

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT
FOR PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

MEMORIAL SERVICE

FOR

GERALD C. "JERRY" BAKER, ESQ.

LEO W. DUNN, JR., ESQ.

DEBORAH A. JOHNSTON, ESQ.

JOHN B. KELLY, ESQ.

CATHERINE M. KOESTER, ESQ.

HONORABLE ROBERT H. MASON

HONORABLE WILLIAM D. MISSOURI

EUGENE "GENE" PITROF, ESQ.

DONALD D. WIKE, ESQ.

HONORABLE ROBERT J. WOODS, ESQ.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2018

4:00 P.M.

COURTROOM 3400

COURTHOUSE

UPPER MARLBORO, MARYLAND

Fateema N. Alonzo, RPR
Official Court Reporter

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PROCEEDINGS

3 JUDGE ADAMS: Good afternoon. I've spent the
4 majority of the day in this courtroom. I started off the
5 day in the courtroom for the annual adoption ceremony,
6 and it was packed, standing room only celebrating the
7 start of families. And then I conclude today in this
8 courtroom, the annual Memorial Service for our Bar
9 Association celebrating the lives of phenomenal people
10 that have served this community and this Bar Association
11 for so many years.

12 So as I look around the courtroom this evening,
13 I thank each and every one of you for taking the time out
14 of your day to come through the weather we had today to
15 make sure you pause for a minute to give tribute to the
16 lives of our brothers on the Bar that have given so much
17 to this Association, to this community and to this
18 profession. So with this, I say welcome and thank you
19 for being here this evening.

20 So, to Judge Erik Nyce, President of the Bar
21 Association; Senior Judge Philip Nichols, Judges of the
22 Circuit Court, my colleagues; Judges of the Court of
23 Appeals; Court of Special Appeals; the Federal court; all
24 of our senior Judges, thank you for being here today.
25 And with that, I am going to turn the program over to

1 Judge Nyce.

2 JUDGE NYCE: Thank you, Judge Tillerson Adams,
3 members of the Circuit Court, members of the Senior
4 bench, members of the District Court, families, friends,
5 guests, relatives.

6 When I was practicing here as a young lawyer
7 years ago, Judge Spellbring and I had a conversation
8 about this service, and Spellbring said that this service
9 really is one of the most important things you'll do in
10 the Bar during the year, remembering those folks who gave
11 to us sometimes in courts, sometimes as friends,
12 sometimes as mentors, sometimes as people that we admire.
13 So I followed that advice, and I'm happy to be here on
14 behalf of the Bar Association in welcoming the family and
15 individuals of these folks who passed in the last year.

16 Today, as Judge Tillerson Adams said, we did
17 have the adoption ceremony, so it really is sort of
18 fitting here today that at the end of the day we're
19 seeing remembrances of the passing of folks that we cared
20 a lot about; whereas this morning we really had a
21 magnificent time looking at the new beginning of families
22 in this courtroom. And, again, we are all on a continuum
23 here. This courthouse will be up and running well after
24 we're all gone, but it is important to remember those
25 folks and my vision is we should remember them as we

1 would like ourselves to be remembered.

2 So that's my statement on behalf of the Bar
3 Association. And, again, thank you all, and with solemn
4 remembrance to the individuals we have lost in the last
5 year or so. Thank you, Ma'am.

6 JUDGE ADAMS: Thank you, Judge Nyce.

7 I'll turn the program over now to Judge
8 Nichols.

9 JUDGE NICHOLS: Good afternoon, Judge Adams, my
10 colleagues, Judges of the Courts of Appeal, the Circuit
11 Courts, the District Court, the Chief Judges who are
12 here, the Senior Judges who are here, all the family
13 members who are here, and President Mike Miller of our
14 State Senate.

15 The fact that you are here today speaks volumes
16 on a day like today when the weather is just terrible.
17 You wouldn't be here if you didn't care. We all care and
18 we care especially today.

19 **Gerald C. "Jerry" Baker, Esq.**

20 JUDGE NICHOLS: The speakers will be called in
21 order, and the first speaker is Arnold D. Bruckner, Esq.,
22 to speak on behalf of Gerald C. Baker, Esq. Arnie,
23 please.

24 JUDGE ADAMS: And just so everyone knows, we've
25 given each speaker five minutes.

1 JUDGE NICHOLS: I believe I made that clear,
2 but if I didn't, someone's going to muscle you out of the
3 way.

4 MR. BRUCKNER: I understand. I'm happy to see
5 everybody here.

6 Jerry Baker was one of the biggest people in my
7 life. I thought I was hot stuff when I graduated from
8 law school, took the Bar and passed it. And then I
9 opened a practice in my house and realized finally there
10 really wasn't for me to do much, and so I looked around
11 and by some heavenly blessing somehow I got directed over
12 to his office. And I suddenly realized when I was
13 practicing there Mr. Baker not only had a great sense of
14 humor, but he really cared about people. He really cared
15 about how the law was practiced and how the law was
16 handled. And in the time I was with him, I learned not
17 only what the law was, but how it affected people and how
18 the people appreciated that. Mr. Baker took me under his
19 wing, and he and the rest of his firm supported me and
20 taught me more than I ever learned in law school. And I
21 was in court one day when one of the senior judges said
22 to him that he probably had forgotten more law than some
23 of the people practicing in front of him knew.

24 All I could say is I think my life was blessed
25 having known him and gotten his counsel. Thank you.

Leo W. Dunn, Jr., Esq.

JUDGE NICHOLS: The family of the late Leo W. Dunn, Jr., Bill, has asked that we have his bio and his picture in the program, but asked not to have to speak or attend here this afternoon, and we are going to honor their wishes.

Deborah A. Johnston, Esq.

JUDGE NICHOLS: Speaking on behalf of Deborah A. Johnston, Esq., the Honorable John P. Davey and his wife, Andrea.

JUDGE DAVEY: Judge Adams, esteemed judiciary, colleagues, Senior Judges, Appellate Judges, Judges of the District Court, Judge Chasanow, Senator Miller, all the members of the Bar Association, and most particularly, the family and friends of the judges and attorneys that we will be recognizing this afternoon.

It is indeed a privilege, although a challenge, for Andrea and I to speak about Deborah Ann Johnston. As you noticed, it's a little out of the ordinary that there's two of us instead of just one individual. Bruce knew that more than likely none of the judges and none of the attorneys could really recognize Deborah appropriately, so he hired a professional, and we have a career communicator with us. As you can well imagine, throughout my career she certainly edited my speeches on

1 numerous occasions, and has done her best to help myself
2 and other corporate officials and elected officials and
3 appointed officials throughout her career, and that's
4 what she's going to do this afternoon as well.

5 Two weeks ago, as only Bruce could do, he
6 organized a memorial Mass for Debbie. And, again, as
7 only Bruce could do, he rounded up 65 of his closest
8 friends and family members to participate in this Mass.
9 And quite frankly, there were so many Jewish
10 representatives at the Mass, that the priest literally
11 started a Sunday sermon speaking Hebrew, but it was the
12 only appropriate thing to do. At the conclusion of Mass,
13 Bruce gave a couple of comments and he stated that while
14 we all know that Debbie was an amazing attorney, in
15 reality, she was two times that good as a grandmother,
16 mother and wife, and ten times that good as a human
17 being.

18 Andrea and I believed Bruce underestimated
19 Debbie's qualities. Debbie was a remarkable, elegant,
20 generous woman who just happened to be a legendary
21 criminal prosecutor. As many of you know, she actually
22 started her career right here in this courthouse. She
23 graduated from Catholic University and then became the
24 law clerk to Judge Melbourne, and after clerking here,
25 she then went on to the State's Attorney's Office. She

1 eventually moved on to be the chief of the Homicide and
2 Narcotics Unit, and then once the Honorable Alex Williams
3 became the State's Attorney, she also was the Deputy
4 State's Attorney during a brief period of time.

5 During her 14 years in the State's Attorney's
6 Office, her conviction record was so substantial, and
7 unfortunately the crimes that she prosecuted were so
8 severe, many of Deborah's cases were front page news on
9 then what was the Prince George's Journal.

10 In 1994 she was U.S. -- United States
11 Attorney's Office for Maryland, and as, again, I think
12 most of you know, at some point she became the Chief of
13 the Southern Division, which is obviously our federal
14 Greenbelt courthouse. From there she spent at least a
15 year and a half down at the United States Justice as a
16 special assistant to the Attorney General, and she
17 finished her career at the U.S. office as a senior
18 litigator and as one of the principal advisors to now our
19 Deputy United States Attorney General, Rod Rosenstein.

20 Debbie, during that whole period of time,
21 obviously earned an amazing reputation. She spent much
22 of her time prosecuting or dismantling narcotic
23 organizations and prosecuting multi-defendant drug cases.
24 In between she did capital murder, kidnapping, fraud,
25 money laundering, obstruction of justice and death

1 penalty cases. To say the least, she had an amazing
2 career, both here in the State's Attorney's Office as
3 well as the U.S. Attorney's Office.

4 On three separate occasions, Deborah was
5 recognized by the then U.S. Attorney General, first by
6 Reno and then by Ashcroft, and finally by Holder as the
7 highest ranking or distinguished employee for a given
8 period of time. And, again, I think it wouldn't take us
9 too much to think that that's one of the three items the
10 three of them could all agree on given their careers.

11 Debbie was inducted into the prestigious
12 American College of Trial lawyers. At the time, she was
13 the only active trial lawyer that was included in the
14 group and only the second woman. And then last year the
15 Bar Foundation awarded her the public service
16 responsibility for the year.

17 There's obviously quite a bit more in the bio
18 that's in the pamphlet that you were each given, but I
19 think I would be remiss if I really didn't point out to
20 you that she had some very, very special qualities that
21 really made her so unique as well as so successful. She
22 had a precise moral compass without being judgmental.
23 Debbie had no trouble determining right from wrong,
24 following the law or prosecuting those that didn't, or
25 making a moral decision instead of an easier popular

1 decision. She firmly believed everyone should be
2 responsible for their own decisions. Faced with tough
3 moral ethical decisions, Debbie never hesitated to choose
4 wisely. To even suggest crossing the line between what
5 is right and what is wrong would have earned you a very
6 quick disapproving nod with the message very strong
7 that's not happening.

8 She was also one of the most inclusive and
9 generous persons anyone could ever know, whether it was
10 to her family or to her friends or to her colleagues.
11 There was always room for another on their
12 once-in-a-lifetime trips abroad. There was always
13 another plate that could be set at the table for any
14 holiday season, or simply an add-on to a dinner
15 reservation. I think some of you in the room have had
16 the opportunity to travel with them to Rome, Paris,
17 Barcelona, Dublin, Normandy, and I think we would all
18 remember those trips as one of the most unbelievable
19 activities of our life, but more importantly, I think we
20 would recognize Debbie's hospitality. Whoever Bruce
21 invited, Debbie always made room for.

22 The final quality I want to talk about is she
23 really respected, fostered and incorporated into her life
24 the different religious beliefs between her and Bruce.
25 As many of us know in our current society, it is very

1 difficult to be either a practicing Jew or a practicing
2 Catholic. However, for Debbie and Bruce, embracing these
3 respective religions and then joyfully celebrating them
4 together was part of their life. Truth be told, Debbie
5 knew more about Jewish faith traditions and Bruce knows
6 more about Catholic practices than most religious
7 observers. I can tell you firsthand, Debbie's Passover
8 meal was an amazing feast that made the Seder of Prayers
9 and songs much more bearable. She will be missed.

10 MS. DAVEY: Thank you.

11 As John mentioned, I am not a member of the
12 legal community, though some of my dearest friends and
13 closest friends are or have been.

14 So I wanted to talk about Debbie just a little
15 bit as a person and as my dear friend. Debbie and I
16 shared a special bond as Pennsylvania girls. We both
17 came from the same area in Pennsylvania, and I would say
18 that her deep value system, along with her equally deep
19 moral code and her strong religious faith, were instilled
20 by her close-knit family during her years growing up in
21 Reading, Pennsylvania.

22 As the eldest of five, Debbie embraced her role
23 as the responsible caretaker and mentor and advisor and
24 manager to the whole family, and she kept up that role
25 all the way through her life. No matter her countless

1 personal and professional gains and life experiences,
2 Debbie never forgot her roots, and she held fast to an
3 unshakable base of family and faith.

4 Rumor has it that throughout her career, before
5 she accepted any legal position, she had to go home and
6 talk to her dad about it and get his opinion. And he was
7 not an attorney or legal professional, but she respected
8 his opinion that much. Debbie's family here in Maryland
9 was her lifeblood, her pride and joy, her heart and her
10 all, started and centered with her son, Brendon, her
11 number one son, and the person who made her so proud
12 every day. Brendon enhanced that pride first by
13 following his mom into the public safety arena as a
14 decorated law enforcement professional, by marrying his
15 beautiful and talented wife, Amanda, and by both of them
16 presenting Debbie with her three boys -- Dylan, Bryce and
17 Colton, her grandsons who she loved more than life
18 itself.

19 Despite her demanding schedules, Debbie spent
20 as much time as possible with her boys. She'd often get
21 up before dawn and go to their house to wake them up and
22 put them on the school bus and get them off to school
23 before she went to work herself. She operated Camp
24 Debbie at her beach house in Rehoboth during the summer
25 with infinite patience and lots of time to play baseball

1 and teach swimming lessons, and she never missed a game
2 or an activity, and she just adored her role as grammy.

3 But Debbie's rock and true love was always her
4 best friend, her partner, her colleague, her companion,
5 sometimes her legal adversary, and her beloved spouse,
6 her darling, Bruce. Together for 37 years, they made a
7 formidable team. John and I always reflected that they
8 reminded us of Spencer Tracy and Katharine Hepburn in the
9 movie Adam's Rib. And Bruce, we thought, sometimes
10 probably shared Tracy's encouragement of Hepburn that she
11 definitely should be a great competitor in the courtroom,
12 just not with me.

13 Highly admired and acclaimed fixtures in our
14 community, Debbie and Bruce were a package deal, sharing
15 their skills, their unrivaled generosity and their love
16 with all of us who were privileged and fortunate to enjoy
17 their friendship. John and I were eternally grateful to
18 have been counted in that category. As John mentioned,
19 Debbie and Bruce introduced their friends to a variety of
20 their favorite pastimes -- sailing, biking, skiing,
21 spending time at the beach, sports events, dining out,
22 eating in, traveling the world, lots and lots of
23 laughter, and especially drinking good wine. Operating
24 from a shared value system reinforced by their two
25 different faith's traditions, as John said, they

celebrated all holidays -- could be Seder dinners, Christmas buffets, Passover suppers, Easter brunches, retirement gatherings, weddings, showers, you name it, often for large crowds, sometimes for small. Debbie fit in the shopping, the prep, the cooking and the cleanup between her work and her trial prep, and many nights she squeezed in a couple of hours of work after socializing. Truly, Debbie and Bruce's hospitality and generosity knew no bounds.

Our friend Debbie Johnston was born on July 14th, Bastille Day. I think that's a fitting birthday for a woman who spent her career fighting for liberty and justice, espousing equality in the courtroom and boardroom, promoting a common good, and building a lifetime filled with family, friendship and love. Debbie was competent, capable, intense, ethical and fair in her work. She was elegant, generous, compassionate, kind, loving, loyal and faithful in her life, and she was truly beautiful inside and out. Debbie graced our lives and profession for too short of a time, yet what a legacy she's left behind. We're all so grateful to have experienced Debbie in our lives and to hold her spirit in our hearts. Thank you very much.

John B. Kelly, Esq.

JUDGE NICHOLS: On behalf of John B. Kelly,

1 Esq., Victoria Cawood Thompson, Esq.

2 MS. THOMPSON: Hi. I'm Tori Thompson, and I'm
3 so pleased to be here in this courtroom. The Honorable
4 Judge Nichols mentioned the word "continuum." Thank you,
5 because that's exactly what the story of my uncle, John,
6 is, a continuum. He was a man who comes from a family
7 who's been in Upper Marlboro since about 1650 or so, so I
8 said the family got here, looked around, went, yeah, this
9 is good, and haven't moved since. But when I look at the
10 courthouse and remember that his father, his grandfather,
11 his great grandfather all practiced here -- his great
12 grandfather was here for the last renovation, I believe,
13 before the current one. That was, like, 1870, so been
14 around for a while. So lots of ghost whispering around
15 for us.

16 But John, even though his mother's family came
17 here, you know, from England with the first foxhounds --
18 my mother would want you to know that -- you know, we
19 largely remained here. Most of us did. John did not.
20 John moved. He was drafted into the Army and made a
21 career there for 20 years. He commanded an ambulance
22 company in Germany in the 1950s. He was executive
23 officer of a hospital in Vietnam. We were very excited
24 about that, the rest of the family, not that he was in
25 Vietnam, but that my aunt, Marieanna, and the children

1 came to live here for a year. We thought that was great.
2 My sister, Chrissy, couldn't understand why people would
3 be upset when they talk about Vietnam. She thought it
4 was, like, two towns over, you know, and that he would be
5 home at night. Anyway, he didn't make it home at night,
6 but he made it home, that was the important thing.

7 He was a liaison between the surgeon general
8 and the U.S. Army and those of other countries, and one
9 of his things that he brought home when he came home from
10 Israel where he worked with the Deputy Surgeon General,
11 he introduced his family to hummus and falafel. We
12 talked with his oldest daughter, Elizabeth, last night
13 and she remembers camping in a VW camper and a tent, from
14 San Antonio to Mexico City and back. There were no
15 sanitary facilities or filling stations sometimes for
16 hundreds of miles. For the four children, my cousins
17 ages three years to eight and a half it was adventure;
18 for their mother, not so much.

19 He did come home and got his law degree and
20 started practicing law in Cawood & Kelly, first with his
21 brother-in-law, my father, the late Judge Cawood; and
22 then with his sister, Katherine Cawood, who unfortunately
23 could not be here today.

24 He was a soldier, he was an attorney, he was a
25 farmer, he was a genealogist, he was a devoted husband

1 and father. I will tell a quick story since I have two
2 minutes. This is before I had gone to law school, but my
3 sister had had an accident at what is now the Lothian
4 traffic circle. I don't know if you guys know that one,
5 but, yeah, I got some nods. It didn't used to be a
6 traffic circle there, and my sister got into an accident,
7 and this is before I started my career in insurance, so I
8 didn't know a whole lot about stuff. And I said to my
9 uncle, "So is Chrissy at fault?" And he gave me that
10 smile, and he said, "I can make it appear that way or I
11 can not." I thought, ha, okay. And I'm sure my sister
12 was found not at fault for that accident.

13 But his was a very rich life, and I'm going to
14 end quickly. I brought this, if anybody wants to see it.
15 It is from his celebration Mass right down here at
16 St. Mary's, you know, of the Assumption, and it is a
17 picture of my uncle as a small boy on the steps of
18 Ashland, the family farm, up on Marlboro Pike, and that
19 is where his mother was born, his grandmother was born,
20 he was raised, and this is where his life started, and
21 this is where he was laid out when he went, you know, to
22 be with our Lord. So, a picture of him as a very little
23 boy. And I love this picture. I've never seen it
24 before.

25 Thanks so much for being his colleagues here at

1 the Prince George's County Bar.

2 **Catherine M. Koester, Esq.**

3 JUDGE NICHOLS: On behalf of Catherine M.

4 Koester, Esq., Robert B. Clark, Esq.

5 MS. KOESTER: Good afternoon to everyone. I
6 don't mean to scare you. Thank you for all the Judges
7 and all the Bar members for attending today.

8 One of the marvelous things about being a
9 lawyer is that you become acquainted with people, as I
10 did with Catherine, who were not kind of in your
11 traditional walk of life, you know, your friends from
12 high school, college, law school, the law firm you worked
13 at, church, synagogue, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, teams,
14 those sorts of things that are the lanes you travel in
15 life and make acquaintances and friendships. And
16 Catherine simply wasn't one of the people who fell into
17 that area in my life. She practiced here in the county
18 for 42 years, the bulk of which was in College Park,
19 Maryland, and was her own practice that was really
20 focused on fiduciary matters, domestic relations,
21 estates, wills, things like that. I've been a personal
22 injury trial lawyer for 37 and a half years, so there was
23 really no mechanism that we were going to cross paths,
24 whatsoever, other than sort of the kids met.

25 And what happened is about 15 or 16 years ago,

1 Cathy's office had a personal injury case and some other
2 miscellaneous civil things, and she went to see a mutual
3 friend, James McCullum, who's a lawyer in College Park
4 who I esteem greatly and she esteems greatly. And she
5 said, you know, "Could you do this personal injury case?
6 Would you take these civil cases and help me out? I'm
7 sick of doing that stuff." And James said, you know,
8 "I'm real busy. Bob Clark knows a great deal more about
9 personal injury work. He's a good trial lawyer, why
10 don't you see him."

11 So I got a call, and it was Cathy. And I'm a
12 person who does not like being in my office. I like to
13 get out, if I see a client, go to their home, go to the
14 hospital, go wherever it is. And so I went down to
15 Catherine's office, and I walked in the door, and there
16 was immediately this incredible cacophony. There was
17 barking, and there was one of these door things that was
18 beeping. And usually you walk in the door and it beeps
19 once. Well, this thing kept beeping and all the
20 employees were scurrying around, and they all wanted to
21 sort of subdue this dog so I didn't get injured. And so
22 I sat down and I waited, and I was ultimately guided into
23 the back of the office where I met Catherine. And
24 Catherine grew up in Wisconsin, I'm from Illinois, so we
25 had a little Midwestern common bond, although she was ten

1 years older than I. She had been injured in her leg, so
2 she didn't get up, and she'd kind of -- she had these big
3 glasses, and maybe in the picture in there you can see,
4 and she had these big intelligent eyes, and I could just
5 feel her sort of penetrating me and sizing me up to see
6 if I was the person with whom she wanted to work, and
7 fortuitously I was. I represented the personal injury
8 case, I did some fiduciary things in the Orphan's court
9 here. And I had never been in the Orphan's court, and
10 the Orphan's court is altogether a different thing than
11 the District Court or the Circuit Court. I've enjoyed my
12 time there.

13 But at any rate, some years later I got a legal
14 malpractice case involving a breach of fiduciary
15 obligations, and I thought about a variety of experts
16 I've used. I've done other fiduciary cases. I used Tim
17 O'Brien at Joseph, Greenwald & Laake, but I immediately
18 thought of Catherine. And I gave her the factual
19 pattern, and she immediately in this extraordinary way
20 recited all the breaches and all the underpinnings and
21 all the avenues that could be pursued. So some years
22 later she was deposed in the case, and it was a prominent
23 lawyer from a big firm in D.C. who asked her hours and
24 hours of questions, and after all of that had been
25 completed, this lawyer, with whom I'm friendly, stepped

1 out and said, "This person is impenetrable. We're going
2 to have to pay you ultimately in this case," even though
3 Catherine had never served as an expert before.

4 Catherine ultimately decided that she wanted to
5 retire from the practice of law, sold her practice in
6 College Park. But she lived in Laurel, and my office has
7 been in Laurel for a number of years, and so she would
8 stop by periodically with her assistant, Sharon Barnes,
9 who was invaluable and would meet clients. And, again,
10 I'm not a person who likes being in the office, but I
11 would look on my calendar and see when Catherine was
12 scheduled to be there, and I would always be there just
13 to chat with her afterwards and to sort of debrief each
14 other about our experiences in life.

15 So in March, Catherine was in my office, and
16 she didn't seem to be quite as quick as usual, and had
17 some leg problem and I was a little concerned about her,
18 but I enjoyed our conversation. I was going off on a
19 vacation with my wife and my two adult children and their
20 significant others to go to Costa Rica, and I came back
21 from Costa Rica and I learned from Cathy's next door
22 neighbor that she had passed away. And I've attended a
23 number of these memorial services through the years,
24 particularly when they are people who I knew reasonably
25 well, but there was something about her passing that

1 touched me more than these other ones. And I don't mean
2 to diminish them in any way, but there was something
3 about the friendship that these two people who were from
4 different walks of life, different ages, who did entirely
5 different things that really had touched me and has
6 affected me ever since. And maybe it's the sense of my
7 own mortality at age 63, or I don't know what it was, but
8 it made me reflect on how much I've enjoyed getting to
9 know all the people. I don't know all of you, but a
10 great many of you here today, I haven't been to your home
11 for dinner, you haven't been to mine, we don't go out and
12 carouse or something, but I really enjoyed the
13 friendships of so many people as I did Catherine, and I
14 felt like I really needed to come today, because many of
15 you don't know anything about her, but she was a
16 wonderful person and pillar of the legal community in
17 Prince George's County. Thank you.

Honorable Robert H. Mason

19 JUDGE NICHOLS: On behalf of the Honorable
20 Robert H. Mason, Senior Judge of the 7th Judicial
21 Circuit, the Honorable Karen H. Mason, his former clerk.

22 JUDGE MASON: I've been warned to keep it
23 brief.

1 Circuit Court, District Court, to our elected officials
2 family, guests, friends and members of the Bar.

3 "We make a living by what we get, but we make a
4 life by what we give." Winston Churchill said that.

5 Good afternoon. It is my sincerest honor to
6 share a few thoughts with you about the late Honorable
7 Robert H. Mason. Judge Mason was also affectionately
8 known as my judge. I was Judge Mason's law clerk. He
9 was my mentor, my namesake and my friend. We had more in
10 common than just our last names.

11 Judge Mason was an Assistant State's Attorney
12 here in Prince George's County; I was an Assistant
13 State's Attorney here in Prince George's County. Judge
14 Mason was a Family Court Master. I was a Family Court
15 Master. Judge Mason was a District Court judge; I was a
16 District Court judge. Judge Mason was a Circuit Court
17 judge, as am I. I was his mini-me.

18 When I think of Judge Mason, two words
19 instantly come to mind -- integrity and temperament.
20 Integrity. Judge Mason had the highest moral code and
21 refused to compromise on matters of principle. He didn't
22 wear his moral fabric on his sleeve like a cloak, nor did
23 he push his moral code of ethics in your face. Judge
24 Mason allowed his life of firm adherence to a code of
25 moral values be his example. Moreover, Judge Mason was

1 not self-consumed. He could see and feel outside of
2 himself.

3 Temperament. As a practicing lawyer, to have a
4 matter before Judge Mason, you knew that the experience
5 would be pleasant, civil and fair. Judge Mason didn't
6 see less experience or out-of-county lawyers as easy
7 sport. He didn't smell blood in the water and go in for
8 the kill just for the entertainment or to relieve
9 boredom. Judge Mason respected all lawyers, defendants,
10 and witnesses that came before him. His temperament was
11 unsurpassed.

12 Most important, Judge Mason understood the
13 value of family. He loved and adored his family, and he
14 didn't shy away from telling you. He often shared of the
15 beautiful family vacations and trips that they took
16 together. I've shared before and I'll share again
17 briefly a trip that my late husband and my two kids took
18 to his vacation place in Vermont. He and Mrs. Mason,
19 who's right there in the front, invited us there to ski,
20 and we skied all day, and it was freezing cold. We got
21 back to their place, and if you let him tell the story,
22 we were asleep for 15 hours. He didn't know if we were
23 dead or alive. He said he would come by the door, he
24 would listen and he would listen again. I said, "Judge
25 Mason, it was cold, and we were exhausted."

1 Judge Mason and Mrs. Mason also flew to Boston
2 to see my son play football, and twice he was injured and
3 didn't even get in the game, but that didn't stop him.
4 He came back again and again and again.

5 There's another Winston Churchill quote that
6 goes, "Success is not final. Failure is not fatal. It
7 is the courage to continue that counts."

8 My last in-person conversation with Judge Mason
9 was at a retirement event, and at that time he shared
10 with me, he said, "Karen, there's another drug that they
11 have, and I think I'm going to try it. It's only a five
12 percent chance that it's going to work." And I thought
13 in my head, five percent, but he didn't waiver. He said
14 he was going to give it a try. At that time I had no
15 idea in a very short time that I was going to have my own
16 struggle with cancer.

17 It is my hope and my prayer that I can
18 demonstrate even a fraction of the courage that he showed
19 in his life. I will miss him, the Bar will miss him,
20 this Court will miss him. Please always remember the
21 Honorable Robert H. Mason. Thank you.

22 **Honorable William D. Missouri**

23 JUDGE NICHOLS: On behalf of the Honorable
24 William D. Missouri, the 17th Chief Judge of this Court
25 since 1864 and my immediate predecessor as chairman of

1 this committee, the Honorable Michele D. Hotten, Judge in
2 our Court of Appeals.

3 JUDGE HOTTON: Good afternoon. It is such a
4 pleasure and an honor for me to be here today.

5 Judge William D. Missouri, an unsung giant of
6 the Maryland judiciary, passed away on November 21st,
7 2017. He was born in Washington, D.C., but grew up in
8 South Carolina in the home of his maternal grandparents.
9 Unlike his white counterparts who received bus
10 transportation to and from school, he was forced to walk.
11 At age eight, he was diagnosed with rheumatic fever which
12 rendered him unable to walk for a year, but slowly and
13 with determination, he regained movement in his
14 extremities.

15 He did a stint in the Air Force and also worked
16 full-time at the U.S. Postal Service while attending
17 classes at night. After receiving his college degree, he
18 applied for a program at Ohio State University, but fate
19 intervened when he sat in on a law lecture and became
20 smitten with the law school bug. He attended the
21 University of Maryland School of Law while maintaining a
22 family, and after graduation became a law clerk for then
23 State's Attorney for Prince George's County, Arthur "Bud"
24 Marshall. Later he was sworn in as an Assistant State's
25 Attorney.

1 In 1985 he was appointed to the District Court
2 for Prince George's County and was subsequently appointed
3 as the county's first African-American Administrative
4 Judge. In 1987 he was appointed to the Circuit Court and
5 later served with distinction as Prince George's County's
6 first African-American Circuit Administrative Judge, and
7 then the Administrative Judge for the 7th Judicial
8 Circuit.

9 After his retirement in 2010, he returned as a
10 Senior Judge, as special legal counsel to the Prince
11 George's County Executive, served as a mediator and
12 arbitrator for JAMS, and served as Past Chair of the
13 ABA's Judicial Division, past chair of the ABA's Senior
14 Lawyer's Division, Past Chair of the National Conference
15 of State Trial Judges, was a Life Fellow of the American
16 Bar Foundation and the Maryland Bar Foundation. Judge
17 Missouri was a member of the Harry A. Cole Judicial
18 Council, the J. Franklyn Bourne Bar Association, the
19 Prince George's County Bar Association, the Maryland
20 State Bar Association, the National Bar Association, the
21 American Bar Association and countless other
22 organizations.

23 Although he often said he was just a country
24 boy a long way from home, he tirelessly worked to level
25 the playing field to address inequities experienced by

1 persons of color in the judicial and legal systems in
2 Maryland. He passionately pursued the road less traveled
3 through a commitment to service in the community and
4 exemplified the term "way maker."

5 When asked about the importance of the role of
6 attorneys, Judge Missouri once remarked, "I think a
7 lawyer's role in society is extremely important. I know
8 it's an old adage, but people always ask why do you think
9 Shakespeare said, 'First let's kill all the lawyers'?
10 Lawyers are the people responsible for moving society
11 forward. If it had not been for lawyers, Plessy vs.
12 Ferguson would not have been heard, the Scottsboro boys
13 would not have received any type of fairness, Brown vs.
14 Board of Education would not have come about. There are
15 so many things that lawyers have done to benefit society.
16 I urge lawyers to remember that they are part of a
17 profession and that they should not be less than
18 professional with one another."

19 Judge Missouri presided over many of my dockets
20 as a young prosecutor in the District and Circuit courts.
21 He became my mentor, my colleague, frequently my
22 coconspirator and close friend. He believed in me, saw a
23 vision of my future that I did not see. He served as
24 both an inspiration and a blueprint for my faith and my
25 career. He demonstrated by example that you have the

1 ability to write your own story as he wrote his with
2 determination, skill, vision, responsibility and service.
3 I owe him a debt beyond measure. Thank you.

4 **Eugene "Gene" Pitrof, Esq.**

5 JUDGE NICHOLS: On behalf of Eugene Pitrof,
6 Esq., Justin J. Sasser, Esq.

7 MR. SASSER: Thank you, everyone, for coming
8 today. I don't want to forget anybody. Thank you,
9 Judges. This is a wonderful opportunity every year to
10 remember those who have gone before us and practiced law.

11 If you knew Gene Pitrof -- as everybody called
12 him -- you would know that five minutes was much more
13 than Gene would need. He was very succinct, to the
14 point, and always wanted to keep things that way. He was
15 not one that stood on a lot of pomp and circumstance.
16 I've had the honor of being asked to speak on his behalf
17 today by his daughter, Eugenia Newberg, who is here.

18 I practiced with Gene in Upper Marlboro as a
19 Main Street lawyer. Gene came to the practice here. He
20 was born in Oconto, Wisconsin, and found his way down
21 here through via the way of the Army. He set up his law
22 practice in 1962 here on Main Street and continued to
23 practice for just 53 years.

24 I can tell you in the 25 years that I spent in
25 practice with Gene, he truly enjoyed every moment of the

1 practice of law. He was the epitome of what you would
2 consider a country lawyer. There was never an occasion
3 when somebody wouldn't come in the front door and he
4 would immediately stop what he was doing, welcome them,
5 and offer them a seat to discuss whatever kind of matter
6 they had. He was that kind of accessible person. He
7 wasn't as he would consider -- he would tell me often,
8 "I'm not a highbinder. I don't need to be taken by
9 appointment." And it was that kind of salt-of-the-earth
10 existence, treatment, practice of law, that he was at
11 every day and he bestowed to me.

12 Just in summing up some of the things that Gene
13 was as a man and as an attorney, as I said, he came from
14 Wisconsin. He got his law degree at Marquette
15 University. He came to Maryland by way of the Army and
16 set up his practice here. He was always on Main Street.
17 He would give me pearls of wisdom such as, "Don't worry
18 about income. Being a successful lawyer is a bi-product
19 of doing a good job for your client. Always keep your
20 focus on doing right by your client and success will
21 follow." A certain essence like that is hard to come by,
22 but I see it in a lot of people that I know here today.
23 It's that kind of accessibility that made him want to
24 fight for the small guy. He was best when there was
25 somebody that he considered to be downtrodden and wasn't

1 going to get a fair shake, and he would give them more
2 than his all.

3 I can tell you that Gene was also what I would
4 consider a Yellow-Dog Democrat. He was very avid in
5 politics. He never wanted to be in the limelight, though
6 he would very often give of his time freely to help those
7 achieve political office. And by Yellow-Dog Democrat, I
8 would mean that if they put a yellow dog up on the
9 ticket, he would vote for that as long as it had a "D"
10 next to it. So he truly enjoyed that.

11 Some of the things that he has bestowed to me
12 in my time with him, when I was trying to figure out what
13 I wanted to do as a young attorney, I said, Gene, you
14 know, I've been at this for a couple years now, and I
15 think I might know what I want to do. I think I'd like
16 to go into the area of family law. And he looked at me
17 and he said, "Really? You want to do that?" He said,
18 "Let me tell you something."

19 This was the last family law case I had. I was
20 representing the husband, and it was a bitter, bitter
21 divorce. They fought about everything on down to the
22 China on down to everything, but Gene was able to at
23 least bestow upon his client the value of coming to a
24 settlement and, finally, they were able to come to a
25 settlement, the other side. But before that, it was just

1 about ready to be derailed. He said they were fighting
2 over, of all things, a jigsaw puzzle -- a jigsaw puzzle.
3 So, Gene took his client to the side and said, okay,
4 you're going to give her this jigsaw puzzle, and the
5 client was livid, but eventually convinced the guy to
6 give up the jigsaw puzzle to his soon-to-be ex-wife. In
7 his final meeting with the client, he was happy and Gene
8 was saying, "Well, you were upset and now you're happy.
9 Why is that?" He said, "Well, I kept one piece of the
10 puzzle." So, he was trying to bestow to me certain
11 things -- seeing that my time is over -- some of the
12 things that you ask for, be careful what you ask for
13 because this is what you're going to get.

14 Well, in keeping with Gene's love of politics
15 and all things political, when Gene decided to pull the
16 plug at age 80, 81, he said, "I've had enough," and he
17 decided to close the doors. And I thought for certain
18 that he would want the desk that he had been sitting at
19 for years -- 50 years, but he didn't. He left his desk.
20 He said, "You can have it. You can drive it now." So, I
21 said, "Okay. That's fine." And thinking back as
22 presidents pass to each successive president something in
23 the desk that you leave -- a letter behind -- I didn't
24 think much of it, but I was going through the desk, which
25 was mostly empty, a few paperclips here and there, and I

1 found an envelope, and I thought it was a letter
2 certainly. And I asked him about it before he passed,
3 and he said, in Gene's unique way, "Open that letter when
4 I'm dead." So I waited until he passed, and I opened the
5 letter, and inside I thought, okay, this is a letter from
6 Gene with some wisdom. What I found inside the letter
7 was a piece of the puzzle and nothing else. So I can
8 tell you that, to this day, the very end, Gene Pitrof, if
9 nothing, was telling me and teaching how to make a proper
10 closing argument.

11 I would be remiss if I didn't offer this in
12 closing, the way Gene would certainly. If you're ever in
13 Upper Marlboro and you find yourself on Main Street, the
14 door is always open. There's no need to knock; it's
15 always open. So I would invite you if you're ever in
16 Marlboro, if you want to crow about a victory or cry
17 about a defeat or just come in to say hello and be
18 welcomed, you are always welcome just as Gene would have
19 welcomed you.

20 **Donald D. Wike, Esq.**

21 JUDGE NICHOLS: Donald D. Wike, Esq., passed at
22 age 87 in the Palm Coast of Florida. We did our best to
23 locate someone to speak on behalf of Don, and we did not.
24 And I'm sure four of you will come up to me as soon as
25 this is over with and say, Why didn't you ask me?

1 In any event, on behalf of the Honorable Robert
2 J. Woods -- I think the 14th or 15th Chief Judge of this
3 Court, the Honorable Vincent J. Femia.

4 **Honorable Robert J. Woods**

5 JUDGE FEMIA: Judge Adams, colleagues from all
6 levels, stripes, ladies and gentlemen, family and
7 friends. Spending five minutes talking about the retired
8 Chief Judge Robert J. Woods, well, we'll give it a shot.

9 If you want to know about Judge Robert Woods,
10 read the program. It tells you all the particulars of
11 his professional and academic life. But to know Bob
12 Woods -- or as we knew him, Robert the rat -- you had to
13 know -- you had to look at that picture; that's him,
14 Gabriel and Lucifer in one. He was an irrepressible imp.

15 I met Bob I guess about '64, '65 when he joined
16 Bud Marshall's as an assistant. I was an assistant. He
17 had an office in the Suburban Trust. He was in with Ray
18 McDonough. He was associated with Ray McDonough in the
19 Suburban Trust Building at Indian Head Highway and
20 Livingston Road. I had an office at 4916 Indian Head
21 Highway in the old Harvey Glassman office in Glassmanor.
22 Howard Stern and I were in there. Bob would come down in
23 the afternoon, you know, when nothing else was happening,
24 and back then a lot of times nothing else was happening.
25 And he would come in, he'd have a libation, we'd talk --

1 great talks and all that. Well, there came a time -- I
2 kept a bottle in my desk drawer for clients in need. And
3 when I opened the desk drawer -- I didn't know what I was
4 looking for -- I saw the bottle; it was almost empty. I
5 don't drink spirituous liquors. I knew my secretary,
6 Pat, didn't drink spirituous liquors. She was an Old
7 German fan. Remember Old German, a beer you could buy,
8 six-pack, \$1? So I knew she wasn't drinking it. And I
9 said to her, "Patsy, what's going on here? Why is this
10 bottle almost gone?" She said, "Well, you know, Bob
11 comes down in the afternoon when you guys aren't here."
12 I think it's just a matter of hospitality. He would have
13 a couple, and he always brought her a six-pack of Old
14 German. I went to him, "Hey, Bob, what are you doing
15 drinking my stuff?" Look at the picture. That's what he
16 did. Never said a word. That's the smile, the famous
17 smile.

18 There was a time when he represented a fellow
19 in a divorce, and he came to me, he said, "I've got this
20 divorce case, it's consent. The wife's been caught
21 flagrante delicto, and it's a consent divorce." Those
22 old enough to remember, remember when you had a consent
23 divorce back then, you had to have an attorney
24 representing the defendant to file the pleadings? So I
25 said, "All right. Send her in." And she came in and I

1 spoke with her. All of sudden it occurred to me this
2 wasn't *flagrante delicto*, this was *flagrante set-up-o*.
3 It was Bob's friend.

4 And he was asking for custody, so I filed a
5 denial. Bob comes running in, "What are you doing? What
6 are you doing? What's this denial." I said, Hey, Bob.
7 I talked to the lady. She's got a defense that may not
8 be the greatest defense, but she's got a defense and
9 you're asking for custody. I can't in good conscience
10 advise her to consent." Well, a couple weeks later he
11 and I were discussing things in the hallway on the second
12 floor, and he said to me, "I'll see you back in the
13 office. I got to talk to Judge Bowen." About an hour
14 and a half later, I get a phone call from a hysterical
15 client. Seems the sheriff showed up at her door with an
16 order signed by Judge Bowen and the husband, and took the
17 children. So I walked around. Perry G. was in visiting
18 judge's chambers across from Powers and Parker. I said,
19 "Judge Bowen, did you sign this *ex parte* order today?"
20 He said, "Yeah." I said, "I don't want to question it,
21 but doesn't the Rule require that there be some attempt
22 to contact the other party or their attorney?" He said,
23 "Yeah." I said, "Well, how about this contact stuff?"
24 He said, "Well, Bob told me he was talking to you in the
25 hall and he told you he was coming around to see me."

1 Now, both of those factoids were correct and true. We
2 were able to work it out without my killing him. I went
3 him and I said to him, "What the hell are you doing?"
4 Look at the picture. Not a word. Just look at the
5 picture. That is literally the way he looked.

6 He had a good friend by the name of Jim Kenkel,
7 friend and neighbor, real close. Bob loved the sea,
8 whether he was the Maharaja of Kettering aboard an ocean
9 liner, or aboard his sailing thingy that he and Stenny
10 owned. You know, one day a storm came up, Bob at the
11 tiller. Apparently he zipped when he should have zagged,
12 Kenkel gets clobbered over side into the water, he's
13 bleeding, but Bob sailed on to Chesapeake Mansion, Jim
14 got picked up by a passing fishing vessel. And I said,
15 "Bob, you damn near killed Jim." That's it. Look at the
16 picture. He and the Kenkels were very close.

17 As some of you may know, Bob was a master chef,
18 having studied under Julia Child, cordon bleu chefs,
19 Patrick O'Connell out there at The Inn At Little
20 Washington. Bob was a master chef and one hell of a
21 pastry cook, let me tell you. And he put on a Nyce
22 dinner for the Kenkels one time. Seems that he may have
23 overheated the fondue oil, damn near burned the place
24 down. I said "Bob, are you trying to redecorate the
25 Kenkels' house?" Not a word. The picture. That was

1 Bob, the irrepressible imp.

2 And he was not above maybe playing a practical
3 joke or two. He called Judge Sweeney one time when we
4 were both on the District Court, and Judge Sweeney wasn't
5 in and he told the secretary, "Would you please have him
6 call Judge Murphy. This is an emergency. Could you
7 locate him and have him call." Judge Sweeney figured out
8 who called, and he thought it was me because it was
9 coming from the same office that he and I shared. I knew
10 nothing about this. But Sweeney got his comeback. Bob
11 sent him a letter one time saying, "Femia goes to
12 Cambridge for a week. Brooks is assigned to Ocean City
13 for a week. Woods gets Baltimore for a week. Is there
14 any justice?" And the letter came back with a Nyce
15 little thing penned at the bottom. "They won't be in
16 Baltimore for a week."

17 And one other time I could think Bob got his
18 comeuppance was we were in Oxon Hill sitting together, he
19 was in criminal, I was in motor vehicle. And those of
20 you who practiced up there remember -- I'm with you.
21 Those of you who practice up there remember that the
22 lawyers had break rooms, all gathered in chambers, drink
23 coffee and tell lies. And a lawyer one day said, "You
24 know, I don't know how you guys do it. All that paper
25 that comes across the bench, how do you do it?" I piped

1 up and said, "Well, as a matter of fact, if it wasn't for
2 the clerks, we wouldn't do it." Bob Wood said, "What do
3 you mean? I read everything that comes across my desk."
4 Bunny Kahn was his clerk. She looked up and she said,
5 "Judge Woods, you know you can't possibly read everything
6 I put across your desk." He said, "I read every last
7 thing." Four o'clock, 4:30 that afternoon, Rosie Carter,
8 who was the Deputy Sheriff assigned, came in and said
9 "Judge Woods, I don't know how to tell you this. I have
10 here an order committing you to Spring Grove, signed by
11 you."

12 Finally, I'll tell you that I don't really
13 believe I ever saw Bob upset but one time, and that was
14 with Leonard Kerpelman. One day I get a call from Bob,
15 and he is screaming, literally screaming on the phone.
16 "That son of a bitch Kerpelman is coming" -- you know,
17 Bob, like myself, was not given to salty language.
18 "You've got to take this case. You got to take this
19 case." Well, you know, in those days, judges, we could
20 swap cases with each other. Did it quite frequently, you
21 had a case you couldn't handle. In fact, I remember when
22 Bill McCullough and Vi were going to Alaska. He was
23 going to leave on Friday and had a two-day rape case and
24 I had an arson case. He asked me could I swap and I
25 swapped. That's how I met Willie Horton. But Bob sent

1 me his case and I sent him my burglary. And Kerpelman
2 and I had an interesting time together. Never had any
3 problem with him again. But that was Bob. That's the
4 way he was. He was an irrepressible imp.

5 But I'll tell you, they say to know him was to
6 love him. And I'll tell you this, if you couldn't love
7 Bob Woods, there's something wrong with your heart. Me,
8 I'm going to miss the hell out of the guy.

9 Thank you kindly for indulging me.

10 JUDGE NICHOLS: Judge Adams, that would be the
11 end of the speakers, but there's one or two other things
12 I need to mention. The late Patricia Smoot passed away.
13 Many of you know her. She will be remembered this time
14 next year. It's just a little too soon for the family.

15 I'd also like Robin Haddon, Richard London and
16 Delores Missouri to stand, who made all of this possible
17 and devoted hours upon hours. Please, if you would,
18 stand.

19 (Applause.)

20 I'd like to tell you that we had a
21 disinterested third party, that is, Sheila Lockhardt as
22 the timekeeper. I found out if you put your speech over
23 the timekeeper's clock, it doesn't matter because you
24 can't see the flashing red light stop. I also found out
25 today, if you turn the lights out, Vince will continue to

1 speak. Doesn't matter what you do. I know that Steve
2 will not put his speech over his timer when he does mine,
3 at least I hope.

4 In any event, I think at this time I need to
5 ask you to grant the motion of all those present and the
6 members of your Bar Association to spread upon the
7 permitted permanent records of this Court the memorials
8 given here today. Thank you, Judge.

9 JUDGE ADAMS: Thank you, Judge Nichols, Judge
10 Nyce and the Committee for putting together this
11 wonderful program for us. The Judges of the Circuit
12 Court for Prince George's County are grateful to the
13 Prince George's County Bar Association and the members of
14 the Committee for the presentation of these memorials and
15 making the arrangements for the ceremony.

16 It is a very fine tradition that we have
17 maintained here in Prince George's County for many, many
18 years. We pause from the usual matters taking place in
19 the courtroom, and we honor our departed brethren and pay
20 tribute to their memories.

21 To the families of the Members of the Bar that
22 we honor today, we thank you. We thank you for giving
23 them to us, because we know there were many days and
24 times and nights that they were practicing law and
25 serving this community, and sometimes that was difficult

1 and challenging to the families. But I guarantee you,
2 the work and the commitment that they gave to this
3 community will have a lasting impact on many, many for
4 years and years to come. So we thank you. We thank you.

5 Many of you have enjoyed a very pleasant and
6 warm personal relationship with those we have
7 memorialized today. The Court will direct that the
8 memorials presented be spread amongst the permanent
9 records of the Court and that copies of the presentations
10 be sent to the families.

11 So in conclusion, Mr. Bailiff, in honor of
12 departed brothers, you may announce.

13 THE BAILIFF: All rise. This Court of Special
14 Session is now adjourned.

15 (Whereupon, at 5:08 p.m., the proceedings were
16 concluded and the court was adjourned.)

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