my family, I'd
23 lost my job, I had hit rock bottom, and there was
24 nobody there to help me. You made it possible for me
25 to come back. I've been drug-free for two years,

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1 I've got my family back, I've got this job," and he
2 had on a uniform, "and I just want to thank you."
3 That's what public service is all about.

4 And more recently, in Washington, a lady walked
5 up to me and she said, "I want to thank you."

6 And I said, "What for?"

7 And she said, "I'm a niece of one of the victims
8 in the unabomber case, and I just want to thank you."

9 That's what public service is all about.

10 There is no higher calling than to help others to
11 uphold the Democratic principles that we hold so dear
12 and to do everything we can to defend this nation
13 that we love.

14 But I get some of the fame; I get all these

15 people standing up and saying such nice things about

16 me; I get this magnificent award.

17 There are countless public lawyers in this nation

18 who, day in and day out, do so much for so many

19 without getting any credit, without getting paid very

20 much, and these are extraordinary people because they

21 don't just shuffle papers. Each day, year after

22 year, they rise to the challenge, they are never

23 afraid to undertake the challenge, to undertake the

24 risk to find the way to seek the truth and do the

25 right thing.

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1 For all of you public lawyers, I think you are

2 but little lower than angels, and I salute you.

3 But all of us have challenges as public lawyers,

4 as lawyers in this nation. Our first challenge is to

5 make the law real for all Americans. There are too

6 many people in this nation who do not have access to

7 lawyers, who do not have access to our courts. And

8 for them, the law is worth little more than the paper

9 it's written on.

10 As lawyers in government, at every level of
11 government, we've got to look at our departments, at
12 our offices, and figure out how we make our
13 government more responsive to its people.
14 I can remember trying, even as a lawyer, to
15 struggle through a friend's Social Security problem.
16 She was old and frail and couldn't handle it, and I
17 went over to the Social Security office some twenty
18 years ago. I practically needed a lawyer to
19 represent me before the Social Security office, and I
20 thought, "Why should that be?"
21 Let us try to simplify the process and make the
22 process clearer so that people do not need to have
23 representation before their government to get the
24 help and the assistance and the support the
25 government provides.

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1 I looked at my office and I saw victims come in,
2 victims who didn't know what a nol pros was, didn't
3 know what a Motion to Dismiss was, didn't know how

4 juries were picked. And I said, "Why should they
5 walk out retraumatized again, victims again? Why
6 don't we try to develop a victim/witness program that
7 can answer their questions, provide the support, be
8 with them so that they don't have to go downtown to
9 get one of their lawyer friends to come out and
10 represent them?"

11 What can we do to make all of government more
12 real to its people? I think we've got to develop
13 systems that focus on people, that focus on their
14 concerns, and make our services as available and as
15 efficient as possible. One of the steps I think we,
16 as government lawyers, need to undertake is to
17 encourage all our offices to use small, old words
18 that everybody understands. When you explain to a
19 victim what to expect in simple terms, they become
20 your greatest ally. They come out of the whole
21 process stronger and better for it.

22 I think we need to use the extraordinary
23 technology that we face in the right way. It doesn't

24 help somebody to have this magnificent call system

25 that refers you, you punch one and then you get a

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1 recorded voice and then you punch four and you get

2 another recorded voice that is impersonal.

3 Let us figure out how to harness this technology

4 to get the information provided, but to do it in a

5 human and personal way. And let us make sure as we

6 proceed to face our challenges that we use

7 technology, but that we ensure that people master the

8 technology and ensure that the technology not rule

9 our people.

10 I think it is one of the greatest challenges that

11 we face as we come into this next century. How do we

12 take that remarkable document called the United

13 States Constitution and take the remarkable tools of

14 cyberspace and bring them together consistent with

15 our tradition as a nation governed by that

16 constitution?

17 How do we use that extraordinary technology while

18 at the same time ensuring that people are treated

19 like people and not just as a cog in the wheel?

20 I think we have another challenge if we are to

21 make the law real to all people. How do we resolve

22 matters without conflict?

23 The ABA is doing some extraordinary work in

24 dispute resolution, in teaching people how to

25 negotiate. The Justice Department has announced a

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1 whole initiative on ADR, training our lawyers to

2 resolve conflicts without trial whenever possible,

3 teaching lawyers the art and the techniques of

4 dispute resolution.

5 People get mad at lawyers when they see a lot of

6 feuding and fussing, and particularly when they have

7 to pay for it or when they see time wasted. Let us

8 figure out how our offices can resolve our disputes

9 as an example for all the nation.

10 But most of all, we must remember that we serve

11 the people, human people with fears and hopes and

12 sometimes panics, people whose problem is not solved

13 by some legal concept, but solved by human beings

14 that care and want to support one another.

15 Let us use that sense of caring to reach out and

16 help rebuild communities across this nation, to

17 empower neighborhoods to come together to solve their

18 own problems so that they don't have to go to

19 government all the time. Or if they do, they can do

20 it themselves so that they don't have to go to

21 lawyers. But if they do, they can do so in a

22 cost-effective, sensible way.

23 You look at a neighborhood that is in trouble.

24 The vacant lots are overgrown, there are abandoned

25 automobiles around, there are crack houses around and

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1 there's a high crime rate. If government comes

2 together, if prosecutors work with police officers,

3 and if we come together to, first of all, make people

4 feel safe enough to come out from behind their door

5 and then come to community meetings, and then we

6 teach them the processes of how you go to city hall

7 and how you get that abandoned car removed, they get

8 prouder and prouder of their neighborhood and they

9 think they can do something, and they reach out and

10 help and they support their police officers and

11 they're involved in solving their community problems.

12 But we, as lawyers, have got to take the lead in

13 providing the ingredients that can give them that

14 pride and that power.

15 In the Department of Justice, I told people, "You

16 don't know what it's like when the feds come to town

17 and say, 'We're here to help you, this is what you

18 should do,' and you look at them and you say, 'Have

19 you ever been to South Florida before?'"

20 "No."

21 "Well, how do you know what we need in South

22 Florida?"

23 Communities understand their needs and

24 resources far better than the federal government.

25 But the federal government can be a remarkable

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1 partner, and we have tried to reach out through all

2 of the agencies of the Department of Justice to form
3 a partnership with communities, saying, "How can we
4 help you? You understand your needs and resources
5 better. How can we help you build your community in
6 the strongest way possible?"

7 To do this, it is important that we look at the
8 whole picture. Chesterfield has an expression about
9 little pig trails, and lawyers go down their little
10 pig trail of specialty, their little favorite subject
11 matter, and they sometimes don't look to the right
12 nor to the left. They don't see the doctor who can
13 help them from a public health perspective, they
14 don't see others involved that can make a difference.

15 In the Department of Justice, we've tried to
16 reach out to the Department of Education, HHS, Labor
17 and HUD, to address how we can come together as
18 partners with communities, looking at the whole
19 picture.

20 In your government work, look out; in your pro
21 bono work, look out; look out and see a school, see a

22 parks and recreation specialist, see a community

23 police officer that cares, see an emergency room

24 doctor who wants to work with you in addressing the

25 issue of domestic violence, but look at the problem

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1 as a whole instead of just pursuing that tiny little

2 pig trail that will take you down to the stream but

3 won't take you across it. Look at what we can do

4 working across disciplines.

5 Nothing has made me prouder than to be in the

6 same room with the immediate past president of the

7 AMA and Roberta Ramo, as president of the ABA,

8 discussing domestic violence and what the AMA and the

9 ABA are doing together to address this issue. It is

10 a classic example of what can be done. But it is

11 important, and Martha is a reminder again, that we in

12 public service can do pro bono service as well.

13 I am so proud of what the ABA has done in dispute

14 resolution. We had a conference recently, the

15 section was there, they had done marvelous work, and

16 now I am participating with the Center for Dispute
17 Settlement in Washington to work with schools, to
18 work with teachers, in teaching and in supporting
19 dispute resolution, which is making such a difference
20 in our public school setting.

21 I have established for the Department of Justice
22 a pro bono policy that encourages, as an aspirational
23 goal, pro bono service.

24 I will share with you the concerns. The young
25 lawyers come to me and say, "I so want to do it, but

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1 I'm worried about conflict and I don't really know
2 whether I know enough about landlord/tenant law to
3 really be able to help."

4 If we organize our pro bono programs correctly,
5 if we bring together everybody so that they have
6 advanced advice on any ethical conflict that may be
7 involved, if we develop training programs, as the
8 D.C. Bar has developed with our lawyers, it's amazing
9 to see these young lawyers just reveling in the
10 chance to serve and to make a difference.

11 What you are doing in the area of literacy, I
12 think, is a classic example of what young lawyers can
13 do, what lawyers of all ages can do, in reaching out
14 to make a difference. It is so heartwarming to see
15 some of the finest lawyers in Washington, to see
16 people that I've heard of from afar, at the same pro
17 bono program as those young lawyers just coming to
18 the Department.

19 But as we do all this, we must remember and we
20 must rededicate ourselves to doing what the law does
21 best, to protect and defend our people, to ensure
22 that the law is used as a sword and a shield.

23 As government lawyers, we've got this finest line
24 to walk. It is our responsibility to make sure that
25 our government does not intrude in any unwarranted

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1 way in the lives of our people. Our people have a
2 general right to be let alone.

3 And some people have asked me over the years why

4 I became a lawyer. I became a lawyer because I

5 didn't want people telling me what to do. And I
6 still remember that, and so I don't like government
7 telling people what to do unless it's absolutely
8 necessary.

9 We must protect the rights of the individual. We
10 must make sure that our constitution is real for all
11 Americans. We must protect the innocent.

12 The reason I didn't want to become a prosecutor
13 was because I thought indeed that they were more
14 interested in securing convictions than seeking
15 justice. I now know that a prosecutor can do more to
16 protect an innocent person than anybody else around,
17 and it is one of our great challenges.

18 We have a responsibility to hold those who have
19 done wrong accountable for their wrong, but we have a
20 clearer responsibility to make sure that we do that
21 in a way that is consistent with the constitution and
22 ultimately seeks to solve the problem.

23 The prosecutor who walks out of the courtroom
24 satisfied that they got a conviction but doing

25 nothing to address the drug problem that caused the

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1 conviction in the first place still has more to do.

2 It is important that we renew our efforts in this

3 land to defend against hate. Haters are cowards.

4 When people stand up to them, they oftentimes back

5 down. There's too much hate in this land and it is

6 time for lawyers to speak up in thoughtful, concerned

7 and caring ways against anybody who would hate.

8 It is important we watch the church arsons, as

9 examples, and watch other examples, but we must speak

10 out against it and we must defend against it. And in

11 this time of concern, we must speak out for this

12 nation that we love, and we, as lawyers, must

13 challenge ourselves to do everything we can to devise

14 a system that protects this nation from terrorism,

15 but at the same time defends the constitution which

16 gave us the freedom we so cherish.

17 Lawyers are, to me, some of the greatest people

18 in the world. Public lawyers are, as I said, but

19 little lower than the angels. To be honored by you

20 is something I will cherish for the rest of my life.

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1 STATE OF FLORIDA

2 COUNTY OF ORANGE

3 I, JEANNIE MC CONN, Court Reporter of Parliamentary

4 Reporting and Notary Public in and for the State of Florida

5 at Large,

6 DO HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing speech of

7 ATTORNEY GENERAL JANET RENO was given before me at the

8 place therein; that I reported said speech

9 stenographically, and that this transcript of speech,

10 pages 1 through 19 inclusive, constitutes a true and

11 correct transcription of the shorthand report of said

12 speech.

13 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto affixed my hand

14 and official seal this 5th day of August, 1996.

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16 _____

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18 Jeannie Mc Conn

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20 Court Reporter

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