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IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE
IN AND FOR NEW CASTLE COUNTY

THE INVESTITURE OF HONORABLE VIVIAN L. RAPPOSELLI
MARCH 15, 2013

APPEARANCES:

PRESIDENT JUDGE JAMES T. VAUGHN
RESIDENT JUDGE RICHARD R. COOCH
REVEREND W. FRANCIS MALOOLY
CHIEF JUSTICE MYRON T. STEELE
GOVERNOR AND FIRST LADY JACK A. MARKELL
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR MATTHEW P. DENN
JUDGE JAN R. JURDEN
U.S. SENATOR CHRIS COONS
ET AL.

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1 Gracious God, you alone rule the world with
2 justice. We ask that you bless the work of all our
3 judges. May they serve with wisdom and humility
4 and seek the truth with courage and fidelity
5 through the intercession of St. Thomas Moore,
6 patron saint of statesmen, politicians, lawyers and
7 judges.

8 We ask you, Lord God, to continue in Judge
9 Rapposelli a zeal for justice, a passion for
10 objectivity, and a fervor for impartiality. May
11 she be ever mindful that all power and wisdom comes
12 from you. And may she, as she always has, deal
13 fairly with all those whom you have created in your
14 image and likeness. We ask this through our Lord
15 and God now and forever. Amen.

16 JUDGE VAUGHN: Thank you, Bishop.

17 We will now have the pledge of allegiance,
18 which will be led by Judge Rapposelli's children,
19 Lexi and Rocco.

20 LEXI AND ROCCO RAPPOSELLI: I pledge
21 allegiance to the flag of the United States of
22 America and to the Republic for which it stands,
23 one nation, under God, indivisible with liberty and

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MARCH 15, 2013
Courtroom No. 8C
12:00 p.m.

PRESENT:

As noted.

6 JUDGE VAUGHN: All right. Well, good
7 afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to
8 this special session of the Superior Court of the
9 State of Delaware for the investiture of Vivian L.
10 Rapposelli as a judge of the Court.

11 Please remain standing for the invocation,
12 which will be given by the most Reverend W. Francis
13 Malooly, Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of
14 Wilmington.

15 Welcome, Bishop.

16 REVEREND MALOOLY: Thank you.

17 Your Honor and Honors, it is an honor to be
18 here, no pun intended, and the Catholic community,
19 Vivian is very proud of you as is our Saint Thomas
20 Moore Society for Lawyers and Judges. And I hope
21 that I will see you often in the future, in church
22 and not in court. I have spent enough time in
23 court. And with that let us pray.

4

1 justice for all.

2 JUDGE VAUGHN: Thank you, Lexi and Rocco.

3 And you may now be seated.

4 I would like to begin by introducing those
5 who are seated with me on the bench today. To my
6 immediate right is Chief Justice Myron T. Steele of
7 the Supreme Court of Delaware.

8 To his right is Resident Judge Richard R.
9 Cooch of the Superior Court. To my left is Judge
10 Jan R. Jurden of the Superior Court. And to Judge
11 Jurden's left is where Judge Rapposelli will be
12 seated soon.

13 And in the jury box are the Superior Court
14 judges and commissioners with robes on for this
15 special session of the Court.

16 The Court recognizes the family members and
17 many friends of our next Superior Court Judge who
18 are present today, and, in particular, Judge
19 Rapposelli's husband, Stephen, and her children,
20 who we just seen, Lexi and Rocco, Judge
21 Rapposelli's parents, Otto and Myriam Medinilla,
22 and her parents-in-law, Felix and Marie Rapposelli.

23 Court also recognizes Governor Jack A.

1 Markell. Welcome again, Governor. And First Lady
 2 Carla Markell. It's a pleasure to have you with us
 3 today, Ms. Markell. Lieutenant Governor Matthew P.
 4 Denn, Senator Chris Coons. Welcome, Senator.
 5 Members of the Governor's Cabinet, members of the
 6 general assembly and other elected officials and
 7 the members of the Delaware Judiciary and the Bar.
 8 To all, a warm and special welcome to the Superior
 9 Court.

10 We are here today to commemorate the
 11 beginning of Vivian Rapposelli's career as a member
 12 of the Superior Court, our State's general
 13 jurisdiction trial court.

14 The proceeding is one of investiture where
 15 the historical robing is a special ceremony,
 16 significance and public commitment under oath. The
 17 robe itself is a symbol of impartiality and the
 18 judge's solemn duty to administer equal justice on
 19 behalf of the people that we serve.

20 It is now my pleasure to ask Chief Justice
 21 Steele to administer the oath of office.

22 Judge Rapposelli's parents will hold the
 23 Bible, and her husband will then assist with the

1 robing.

2 CHIEF JUSTICE STEELE: Are you prepared to
 3 take the oath?

4 JUDGE RAPPOSELLI: I am.

5 CHIEF JUSTICE STEELE: Place your right hand
 6 on the Bible. Please repeat after me. I --

7 JUDGE RAPPOSELLI: I, Vivian L. Rapposelli.

8 CHIEF JUSTICE STEELE: Do proudly swear.

9 JUDGE RAPPOSELLI: Do proudly swear.

10 CHIEF JUSTICE STEELE: To carry out the
 11 responsibilities.

12 JUDGE RAPPOSELLI: To carry out the
 13 responsibilities.

14 CHIEF JUSTICE STEELE: Of judge of the
 15 Superior Court of the State of Delaware.

16 JUDGE RAPPOSELLI: Of judge of the Superior
 17 Court of the State of Delaware.

18 CHIEF JUSTICE STEELE: To the best of my
 19 ability.

20 JUDGE RAPPOSELLI: To the best of my
 21 ability.

22 CHIEF JUSTICE STEELE: Freely acknowledging.

23 JUDGE RAPPOSELLI: Freely acknowledging.

1 CHIEF JUSTICE STEELE: That the powers of
 2 this office.

3 JUDGE RAPPOSELLI: That the powers of this
 4 office.

5 CHIEF JUSTICE STEELE: Flow from the people.

6 JUDGE RAPPOSELLI: Flow from the people.

7 CHIEF JUSTICE STEELE: I'm privileged to
 8 represent.

9 JUDGE RAPPOSELLI: I am privileged to
 10 represent.

11 CHIEF JUSTICE STEELE: I further swear.

12 JUDGE RAPPOSELLI: I further swear.

13 CHIEF JUSTICE STEELE: That I will always
 14 place the public interest.

15 JUDGE RAPPOSELLI: That I will always place
 16 the public interest.

17 CHIEF JUSTICE STEELE: Above any special or
 18 personal interest.

19 JUDGE RAPPOSELLI: Above any special or
 20 personal interest.

21 CHIEF JUSTICE STEELE: And to respect the
 22 right of future generations.

23 JUDGE RAPPOSELLI: And to respect the right

1 of future generations.

2 CHIEF JUSTICE STEELE: To share the rich
 3 historic.

4 JUDGE RAPPOSELLI: To share the rich
 5 historic.

6 CHIEF JUSTICE STEELE: And natural heritage
 7 of Delaware.

8 JUDGE RAPPOSELLI: And natural heritage of
 9 Delaware.

10 CHIEF JUSTICE STEELE: In doing so.

11 JUDGE RAPPOSELLI: In doing so.

12 CHIEF JUSTICE STEELE: I will always uphold
 13 and defend.

14 JUDGE RAPPOSELLI: I will always uphold and
 15 defend.

16 CHIEF JUSTICE STEELE: The constitutions of
 17 my country and my state.

18 JUDGE RAPPOSELLI: The constitutions of my
 19 country and my state.

20 CHIEF JUSTICE STEELE: So help me God.

21 JUDGE RAPPOSELLI: So help me God.

22 CHIEF JUSTICE STEELE: Congratulations.

23 JUDGE RAPPOSELLI: Thank you.

1 JUDGE VAUGHN: All right. Well, before
2 today's speakers are recognized, I would like to
3 warmly welcome Vivian to the Superior Court.

4 Her qualifications and experience make her
5 fully deserving of the honor which the Governor and
6 the Senate have conferred upon her.

7 And Vivian and I have spent quite a bit of
8 time together here since her confirmation. And
9 based upon all that we have talked about, I am
10 convinced that she has all the qualities, all the
11 qualities, that are needed to be an outstanding
12 Superior Court judge and a distinguished member of
13 the Delaware Judiciary.

14 I know that Vivian and I will not have any
15 problem at all working together in our new
16 relationship as colleagues on the Superior Court.
17 Each of us on the Superior Court look forward to
18 working with Vivian as our newest colleague. And
19 welcome.

20 JUDGE RAPPOSELLI: Thank you, President
21 Judge.

22 JUDGE VAUGHN: I would now like to recognize
23 the Governor, the Honorable Jack A. Markell,

1 Governor of the State of Delaware, for his remarks.

2 GOVERNOR MARKELL: Well, good afternoon,
3 everybody. We've all been seeing a lot of each
4 other, haven't we, judges over there?

5 To Mr. Chief Justice, always good to be with
6 you. To Judge Vaughn and all the other judges who
7 are here today, it's always an honor for me to be
8 here. And I have to say, looking over, there are a
9 lot of new judges. And I'm sure that the more
10 experienced judges are doing a great job helping
11 everybody to get acclimated to their new
12 responsibility.

13 I am delighted that my wife, Carla, can be
14 with us here today. She very much wanted to be
15 here, and I'm glad that that worked out.

16 The Lieutenant Governor, of course, an old
17 friend of Judge Rapposelli. And it's great that
18 Senator Coons was here. Senator Carper was
19 actually here earlier.

20 We also have a number of Vivian's former
21 cabinet secretary colleagues who are here. That's
22 really a reflection of the esteem in which she has
23 held. And I am just thrilled to be here.

1 It is difficult to overstate the
2 contribution that Vivian made over the last four
3 years to the Kid's Department. She did an
4 incredible job of building up a level of trust with
5 a variety of stake holders, and whether it was
6 working on kids who age out of foster care, whether
7 it was families, dealing with families who have
8 lost a child, whether it was, you know, making sure
9 we do the proper oversight for kids who are abused
10 or neglected, or whether it was focusing on helping
11 kids who got in trouble get back on the right path,
12 or whether it was making the Terry Center, a place
13 that is very near and dear to Carla and me, a more
14 personal and less institutional place.

15 Vivian made a profoundly positive difference
16 in the lives of so many children and families in
17 our State.

18 So what does that have to do with being a
19 judge? You know, when I have this incredible
20 honor, which I have had a lot recently, and I do
21 want to thank you, the members of the judicial
22 nominating commission, for their excellent work in
23 evaluating really amazing applicants for the

1 judgeship positions.

2 But when I -- you know, when it gets to the
3 point where I get to meet the people who I'm
4 choosing between, I look for people who have the
5 necessary intellect, the judgements, people who are
6 fair. And Bishop Malooly, I thought, really
7 captured that in his invocation, that Vivian is
8 always fair to the people that she deals with.

9 And I look for people who have the right
10 temperament. It's so important in a judge. And
11 when I interview potential judges, I often ask them
12 what makes a great judge. And one of the things
13 that they always bring up is somebody who has the
14 right temperament. And Vivian Rapposelli
15 absolutely has the right temperament. She has
16 demonstrated she has all of those skills.

17 And, you know, before the program started
18 today, Vivian's mom said to me, she said, I want to
19 thank you for believing in Vivian, first, having
20 given her the opportunity to serve as cabinet
21 secretary in the Kid's Department and now more
22 recently nominating her to the Senate to be a
23 judge.

1 And my response to Vivian's mom was very
2 simple -- but I think it really reflects what
3 matters here -- Vivian gave me every reason to
4 believe in her. And, more importantly, Vivian has
5 given the people of Delaware every possible reason
6 during her career over, certainly, the last four
7 years, but even before that, for all of us in
8 Delaware to believe in her.

9 You are going to be a great judge.

10 JUDGE RAPPOSELLI: Thank you.

11 JUDGE VAUGHN: Thank you very much for those
12 remarks, Governor.

13 I would now like to recognize the Honorable
14 Matthew P. Denn, Lieutenant Governor of the State
15 of Delaware for his remarks.

16 GOVERNOR DENN: Good afternoon, everyone. I
17 have conflicting obligations here. I promised
18 Judge Rapposelli that my comments would be very
19 brief but I also promised her husband, Steve, that
20 I would mention him at least three times during my
21 remarks. So I just want to begin by saying really
22 from the bottom of my heart Steve Rapposelli, Steve
23 Rapposelli, Steve Rapposelli. Are we good?

1 All right. Trial Court judges carry out a
2 lot of responsibilities and they have a lot of help
3 carrying out many of those responsibilities. They
4 have law clerks that help them do legal research
5 and write some of the decisions that they have to
6 write, they have assistants who help them schedule
7 the flow of cases that they have to oversee as
8 judges. In many instances they have juries that
9 help them decide factual issues where the parties
10 that are in front of them can't agree on what the
11 facts are.

12 But for all trial judges there come moments
13 when all alone, sometimes sitting by themselves in
14 a room, they have to do what their title suggests
15 and they have to exercise judgment, and that is I
16 think where Vivian Rapposelli is absolutely going
17 to excel.

18 And I worked with her for four years as she
19 occupied really one of the most pressure filled
20 jobs in State Government, at the top of the Kids'
21 Department.

22 And the fact that you probably didn't read
23 very much about her in the newspaper during that

1 four-year period is really a testament to the
2 extraordinary job that she did in that position.

3 And from her hiring decisions to navigating
4 her department through some incredibly difficult
5 budget times, to managing the crises that
6 inevitably come up in an agency of that type, in
7 every single instance she was smart and she was
8 compassionate and she was decisive.

9 And Vivian Rapposelli is also a real person
10 who has lived a real life. She's run a business.
11 She's raised a family. And she knows what it means
12 to strive and to struggle and to balance the
13 obligations between work and parenting.

14 And all of that, the innate talent, the life
15 experience, is really going to come to bear when
16 Vivian has to make those judgements that only she
17 can make, judgments that will really profoundly
18 effect the lives of people who stand before her.
19 The responsibilities that we place in the hands of
20 Superior Court judges making decisions about
21 whether people are going to go to prison or remain
22 free, making decisions about the quality of life
23 that people are going to have who have been

1 injured, who have lost their jobs. Those are
2 enormous responsibilities that we place in their
3 hands. And there are just few people that I know
4 of in whose judgment I would place more trust when
5 it comes to making decisions like that than I would
6 Vivian Rapposelli.

7 Last thing I want to mention about Judge
8 Rapposelli is that she will leave this institution
9 better than she found it.

10 I became involved with the Kids' Department
11 about 15 years ago when it was basically broken,
12 and I saw firsthand the consequences of it being
13 broken and the grief of the families that were hurt
14 as a result of that.

15 And we made a lot of improvements 15 years
16 ago, but there was still an awful lot more work
17 that remained to be done. And Vivian Rapposelli
18 did more than manage the Kids' Department day to
19 day. She built it up as an institution in ways
20 that will last long after her departure. And her
21 work there will benefit kids who were not even born
22 during her tenure.

23 And I believe that she's going to bring that

1 same attitude to this institution and beyond ably
 2 handing her cases and the fragile lives that come
 3 before her, I'm confident that she's going to leave
 4 Superior Court a better place than she found it.
 5 And I'm just very pleased and honored to be able to
 6 be here today to be part of this.

7 JUDGE VAUGHN: Thank you, Lieutenant
 8 Governor. I appreciate those comments.

9 I would now like to recognize the Honorable
 10 Judge Jan R. Jurden for her remarks.

11 JUDGE JURDEN: Thank you, President Judge.

12 And may it please the Court. And a special
 13 welcome to all of you. And an extra special
 14 welcome to Judge Rapposelli's beloved parents.

15 Buenas Tardes, Dr. and Senor Medinilla.

16 Este es un dia feliz.

17 Quiero agradecerles por crear hijos tan
 18 maravillosos.

19 Estamos. Thank you.

20 You did not know I was going to say that,
 21 did you? Neither did I. It just happened this
 22 morning.

23 Estamos agra decididos. Felicidades a ustedes

1 y a Vivian en esta ocasion de gran importancia y
 2 que dios log bendigan.

3 I'm so happy and honored to have the
 4 privilege of saying a few words about my good
 5 friend, my former Young Conoway collogue and now my
 6 current collogue on the Superior Court, Vivian
 7 Rapposelli.

8 And to those of you who are here for the
 9 investiture of Judge Rocanelli, you're in the wrong
 10 place.

11 I first met Judge Rapposelli in 1994, not
 12 too long after she graduated Cum Laude from Widner
 13 Law School and joined the Delaware bar.

14 And over the past 19 years I have watched,
 15 often in awe, as she dedicated herself and her
 16 legal skills to helping others. From victims of
 17 domestic violence to injured workers to abused and
 18 neglected children, she is a champion of all.

19 And the many people she helped along the way
 20 would attest to the fact that practicing law to her
 21 was not a job but a calling. And she was, as she
 22 will be here, with every task or challenge,
 23 dedicated, passionate, tireless and courageous, all

1 traits that made her a great lawyer and a great
 2 cabinet secretary and all traits that will
 3 undoubtedly make her a great judge.

4 As a young lawyer working for Gene Maurer, a
 5 victim of an assault, a domestic violence case,
 6 asked her for help. The victim was terrified and
 7 did not want to testify in the assault case against
 8 her abuser, and Vivian wanted to help desperately.
 9 But there was a big problem, Gene represented the
 10 defendant. And it was that event, that call for
 11 help, that she could not answer, that caused her to
 12 leave private practice and go to work for Delaware
 13 Volunteer Legal Services. And there she
 14 represented countless victims of domestic violence
 15 and taught classes at Widener as an adjunct
 16 professor.

17 She saw a need and she worked to fill it, a
 18 theme that marks every aspect of her distinguished
 19 career. She was, and is, not afraid to take on
 20 tough cases.

21 She bravely took on a large corporation that
 22 tried to shirk its responsibility to a seriously
 23 injured plant worker. She won. She took on a

1 police agency, not exactly a politically wise move,
 2 when its wrongful conduct caused the death of a man
 3 who left behind a young widow and six small
 4 children. She won.

5 The breath of her law practice is indicative
 6 of her legal acumen and versatility. In addition
 7 to personal injury cases, criminal cases, domestic
 8 violence cases, she handled unfair wage claims and
 9 immigration classes. And her former clients adore
 10 her. She still receives cards and letters from
 11 them, even though her representation of them ended
 12 years ago.

13 One of her grateful clients even hand
 14 knitted sweaters for her daughters Victoria and
 15 Lexi. Now I don't know about all of you, but I've
 16 been practicing law for a long time before I went
 17 on the bench, I never got a knitted sweater.

18 When talking about some of the cases she
 19 handled, she said to me once I think the small
 20 cases counted just as much as the big ones. And
 21 that says so much about her and the judge she is
 22 going to be. She will treat every litigant's case
 23 as important.

1 Along the way, while managing a very
2 successful and demanding law practice, she found
3 time to make significant contributions in the
4 Hispanic community, and for this she was named the
5 2010 Distinguished Hispanic Delawarian by the Latin
6 Community Center. She has consistently given back
7 to the community. She has been heavily involved in
8 pro bono and community service.

9 And it's obviously not just her clients who
10 love and respect her. Look around this room. It's
11 all of you who have worked with her, from cabinet
12 secretaries, members of the general assembly,
13 lawyers, staff, who know firsthand she is smart,
14 fair, supportive, willing to listen, and always
15 willing to help.

16 And on that last point, when I was in the
17 Army -- I know you didn't know I was in the Army,
18 because I never talk about it -- rule number one
19 among the enlisted folk was never ever volunteer.
20 Well, clearly Judge Rapposelli was never in the
21 Army -- although, I know you wish you had been,
22 given all I've said about it -- because she's
23 always willing to volunteer to help her colleagues

1 and those in need.

2 One of the many things I admire about Vivian
3 is her ability to overcome obstacles. When faced
4 with a problem, her response, out of the box, is
5 unfailing okay, we can fix this, then, let's figure
6 out how.

7 With her everything is possible, you just
8 have to work at it. She is an excellent problem
9 solver. She's practical and possesses good common
10 sense, as evidenced by her quick thinking when we
11 were in Key West and a friend's phone got doused
12 with pool water. Judge Rapposelli got off her
13 raft, without spilling her umbrella drink, went
14 over to the scene of the problem, surveyed the
15 situation, studied the problem, and said,
16 authoritatively, I've got this; all I need is a bag
17 of rice.

18 Well, she did solve the problem. Did you
19 know that if you put a cell phone that's been
20 doused in water in a bag or rice, it can dry out
21 and you can use it? Right? Very practical.
22 You're never going to live that down.

23 She has an excellent sense of humor, and a

1 ready smile, as is on display today and always.
2 She has a million dollar personality and a way with
3 people that makes everyone feel at ease. She makes
4 you feel good about herself. You simply want to be
5 in her orbit.

6 My mother told me you can learn a lot about
7 someone from the way they react under pressure.
8 When Judge Rapposelli started grade school at
9 St. Donato's in Philadelphia -- you know I had to
10 mention this -- she didn't fit in. She had moved
11 with her family to the U.S. from Guatemala. She
12 spoke little English and, according to her, had
13 really big hair.

14 At a very young age, she demonstrated
15 resourcefulness. She simply told everyone there
16 that she was Italian and that her name was
17 Metanilla. True story. And it worked. As an
18 aside, I saw her St. Donato's school picture and
19 she's right about the hair.

20 As we all know, the secretary of the Kids'
21 Department has enormous responsibility. That
22 department deals with the most -- I'm nervous today
23 and I don't know. She's easy to talk about and a

1 dear friend, but -- the Department deals with the
2 most precious subject matter there is, and that is
3 our children. And as a cabinet secretary Vivian
4 exhibited time and time again grace under fire.

5 Even when stressed, she never lost her cool.
6 She led by example. She maintained a calmness, and
7 she helped everyone around her stay calm. This
8 trait too will serve her well on the bench.

9 Over the years I've been fortunate to
10 witness Judge Rapposelli's commitment to her family
11 and their's to her. Dr. and Mrs. Rapposelli, you
12 have raised three beautiful, kind, wonderful
13 children, all of whom chose careers that involve
14 helping others, Otto, Jr., a physician's assistant
15 and Sandra, a critical care surgeon. No wonder
16 given all that you two have done for the community.

17 They, like you, have big, caring hearts.
18 You have provided loving, unconditional support and
19 instilled such a strong moral compass, a strong
20 work ethic, and expressed repeatedly the importance
21 of taking care of others, particularly those less
22 fortunate, and for that we are deeply grateful. We
23 are the beneficiaries of that.

1 Steve, Steve, Steve. Steve paid me.
 2 I shouldn't have said that on videotape,
 3 should I?
 4 You are an accomplished and highly respected
 5 physical therapist. And my guess is, looking
 6 around the room, you've probably treated half of
 7 us. More important, much more important, you are a
 8 wonderfully kind person, an excellent father,
 9 husband, son, brother, and a wonderful friend.
 10 Your support, I know, has been and will
 11 continue to be invaluable to Vivian as she begins a
 12 challenging judicial career and continues her
 13 exemplary public service.
 14 To Victoria, who couldn't be here, to Lexi
 15 and Rocco, your mom loves you more than anything.
 16 I know you know that already. You inspire her and
 17 she's so proud of you. Otto, Jr., Vivian's brother
 18 who couldn't be here, and Sandra who is here,
 19 Vivian talks about you often, and I know you're all
 20 close, not just siblings, but close, close friends.
 21 And how wonderful and valuable that is.
 22 And now Vivian. You should put down the
 23 water. You are a cherished, true and loyal friend.

1 There is no question that you are ready to assume
 2 this role. You are so well prepared. During your
 3 many years practicing law as a solo practitioner
 4 and with colleagues you've had many wonderful
 5 mentors and law partners, many of whom I see here
 6 today.
 7 You bring such rich and extensive experience
 8 with you. And in the past few weeks you have
 9 managed somehow to shadow 15 judges in three
 10 countries and watch every type of proceeding this
 11 court handles.
 12 Your foundation is rock solid. And as with
 13 everything you do, you have learned quickly. You
 14 will be such an asset to this Court and the people
 15 we're privileged to serve. You have what it takes
 16 to be a great judge.
 17 There is much to celebrate today. In
 18 addition to gaining a smart, kind, loyal, humble,
 19 working colleague, with an excellent sense of
 20 humor, we gain, I think, our first bilingual judge,
 21 our first St. Donato's graduate, and certainly our
 22 first Miss Guatemala. I had to mention it. She's
 23 very modest, didn't want anybody to know.

1 Now, in closing, because I know you're all
 2 ready for me to close so we can hear from the
 3 judge. At Judge Wallace's investiture last week,
 4 Justice Holland presented Judge Wallace with a
 5 Supreme Court coffee mug. We were all very jealous
 6 about that. It has been suggested by some that
 7 when that mug is filled with water the water
 8 somehow transforms into some kind of holy water --
 9 no disrespect or sacreligion intended, Bishop
 10 Malooly -- and that would make sense because after
 11 all it's a Supreme Court mug, right?
 12 Well, I have for you a gift. And this is
 13 what we Superior Court judges pour our water into.
 14 And so, Vivian, thank you for your willingness to
 15 continue your distinguished Public Service in a new
 16 role. As my predecessor said to me when I started
 17 here, now go forth and do justice. Welcome to the
 18 Superior Court.
 19 JUDGE VAUGHN: Well, thank you, Judge
 20 Jurden.
 21 All right. It is now my privilege to call
 22 upon our new Superior Court judge for her
 23 greetings. Judge Rapposelli.

1 JUDGE RAPPOSELLI: Thank you.
 2 President Judge Vaughn, Chief Justice
 3 Steele, Resident Judge Cooch, Judge Jurden, United
 4 States Senator Coons, Governor and First Lady
 5 Markell, Lieutenant Governor Denn, the most
 6 Reverend W. Francis Malooly, colleagues in the
 7 Superior Court, esteem members of the Delaware
 8 Judiciary, the General Assembly, elected officials,
 9 my cabinet friends and members, members from the
 10 Children's Department and various state agencies
 11 here, to the Governors Office, members from
 12 Widener, family, friends, colleagues, and anybody
 13 else that I missed, my time is up, you know, today
 14 is the Ides of March, and it never has really meant
 15 anything considerable to me, but on this mid-day,
 16 mid-month, the day hasn't ended, but I know that I
 17 will say that it has already been one of the
 18 greatest days of my life.
 19 And I've been to a few of these
 20 investitures, and it's true what they say, that you
 21 think that you're ready to say what you're going to
 22 say, you're going to keep your cool, but I won't,
 23 so I am just prefacing it by saying that I will

1 follow in probably what will be a very emotional --
 2 a couple of very emotional moments, so I just ask
 3 that you bear with me.

4 And many of you who have attended the
 5 various investitures, and some of us who are now
 6 known as the investiture groupies, roadies and
 7 investiture crashers, they have all been unique in
 8 a very special way, but I have decided in my
 9 remarks not to reinvent the wheel.

10 And at the risk of sounding like a broken
 11 record, let me just say from the beginning that for
 12 those who have been here before, you can't help but
 13 come up with three very important must haves in a
 14 decent investiture speech. So the must haves in my
 15 remarks are going to be like a good recipe. And
 16 for those of you that know me, you know that I
 17 can't cook, but I can read.

18 And like my mom and my mother-in-law have
 19 taught me about good recipes, that while it might
 20 handle some creative modifications there are some
 21 necessary ingredients. So there are three must
 22 haves, must saves, I guess, in this case.

23 The first is that I am truly humbled,

1 honored and blessed. And these three simple words
 2 I have heard over and over again but they really
 3 cannot fully express how I feel today. And rather
 4 than trying to tell you, suffice it to say that the
 5 emotions that I feel run the gamut from feeling
 6 overwhelmed to feeling overjoyed all within split
 7 seconds, from an inability to really put my arms
 8 around the concept and the magnitude of this
 9 amazing life altering event that is happening to me
 10 here and now, and then to catching my breath when
 11 it hits me that this blessing is in fact happening
 12 here and now.

13 I'll take that now. Thank you. Maybe I
 14 shouldn't be drinking from that either. All right.
 15 Never mind.

16 And there aren't many things in life that
 17 have happened, especially in my life, except for
 18 marriage and the birth of my children and the loss
 19 of a loved one that have been quite as moving as
 20 this and I really won't and can't put them into
 21 words. It's really bigger than me. And your
 22 presence here demonstrates that there is a
 23 willingness on your part to be witness to this very

1 special moment and to appreciate the magnitude of
 2 it with me. And in my son's words, the total
 3 awesomeness of it. So before I start using more
 4 language that my seven-year old uses often, I will
 5 go back to simply saying that I am humbled and
 6 honored and blessed.

7 The second must-have or must-say that I
 8 think makes up a good investiture speech would not
 9 be complete without a heaping amount of thank yous.
 10 And it will feel a little bit like the Academy
 11 Awards, but unless the music starts to drown me out
 12 and somebody shuts off my microphone, or someone up
 13 here with really stealth, military moves decides to
 14 just easily kick me under the table, I hope that
 15 you will indulge me as I express my thanks to some
 16 people that have made this happen.

17 To my husband Steve, Steve, Steve, Steve,
 18 who has been my rock throughout the years of our
 19 life together offering nothing but support and
 20 love, without you I would not have been able to do
 21 this. I love you, plain and simple.

22 To my kids, Victoria, Lexi and Rocco, my
 23 17-year old Victoria managed to get out of town,

1 literally out of the country, only because of a
 2 mandatory school trip. And I'm sure that she's on
 3 the plane right now breathing a sigh of relief. In
 4 fact, I spoke to her this morning and I've never
 5 heard her quite as happy as she was this morning.
 6 But my other two, Lexi and Rocco, did not manage to
 7 escape.

8 To Rocco, you did a great job yesterday when
 9 you had to speak in front of your entire first
 10 grade class in your school, and I hope that I do as
 11 good a job today as you did yesterday. And I'm
 12 pretty sure that I'm more nervous than you were, so
 13 I'm trying to be as cool as you are.

14 And to Lexi, I promise you that you will get
 15 to your talent show this afternoon and that your
 16 song will be as beautiful as you are.

17 Lexi insisted that she must leave the
 18 building by 1:10. And if I stand a chance of her
 19 ever speaking to me ever again, that's going to
 20 have to happen. So if you see her walk out, please
 21 don't take it personally. I certainly don't. And
 22 I would ask the bailiffs to please go ahead and let
 23 her go, and try not to stop her.

1 I thank them both for faking interest, for
2 sitting up straight and for being the great kids
3 that they are. I am very, very proud of you.

4 To my little sister Sandra, who is here, and
5 my little brother Otto, who could not be here, I
6 said it for your entire lives -- and I am so glad
7 to be up here because it is finally official -- so
8 unless the Supreme Court says otherwise, I told you
9 I am always right, always. It's okay, it's okay to
10 say it out loud. It's all right.

11 To my extended family and specifically my
12 sister-and brothers-in-law, Mike, Nick, Joe and
13 Christina, and their kids who are here as well, I
14 think we can extend that rule also. It will make
15 our family dinners so much easier. Thank you all
16 for being here.

17 Now, that rule does not apply to my
18 mother-in-law or my father-in-law. What we know is
19 that your son married a very smart woman and I know
20 my limitations. So with Felix and Marie Rapposelli
21 I will still defer to you, and I thank you for
22 giving me such a great son.

23 You know, when the Governor shared the good

1 news with me, it was on the anniversary of my
2 maternal grandmother's death. And coincidentally my
3 father's mother had just passed away around the
4 time that I submitted my application. And I had
5 been thinking about both of them during the same
6 time.

7 In any event, my mother was mourning the
8 loss of her mother when I found out from the
9 Governor he had made his decision, and on that day
10 I told my mother that Abuela had somehow decided to
11 tell the Governor to give me the good news on that
12 particular day. So thank you, Governor, for
13 forever offsetting that very sad day with a happy
14 occasion and changing my mother's tears of sadness
15 to happiness.

16 If you cry, Mommy, today, it's okay. It's
17 allowed. I saw three other male judges do it while
18 up here and I heard from others who are wearing the
19 robes that they cried like babies as well. So I
20 think you can cry here today. It's okay.

21 To my parents, Otto and Myriam Medinilla,
22 who achieved their American dream and always
23 supported me as I realize my own, I want to thank

1 you. This journey has not been an easy one, and I
2 know -- and it gives me great pleasure to see you
3 both here. And I say that, that you are here, and
4 I'm thankful, because I think of what my friend Jan
5 Jurden, Judge Jurden, who reflected on the loss of
6 her mother since her investiture, or the last three
7 investitures of my colleagues who lamented that
8 they were not able to share their day with a parent
9 or a loved one and said only that they wished that
10 they could have been here. And I am blessed that
11 my remarks today in this particular recipe do not
12 call for that wish, and that they -- I am fortunate
13 enough to have my parents here with me.

14 So it wouldn't be right if I didn't give
15 thanks also, then, to God for allowing my parents
16 to be here with me today. Thank you.

17 To the Governor, lightning has struck twice
18 thanks to you. And I cannot think of any one man
19 that has influenced my professional life more than
20 you. Thank you. Thank you for your faith in me as
21 one of your cabinet secretaries. I am honored to
22 have served in your administration. The experience
23 was truly a dream come true. And because of you I

1 have never looked back on the life in the private
2 sector, and because of you I knew I belonged in
3 Public Service.

4 And just when I thought it couldn't get any
5 better, you chose me for this role. And I will
6 forever be grateful to you for seeing what you saw
7 in me.

8 I also thank you, Carla, for your friendship
9 and your casual advice and to see the friendship
10 that evolved. Your advice was very comforting to
11 what was sometimes a very difficult journey in the
12 Kids' Department. And I want to thank you both
13 personally and professionally for the support that
14 you gave me.

15 To everyone at the Kids' Department who are
16 here and to my friends in the cabinet, I want to
17 thank you for making that experience just truly
18 amazing, rewarding and something that I will always
19 look back on with fond memories.

20 I do thank the members of the J and C for
21 their collective work and their support for sending
22 my name up to the Governor.

23 And I also thank the Senate and those who

1 are here from the general assembly, in general, the
 2 Senate for their role in confirming my nomination.
 3 I will miss Legislative Hall. I will miss the work
 4 that we did for children and families. And I will
 5 miss working with all of you.

6 To Lieutenant Governor Denn, it was a really
 7 nice speech actually. I thought I was going to
 8 have to say something, but -- I will say it anyway.
 9 I am certain that I have decided that you will not
 10 be appearing any time before me soon but after
 11 today's comments I actually would like to see more
 12 of you. That was very nice.

13 And I know that we banter back and forth and
 14 always took opportunities to dig, all in gest, and
 15 honestly I will miss working with you and expect to
 16 hear more about life in general with Adam, Zach and
 17 Michelle.

18 To Judge Jurden, your friendship has been
 19 invaluable. You make it look so easy and yet I
 20 know that it is not. You are the reason I wanted
 21 to be a judge. And I promise never to take myself
 22 so seriously in this role as to forget who I am.
 23 And when I think of you and how you do it, the

1 other promise that I made to this Court, behind the
 2 scenes, of course, is that I will laugh often
 3 thanks to you. You are truly a mentor, a role
 4 model, and except for the life in the Army that I
 5 have not followed, I do and I have enjoyed
 6 following in your footsteps.

7 And I have been blessed with amazing
 8 friends. And I would be remiss if I didn't thank
 9 my friends who really are more like my sisters, and
 10 they have supported me throughout my journey. And
 11 I know that they would prefer to remain anonymous,
 12 but I have the microphone. So to Evon, Natalie
 13 Danielle, Cheryl, Kate, and Tiffany, thank you.
 14 You inspire me to be a better person and a better
 15 friend.

16 I wish to thank also those people that have
 17 been supportive, supported me, and really there are
 18 just too many. But I wish to thank Frannie Heyney
 19 here and Lydia Prigg from the Governors' Office,
 20 and the many people from the Kids' Department and
 21 the Governor's Office that help make the transition
 22 for me.

23 I know that it takes a lot of work, and it

1 doesn't go unnoticed. And to the to the bailiffs,
 2 the Capitol Police, the court staff whose names I
 3 still don't know but their faces are always very
 4 friendly, I thank you in advance for your patience.

5 I thought about the many mentors that I
 6 would talk about, the many, many great men and
 7 women who have supported me and who were part of my
 8 legal and executive experiences from the countless
 9 attorneys in the bar, the Delaware State Bar
 10 Association, DTLA, Delaware Bar Foundation, the
 11 attorneys at Prickett Jones, Young Conaway Stargatt
 12 & Taylor, Wilson Halbrook & Bayard to those that
 13 supported me through Delaware Voluntary Legal
 14 Services, the Kids' Department and the many
 15 attorneys from the Attorney General's Office and
 16 the Public Defender's Office during my time there
 17 to the Office of the Child Advocate, the Family
 18 Court, Chief Judge Coons and the leadership and the
 19 entire Family Court to those at Widener Law, Dean
 20 Ammons, thank you for your support, to the numerous
 21 Hispanic organizations and leaders. I see Maria
 22 Matos here. Thank you. And the countless boards
 23 and commissions too numerous to mention. I see

1 Fred Sears here. They're all here.

2 I have been a part of so many different
 3 worlds, and I am proud of the path that I traveled
 4 in Delaware since law school.

5 My experiences have served me well in
 6 various stages of my life, and I am comforted in
 7 knowing that my life as a lawyer was about serving
 8 and representing those that I felt needed me the
 9 most.

10 And I know that my diverse background and
 11 skill set will now continue to serve the public but
 12 this time from the bench.

13 And while I think about the 20 years that I
 14 have had as a legal career, one that I am very
 15 proud of -- and my Delaware experience is actually
 16 more like 32 years. And that's how long I have
 17 been here in Delaware. And as diverse as my
 18 background is I do consider myself a Delawarian
 19 and -- maybe not a native Delawarian, although I'd
 20 like to think I am -- but beyond the obvious
 21 pumpkin chunking, the flower market, point to
 22 point, apple scrapple, the Polar Bear Plunge, which
 23 I've done -- well, I haven't done the Polar Bear

1 Plunge but all the others I have. You know you are
 2 a true Delawarian if you make it a family event to
 3 eat burgers and lots of ice cream at the Charcoal
 4 Pit, you think the Smyrna rest stop is the nicest
 5 and cleanest in the country. On certain Novembers
 6 you make that trip to Return Day rain or shine.
 7 During the summer you avoid I-95 on Friday
 8 afternoons and you don't leave the beach until late
 9 Sunday night, Monday morning if you can. When in
 10 Rehoboth you must get a bucket of trashers with
 11 extra vinegar and salt, and the best Bloody Marys
 12 at the Star Board. In June you must go to St.
 13 Anthony's for Funnel cake.

14 You haven't lived until you stayed up until
 15 2 a.m. and had a piece -- a slice, maybe two -- of
 16 Gratto's Pizza. And regardless of the time of year
 17 you know never to speed in Fredericka or Elsmere,
 18 ever.

19 Now, as all good Delaware judges have done
 20 before me, I turn now to the last must-have
 21 must-say in my remarks in that I too make a promise
 22 and the promise is to carry out the
 23 responsibilities of this office to serve the people

1 of Delaware to the best of my ability.
 2 And in any new job you're always going to
 3 wonder if you're going to be able to do a good job.
 4 And admittedly when I first came into this position
 5 for a brief moment I was wondering if the world was
 6 sending me some strange signs. Within three days
 7 of starting here, or within moments -- maybe
 8 actually it was hours of starting here, a meteor
 9 had struck Russia, lightning had struck the
 10 Vatican twice and the Pope had resigned, and for a
 11 catholic that's some pretty big news, and surely I
 12 felt that that was the sign of something and
 13 probably not good.

14 But I'm happy to report that while I first
 15 saw some strange signs here, especially here, I
 16 mostly chalked it up to the very eclectic
 17 personalities of my colleagues. And I think I'm
 18 over that. And the only thing that is a bit
 19 strange that has stayed on is that my chambers
 20 tilts every so slightly in one direction. But like
 21 a good Delaware judge for anyone that visits me in
 22 chambers I think I'm going to use that tilt to my
 23 advantage and I'll be positioned on the higher end.

1 And I want to thank my colleagues on the
 2 Superior Court for that very sage piece of advice.
 3 The advice and congratulations have come from all
 4 of the courts, to all of the judicial officers who
 5 have extended their warm welcome, from the Court of
 6 Common Pleas to the Family Court, the Court of
 7 Chancery and the Supreme Court. I am honored to
 8 join the bench.

9 As we already know, we have an extraordinary
 10 judiciary. And on the Superior Court sitting and
 11 retired judges have set the bar very high making
 12 this Court the number one court in fairness and
 13 impartiality.

14 When my friend Joe Slight's made his remarks
 15 in year 2000, he commented on how he would do his
 16 best to fill the vacancy created by Justice
 17 Quillen. Justice Quillen was my professor, and I
 18 knew what he meant by that. And I think it gave
 19 him great comfort to know that Justice Quillen
 20 would be watching the then newly appointed judge
 21 closely.

22 And while I'm not filling the vacancy of a
 23 prior sitting judge -- and I thank the judiciary --

1 because it took 12 years to get this position and I
 2 want to thank you for that -- I hope that Judges
 3 Slight's and Ableman and any of the other judges who
 4 will assist me will also keep a mindful eye.

5 I thank Judges Ableman and Joe Slight's, who
 6 is here, my friends, for their advice and support.
 7 And my only regret is that we could not serve
 8 together.

9 As for the other 20 sitting judges, in the
 10 last month I want to thank you for sharing with me
 11 your distinct judicial perspectives. I thank you
 12 for your willingness to generously impart your
 13 wisdom, your styles, your stories. I thank you all
 14 for your kindness individually and collectively for
 15 your support.

16 While you're all different indeed, your
 17 common denominator is that you are all exceptional
 18 public servants, and I can think of no greater
 19 sense of purpose than to dedicate my life to the
 20 public and the law in this capacity, and it gives
 21 me great joy to do so with you.

22 And with that I want to thank you all very
 23 much for being here. Thank you.

1 JUDGE VAUGHN: Thank you, Vivian.

2 JUDGE RAPPOSELLI: Thank you.

3 Congratulations and best wishes.

4 JUDGE RAPPOSELLI: Thank you.

5 JUDGE VAUGHN: Would you all rise. We will
6 have the benediction.

7 REVEREND MALOOLY: Gracious God, we give
8 thanks for all the life values and presence of
9 Judge Rapposelli today our state becomes stronger,
10 our legal system enhanced. All of us are the
11 better. Bless our Vivian and all of us now and
12 forever Amen.

13 JUDGE VAUGHN: Thank you, Bishop.
14 Ladies and Gentlemen, that concludes this
15 special session. You are welcome to remain and
16 greet our new judge here on the 8th floor.

17 The Court is adjourned.

18 THE BAILIFF: Special session of the
19 Superior Court of the State of Delaware in and for
20 New Castle County is now adjourned. God save the
21 State and its honorable court.

22

23

CERTIFICATE OF COURT REPORTER

I, Kim L. Haley, RPR, CRR-NJ, Official Court
Stenographer of the Superior Court, State of
Delaware, do hereby certify that the foregoing is
an accurate transcript of the proceedings had, as
reported by me, in the Superior Court of the State
of Delaware, in and for New Castle County, in the
case herein stated, as the same remains of record
in the Office of the Prothonotary at Wilmington,
Delaware, and that I am neither counsel nor kin to
any party or participant in said action nor
interested in the outcome thereof.

This certification shall be considered null and
void if this transcript is disassembled in any
manner by any party without authorization of the
signatory below.

WITNESS my hand this 5th day of March,
2014.

/s/ Kim L. Haley, RPR, CRR-NJ
Official Court Reporter
232-RPR