

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

- - - - - : Friday, April 27, 2018
: 3:00 p.m.

IN THE MATTER OF: :

CEREMONY OF INVESTITURE : Superior Court
: Courtroom 8B
of : New Castle County
: Courthouse

SHELDON K. RENNIE :

AS AN ASSOCIATE JUDGE OF :
THE SUPERIOR COURT :

- - - - - :

PRESIDING: HON. JAN R. JURDEN, PRESIDENT JUDGE
SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE

SITTING: HON. RICHARD R. COOCH, RESIDENT JUDGE
SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE

HON. ALEX J. SMALLS, CHIEF JUDGE
COURT OF COMMON PLEAS FOR THE
STATE OF DELAWARE

PRESENT: HON. JOHN C. CARNEY, GOVERNOR
STATE OF DELAWARE

PASTOR RICK HENSLEY

EMILIE NINAN, ESQUIRE

Members of the Delaware General
Assembly, Judges of the State and
Federal Courts, Commissioners and
Others.

KAREN L. SIEDLECKI, RMR
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500 N. King Street, Suite 2609
Wilmington, Delaware 19801

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April 27, 2018
Courtroom 8B
3:00

PRESENT:

As noted.

- - -

PRESIDENT JUDGE JURDEN: Good afternoon.

AUDIENCE: Good afternoon.

PRESIDENT JUDGE JURDEN: And we welcome you to this Special Session for the Investiture of the Honorable Sheldon K. Rennie as a judge of the Superior Court.

Joining me on the bench today is my colleague, Resident Judge Richard Cooch, and the Chief Judge of the Court of Common Pleas, Alex J. Smalls. And seated in the jury box are our colleagues of the Superior Court.

I'd like to invite Pastor Rick Hensley to come forward for the invocation.

Welcome, Pastor.

Ladies and gentlemen, will you please stand for the invocation.

PASTOR HENSLEY: Would you join me in prayer?

1 (Invocation by Pastor Rick Hensley.)

2 PRESIDENT JUDGE JURDEN: Thank you very
3 much.

4 We're honored to have with us today Governor
5 Carney and many other distinguished guests and
6 members of the bench and bar, including Superior
7 Court alumnae Justice Ridgely, Vice Chancellor
8 Slight and Josh Martin.

9 There are so many guests today, I would love
10 to be able to recognize them all. And I don't want
11 to take the time away from Judge Rennie. So I'm not
12 going to do that. But I do want to thank all you
13 very much for being here for this special occasion
14 and extend a very hearty welcome to you.

15 And I also want to extend a warm welcome on
16 behalf of the Superior Court to Judge Rennie's
17 family who are able to be with us here today. I'd
18 like to introduce them. Judge Rennie's wife,

19 [REDACTED]. Their children: [REDACTED]

20 [REDACTED]. Judge Rennie's parents, [REDACTED].

21 [REDACTED]. And unfortunately
22 her father was not able to attend today.

23 Judge Rennie's brother and sister-in-law,

1 [REDACTED]
2 [REDACTED]
3 [REDACTED]
4 [REDACTED].

5 And I now ask [REDACTED] to
6 come forward and lead us all in the Pledge of
7 Allegiance, please.

8 (Pledge of Allegiance led by [REDACTED]
9 [REDACTED].)

10 PRESIDENT JUDGE JURDEN: Judge Rennie, I
11 know I can say for all my colleagues and myself that
12 we are very happy and truly grateful to have you
13 join our ranks.

14 Others here are going to attest to your many
15 fine qualities, accomplishments and qualifications.
16 But let me just say, we could not ask for a better
17 colleague.

18 You are no stranger to this Court. You
19 clerked here many, many years ago. And a wise
20 individual, who's here, Mark Vavala, pointed to you
21 and said, "I think you should be a judge." And he
22 had a good feeling and it's borne out.

23 You have a wealth of experience. You're

1 smart, diligent, hard working and professional.
2 You're humble, you're earnest, you're honest and
3 fair, and you're compassionate. You possess an
4 excellent judicial temperament. We're grateful for
5 your willingness to serve the public in this
6 capacity, truly.

7 Resident Judge Cooch, before Chief Judge
8 Smalls administers the oath, would you like to say a
9 few words?

10 RESIDENT JUDGE COOCH: Well, I would, thank
11 you.

12 I'm just so pleased to join President Judge
13 Jurden extending the warmest of welcomes to Judge
14 Rennie. I speak not only for New Castle County
15 judges and commissioners, but for the greater New
16 Castle County Superior Court family, of which you
17 are now a part.

18 We're all here, not only to welcome you, but
19 to support you, advise you, help in every way
20 possible, and in probably a very short time we'll be
21 asking you for advice and your thoughts on matters.

22 So, Judge Rennie, welcome aboard.

23 PRESIDENT JUDGE JURDEN: Chief Judge Smalls

1 will administer the oath. And Judge Rennie's wife
2 will hold the bible.

3 And Judge Rennie, just for your edification,
4 the Superior Court is 187 years old, and you will be
5 the 101st judge.

6 CHIEF JUDGE SMALLS: Are you prepared to
7 take the oath of office?

8 JUDGE RENNIE: I am.

9 CHIEF JUDGE SMALLS: If you will repeat
10 after me. "I, Sheldon Rennie."

11 JUDGE RENNIE: I, Sheldon Rennie.

12 CHIEF JUDGE SMALLS: "Do proudly swear."

13 JUDGE RENNIE: Do proudly swear.

14 CHIEF JUDGE SMALLS: "To carry out the
15 responsibilities."

16 JUDGE RENNIE: To carry out the
17 responsibilities.

18 CHIEF JUDGE SMALLS: "Of the office of."

19 JUDGE RENNIE: Of the office of.

20 CHIEF JUDGE SMALLS: "Judge of."

21 JUDGE RENNIE: Judge of. Superior Court?

22 CHIEF JUDGE SMALLS: "Superior Court."

23 (Laughter.)

1 CHIEF JUDGE SMALLS: "To the best of my
2 ability."

3 JUDGE RENNIE: To the best of my ability.

4 CHIEF JUDGE SMALLS: "Freely acknowledging."

5 JUDGE RENNIE: Freely acknowledging.

6 CHIEF JUDGE SMALLS: "That the powers of
7 this office."

8 JUDGE RENNIE: That the powers of this
9 office.

10 CHIEF JUDGE SMALLS: "Flow from the people
11 I'm privileged to represent."

12 JUDGE RENNIE: Flow from the people that I'm
13 privileged to represent.

14 CHIEF JUDGE SMALLS: "I further swear."

15 JUDGE RENNIE: I further swear.

16 CHIEF JUDGE SMALLS: "Always to place."

17 JUDGE RENNIE: Always to place.

18 CHIEF JUDGE SMALLS: "The public interest."

19 JUDGE RENNIE: The public interest.

20 CHIEF JUDGE SMALLS: "Above any special or
21 personal interest."

22 JUDGE RENNIE: Above any special or personal
23 interest.

1 CHIEF JUDGE SMALLS: "And to respect."

2 JUDGE RENNIE: And to respect.

3 CHIEF JUDGE SMALLS: "The right of future
4 generations."

5 JUDGE RENNIE: The right of future
6 generations.

7 CHIEF JUDGE SMALLS: "To share the rich
8 historic."

9 JUDGE RENNIE: To share the rich historic.

10 CHIEF JUDGE SMALLS: "And natural heritage."

11 JUDGE RENNIE: And natural heritage.

12 CHIEF JUDGE SMALLS: "Of Delaware."

13 JUDGE RENNIE: Of Delaware.

14 CHIEF JUDGE SMALLS: "In doing so."

15 JUDGE RENNIE: In doing so.

16 CHIEF JUDGE SMALLS: "I will always uphold
17 and defend."

18 JUDGE RENNIE: I will always uphold and
19 defend.

20 CHIEF JUDGE SMALLS: "The constitutions."

21 JUDGE RENNIE: The constitutions.

22 CHIEF JUDGE SMALLS: "Of my country."

23 JUDGE RENNIE: Of my country.

1 CHIEF JUDGE SMALLS: "And my state."

2 JUDGE RENNIE: And my state.

3 CHIEF JUDGE SMALLS: "So help me God."

4 JUDGE RENNIE: So help me God.

5 (Applause.)

6 PRESIDENT JUDGE JURDEN: Judge Rennie is
7 now, with the assistance of his parents, going to
8 put on his robe. And the robe is a sign of
9 impartiality.

10 Come on forward, Mr. and Mrs. Rennie.

11 (Robing assisted by [REDACTED]

12 [REDACTED].)

13 PRESIDENT JUDGE JURDEN: Welcome to the
14 Superior Court, Judge Rennie.

15 (Applause.)

16 PRESIDENT JUDGE JURDEN: Come on up.

17 At this time, the Court is very pleased to
18 recognize the Honorable John C. Carney, Governor of
19 the State of Delaware.

20 Welcome, Governor.

21 GOVERNOR CARNEY: President Judge Jurden,
22 Resident Judge Cooch, Chief Judge Smalls, other
23 members of the judiciary, [REDACTED] and your wonderful

1 children, [REDACTED], the Rennie family, I am
2 so happy to be here to mark this special occasion
3 with all of you.

4 I was a little worried when Judge Smalls was
5 delivering the Oath of Office, as he got to the
6 office itself, I thought he might put in "Judge of
7 the Court of Common Pleas."

8 PRESIDENT JUDGE JURDEN: I was worried, too.

9 GOVERNOR CARNEY: I think Judge Rennie had
10 that same hesitation. And he quickly filled the
11 void so there was no confusion about where we are or
12 where you were headed.

13 Nominating judges is actually one of the
14 hardest things I have to do as governor. The math
15 isn't very good for one who seeks political office.
16 You make one person happy and at least two or more
17 are disappointed.

18 I'm not a lawyer and so I try to get advice
19 from as many lawyers and others as I can. As you
20 all no doubt know, lawyers can be opinionated from
21 time to time. And I normally have to sort through
22 those opinions carefully as I sort out my own view.

23 But in this particular case, it was very easy.

1 Because every person I talked to about Sheldon
2 Rennie said the exact same thing, "He's even
3 tempered, he's fair, and he's honest." And getting
4 to know Judge Rennie as I have through this process,
5 I've come to the same conclusion. And that's just
6 what I look for in a judicial nominee.

7 In the Court of Common Pleas, a lot of people
8 come in representing themselves. People come
9 without any knowledge of the law, or in some cases
10 courtroom decorum. From what I understand -- I've
11 not been there myself -- it can get a little
12 exciting at times.

13 And as someone who has showed up at J.P. Court
14 to somewhat indignantly fight a red light ticket, I
15 have a lot of sympathy for the judges who have to
16 deal with traffic court in CCP.

17 Judge Rennie is known for his patience, his
18 compassion, his obvious respect for all the parties
19 involved. Despite an overwhelming caseload, he has
20 a reputation for moving cases efficiently but with
21 care. He ensures due process with civility and an
22 air of calmness that makes people leave his
23 courtroom feeling like they've been heard, which I

1 think is all we can ask in our judges at least.

2 And his orientation towards others extends
3 beyond the courtroom. The list of organizations
4 that he volunteers for is impressive.

5 You may know that Judge Rennie had the
6 opportunity, and good sense I would say, to clerk
7 for my father-in-law, the late Justice Bill Quillen.
8 Most of what I know about what a good judge should
9 be I learned from Bill.

10 Bill, for those of you who know, thought it
11 was a special obligation to mentor the young clerks
12 who work for him at what it means to be a good
13 lawyer. That could have been all I needed as an
14 endorsement of Judge Rennie's application.

15 And one of the things that Bill used to say,
16 and I heard him say it many times, when a judge is
17 deciding a case, that he'd like to figure out the
18 fair and right thing to do first and let the facts
19 and the law take him there.

20 And it's clear from Judge Rennie's decision
21 and his demeanor on and off the bench that that
22 fairness is what he strives for as well. I'd like
23 to think that he learned that lesson from Bill.

1 As part of the application process for judges,
2 we ask applicants to name their favorite Delaware
3 Supreme Court case. Judge Rennie's favorite was the
4 Court's affirmation of the Chancery Court decision
5 to integrate Delaware Public Schools in the early
6 1950s. Here's what he said about it.

7 "While the legal analysis was obviously
8 well-reasoned, I am most impressed by the courage
9 and character of both courts to go against the
10 status quo during that time period and make the
11 morally correct decision." That's the kind of
12 person I want on the bench.

13 And so to Sheldon's family, to his mom and
14 dad, thank you for [REDACTED]
15 [REDACTED]. I am
16 confident that he is going to do a tremendous job as
17 a Superior Court judge here in the State of
18 Delaware.

19 Thank you very much.

20 Judge Rennie, good luck.

21 (Applause.)

22 PRESIDENT JUDGE JURDEN: I'm now pleased to
23 recognize Chief Judge Smalls, who has served as

1 Chief Judge of the Court of Common Pleas since 1997,
2 and has served as a mentor to Judge Rennie and so
3 many other people in the bar and on the bench.

4 Chief Judge Smalls.

5 CHIEF JUDGE SMALLS: President Judge Jurden,
6 Resident Judge Cooch, other members of the
7 judiciary, the governor and attendees here today.
8 It is a good day for Judge Rennie.

9 I recall when Judge Rennie first came to the
10 Court, a colleague of mine, Eric Davis, said, "What
11 do you think of Judge Rennie?"

12 I said, "I don't know that guy."

13 He said, "He's a good person."

14 I said, "Why are we having this discussion?"

15 "Because there's some thought that he might
16 apply for the position."

17 Well, now that he's had the job for a couple
18 of years, he's moving on. So one might think he's
19 having difficulty holding onto a job.

20 (Laughter.)

21 CHIEF JUDGE SMALLS: But over the last
22 series of years, he has become a friend, a colleague
23 and an inspiration to the Court.

1 He brought to the Court a dedication for hard
2 work and efforts to improve the process of serving
3 those who are, in fact, finding themselves before
4 the Court. He has earned the thanks and the
5 gratitude of all of us on the Court, the judges and
6 the staff. And we say thank you for the hard work.

7 Having known and served with you over the last
8 several years, I am confident that you will do well
9 on that other court that you're now joining. The
10 Superior Court, that you will now hear our appeals.
11 That you're joining a fine court with fine judges
12 and you will be a fine jurist.

13 And the people, Governor, you have given them
14 a fair and a balanced judge. He is a person that
15 has an enduring commitment to family and to his
16 career.

17 When you speak to Judge Rennie, he often talks
18 about his children and his wife. And in his tone of
19 his voice, you know the commitment that he has for
20 [REDACTED]. So there's no
21 question, family is very important to him as well as
22 his career.

23 The Judicial Code of Conduct indicates that "A

1 judge should act at all times in a manner which
2 promotes public confidence and integrity and
3 impartiality in the judiciary."

4 Judge Rennie's decisions reflect those
5 characters. He works hard. He's very intelligent.
6 He has good character. He has the ability to work
7 well with others. He brings to the Court what's
8 embodied in that principle.

9 That is, he is a true intellectual. His
10 opinion reflects an appreciation for dealing with
11 complex issues and rational decision making. He is
12 a person that has self-confidence without being
13 contrite. He is decisive without being arrogant.
14 He has passion without pretensions.

15 And most importantly, he's fair, and he gives
16 the perception of fairness. Because we all know
17 that in a court with high volume, the perception of
18 fairness is critical to one's belief as one leaves
19 the Court.

20 He is a sensitive and a good listener. He has
21 the ability to be sensitive to the needs and the
22 concerns of the litigants, listen to their issues,
23 able to resolve the problems that come to the Court

1 and with a decision that everyone feels when they
2 leave that they have been heard.

3 That is, he is a good communicator. He has
4 the ability to communicate on all levels. And in a
5 pro se court you have to have that ability. The
6 Court does not have the luxury of choosing its
7 litigants. So he brings all of those as he
8 transitions from a court where most of the litigants
9 are self-represented to a court that handles very
10 complex issues.

11 And I think he brings that as a individual
12 that understands the needs of society, and he
13 recognizes the responsibilities of his appointment.
14 In recognizing that, I am certain that he will treat
15 everyone fairly, make correct choices without favor
16 or fear, to seek justice and do justice.

17 And he will reflect this comment that was made
18 by Judge Irving Kaufman of the U.S. Court of Appeals
19 for the Second Circuit when he talked about the
20 subject of the courts and the public.

21 Judge Kaufman said, "A glance in the mirror of
22 a public opinion cannot be faulted as a mere
23 indulgence of professional vanity, for the judiciary

1 as an institution cannot function without the
2 support of the people." And the public support
3 turns upon, and I emphasize turns upon, "the
4 people's confidence and the belief that the Court's
5 decision is grounded in fairness and
6 reasonableness."

7 That is what Judge Rennie brings to the Court.
8 And congratulations.

9 (Applause.)

10 PRESIDENT JUDGE JURDEN: Well said, Chief
11 Smalls. And when are you going to forgive us?

12 CHIEF JUDGE SMALLS: Sometime.

13 PRESIDENT JUDGE JURDEN: The Court
14 recognizes Emilie Ninan, Esquire, a partner in the
15 firm of Ballard Spahr and -- it's Ballard Spahr,
16 excuse me. I'm all excited.

17 A friend of Judge Rennie. Thank you for being
18 here.

19 MS. NINAN: Thank you.

20 Good afternoon, Governor Carney, President
21 Judge Jurden, Resident Judge Cooch, Chief Judge
22 Smalls, other members of the bench, members of the
23 bar, family, friends and colleagues.

1 I'm honored to have a few minutes to share
2 some thoughts with you on this momentous occasion.
3 I've known Sheldon for over 20 years. I think I was
4 taking the bar the year he actually came to Delaware
5 as a 1L Redding fellow. So we didn't get to know
6 each other that much that summer. But just a couple
7 years later, it was his turn to take the bar. And
8 we met through the Supplemental Bar Review Course
9 and the Multicultural Judges and Lawyers section of
10 the Delaware State Bar Association.

11 And since then, our paths have crossed often.
12 We were both associates at different Delaware firms
13 at basically the same time. We were later partners
14 at two different national firms, but working in the
15 same office building. And today we serve on the
16 Delaware Leadership Foundation Steering Committee,
17 which hosts an annual Delaware Prayer Breakfast.

18 In all that time that I've known Sheldon, he
19 has always been the calm, steady force in the
20 room. Even when he is rightly fired up about a
21 wrong or an injustice, he is somehow able to express
22 himself effectively while still maintaining a
23 polite, reasoned and respectful manner.

1 As Greg Williams noted when he spoke at
2 Sheldon's first investiture, Sheldon is a person of
3 integrity, a temperance well-suited for the bench.
4 Over the last years, five years on the bench,
5 Sheldon has certainly demonstrated the truth of
6 those words.

7 There's no doubt that Sheldon is thoughtful
8 and deliberate and passionate about the
9 administration of justice. But when I think of
10 Sheldon, there are two words that first come to my
11 mind. And that's faith and family.

12 Sheldon has a beautiful, loving family, and he
13 and his wife are raising amazing children. And
14 you're going to see what I mean when you hear his
15 daughter speak next.

16 But in terms of faith, Sheldon has made that a
17 priority. I have always admired him for being bold
18 and unashamed of his faith in Jesus Christ as his
19 personal savior.

20 His faith is a source of his joy and strength,
21 but also those very attributes, fairness, humility,
22 all the things that the governor talked about and
23 Judge Smalls mentioned that make him a wonderful

1 addition to the Superior Court and the things that
2 we are celebrating today.

3 Sheldon is a faithful steward of the talents
4 he's been given. And he has done the difficult task
5 of being patient, subjecting his own will to God's
6 perfect timing. He has put in the hard work and
7 persevered, not to bring glory to himself, but glory
8 to our God. What a lesson, an example for all of
9 us.

10 To the young people in this room who may find
11 perceived requirements of success in the legal
12 profession daunting -- maybe you don't have any
13 lawyers in your family -- it's okay. Be emboldened
14 by what you are witnessing here today.

15 I, for one, never thought that I would have
16 the opportunity to address an audience like this in
17 a room like this for an occasion such as this. But
18 don't be limited by others' preconceived notions of
19 what you can and cannot achieve. Define success for
20 yourself.

21 Most skills can be learned. Networking,
22 public speaking, business development, writing,
23 leadership. Like Sheldon, be intentional. But be

1 open to unplanned opportunities that come your way.
2 Above all, take courage in knowing that God is able
3 to do immeasurably more, more than we can even ask
4 or imagine for ourselves.

5 Sheldon, let me end where I probably should
6 have began. On behalf of the Multicultural Judges
7 and Lawyers in Delaware, on behalf of the Delaware
8 Leadership Foundation, and on behalf of all your
9 brothers and sisters in Christ, congratulations on
10 achieving this milestone today.

11 As you take this step, hold on to God's
12 promise in Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the plans I
13 have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm
14 you, plans to give you hope and a future."

15 We are all excited to see what's coming next
16 for you, my friend. But may God continue to bless
17 you and your family.

18 JUDGE RENNIE: Thank you.

19 (Applause.)

20 PRESIDENT JUDGE JURDEN: Thank you so much,
21 Ms. Ninan.

22 And now I'm honored to introduce again [REDACTED]
23 [REDACTED], who is quite a gifted orator, and who is

1 actually -- she's qualified for regionals, which are
2 coming up shortly. And she's going to talk to us
3 about her dad. So this could be very enlightening.

4 Come on up. Welcome.

5 XXXXXXXXXXXX: Good afternoon.

6 AUDIENCE: Good afternoon.

7 XXXXXXXXXXXX: It's so exciting to be able to
8 speak at my father's investiture. As many of you
9 may remember, my older sister spoke at his first
10 investiture five years ago. So now it's my turn.

11 My name is [REDACTED] and I am the second
12 born in the family, as well as my father's favorite
13 child. In my opinion, anyway.

14 I've always been the daddy's girl in the
15 family until my sweet baby sister came and upstaged
16 me. But I'm very excited that my father's made it
17 to this point.

18 At his first investiture, my sister [REDACTED]
19 spoke about our father's confident yet humble
20 approach to life. But today I want to focus on one
21 of my many favorite character traits that makes my
22 father such a great leader.

23 He has the heart of a servant. At first, this

1 might seem like quite a paradox. But great servants
2 make great leaders. What in your mind constitutes a
3 servant? Is it someone working for someone else,
4 someone who literally ruins his own life trying to
5 please everyone around him? A servant is someone
6 who willingly sets aside his own immediate desires
7 to bless and serve those around him.

8 This is exactly what my father has exemplified
9 as long as I can remember, in serving in the
10 workplace, at home, our community, at church, family
11 and friends.

12 At work, Daddy always looks for ways to serve
13 his co-workers. When a fellow judge is unable to
14 make it to work, Daddy sacrifices his own personal
15 comfort and takes on their tasks as well as his own.

16 Even on the bench, Daddy is kind and
17 understanding to those who come before him. While
18 he does administer justice, he does so as a parent
19 disciplining a child. Not with vengeance, but out
20 of a simple desire to see that person do better. At
21 work, Daddy lives up to Galatians 5:13, which says,
22 "By love, serve one another."

23 Not only at work does my father display a

1 servant's heart, but also at church. Even though he
2 cannot carry a tune to save his life, Daddy
3 occasionally leads worship on Sundays. Sometimes
4 when Pastor is away, Daddy teaches in his place. He
5 consistently demonstrates to my siblings and me how
6 to be servants to everyone around us.

7 He also serves his community. I've often seen
8 my father adjust his schedule on the fly of the
9 moment to talk with any person interested in law.
10 He also takes time to train my peers in the art of
11 debate. Daddy is a willing teacher, ready at any
12 time to mentor and train, whether it be on the phone
13 or meeting with people in person.

14 Second Timothy 2:24 says, "And the servant of
15 the Lord must not strive, but be gentle onto all
16 men, apt to teach, patient."

17 In addition to serving and mentoring those
18 around him, Daddy is a servant to his neighbors.
19 Ever since my siblings and I were young, he would
20 take us to visit a lady living near us whose
21 wonderful husband served many years on the police
22 force before he passed away.

23 We would bake bread and deliver it to her so

1 often that she soon became affectionately known as
2 "The Molasses Bread Lady." Sometimes when we were
3 on a bike ride, Daddy would suggest that we visit
4 her as she may be lonely.

5 Daddy also displays his servant's heart at the
6 most random times. I recall one time going to an
7 event when he was all dressed up, then he reversed
8 the car to offer help to an elderly woman he saw
9 shoveling snow in her driveway.

10 He's often used our home as a place of respite
11 to mothers and children and others in need. He
12 counsels men, women, children and married couples in
13 all areas of life. Not as an expert, but as a
14 servant.

15 In these and so many other instances of
16 service, my father has been an example to me and my
17 siblings, teaching us to set aside our own pleasures
18 and to look to the needs and wants of others.

19 William Wilberforce, the great servant leader,
20 who was instrumental in abolishing slavery in most
21 of the British Empire, stated it well, "Let everyone
22 regulate his conduct...by the golden rule of doing
23 to others as in similar circumstances we would have

1 them to do unto us, and the path of duty will be
2 clear before him."

3 My father has a servant's heart towards our
4 family as well. Even after he returns home from a
5 long day of work, he still takes time to help out
6 with crazy children and messy kitchens. He often
7 tells my younger brother, "Let's serve the ladies by
8 cleaning the kitchen since they've made us dinner."

9 No matter how exhausted he is, Daddy still
10 sets aside his own comfort to spend time with each
11 of us, asking us how our day went. Sometimes he
12 even asks us early in the morning, before we even
13 got out of bed and we haven't even begun our day
14 yet.

15 He enjoys telling us about anything
16 interesting that happened at work. He often
17 forfeits after-work events to return home and be
18 with us all.

19 He serves my mom when my baby sister wakes up
20 early in the morning and tends to her so that Mommy
21 can get some, few more moments of rest.

22 And we do sympathize with the people who come
23 before Daddy. We have our own days of judgment at

1 home. Whether it's a sibling dispute or when we do
2 something wrong, we must stand before him and endure
3 that deep judicial look in his eyes when he peers
4 into our very soul and says with his ever present
5 Crucian accent, "Does that make sense? You must use
6 your head."

7 (Laughter.)

8 Daddy's always there to help whenever any of
9 us are panicking over a difficult math problem, even
10 if he doesn't know exactly how to finish it himself.

11 When we were little, we used to go around
12 bragging about how our Daddy can fix anything.
13 Practically every evening, he returns home to fix
14 something new that we've broken, a skill that he
15 started passing on to my younger brother.

16 And last, but certainly not least, Daddy is a
17 servant to Christ. He holds himself accountable to
18 God, and tries to make sure that in everything he
19 does he's honoring God and setting an example for us
20 and to those around him.

21 Now, he's not perfect by any means. In fact,
22 he tries to let us know when he messes up, and often
23 apologizes for his weaknesses. And he has many,

1 that my mom says he has graciously distributed to
2 each of his children.

3 (Laughter.)

4 But even with all his faults, Daddy still
5 doesn't let them stop him in his life's journey.
6 Christ said in John 12:26, "If any man served me,
7 let him follow me. And where I am, there shall his
8 servant be. If any man served me, him will my
9 Father honor."

10 Daddy understands that his servant's heart
11 towards God has brought him this far and it will
12 continue to lead him the rest of his life.

13 He has lived a life of service, as far as I
14 can remember. And I'm sure he is more than ready to
15 continue to be a remarkable servant to the great
16 State of Delaware.

17 Daddy, I'd like to end by giving you a quote
18 from one of your favorite historical figures,
19 William Wallace, the servant leader who began the
20 struggle to liberate Scotland from England.

21 If you remember, he said this to Robert the
22 Bruce to persuade him to leadership, "Now tell me,
23 what does that mean to be noble? Your title gives

1 you claim to the throne of our country, but men
2 don't follow titles, they follow courage. Now, our
3 people know you. Noble and common, they respect
4 you. And if you would just lead them they'd follow
5 you. And so would I."

6 Thank you.

7 (Applause.)

8 PRESIDENT JUDGE JURDEN: ██████████, that was
9 fantastic. And if you don't win regionals, I'll be
10 the most surprised person in the room.

11 I also learned that we need to get back the
12 invite to the Superior Court Chorus that we mailed
13 to Judge Rennie.

14 And I was also thinking, so we heard from
15 ██████████ at your Common Pleas and we now heard from
16 ██████████ at your Superior, and you have ██████████
17 ██████████. So I can even do that math.

18 All right. Now, it's my pleasure to introduce
19 our newest colleague, Judge Rennie.

20 JUDGE RENNIE: Good afternoon.

21 AUDIENCE: Good afternoon.

22 JUDGE RENNIE: President Judge Jurden, Judge
23 Cooch, Chief Judge Smalls, Governor Carney, fellow

1 jurists, members of the bar, friends and family,
2 thank you for joining me at this momentous occasion.
3 I am truly honored to be sitting here on this bench
4 alongside these distinguished jurists.

5 Anyone who knows me knows how important my
6 faith is to me. For most of my adult life, I have
7 adhered to the principle that true humility is
8 recognizing that God and others are responsible for
9 the accomplishments in one's life.

10 So I'd first like to give honor and thanks to
11 the Lord Jesus Christ for directing my paths. The
12 Lord has blessed me to be surrounded by friends,
13 relatives, church family, good neighbors and
14 colleagues who have supported me and cheered me on.
15 And that is something that I do not take for
16 granted.

17 I've even been blessed to have been connected
18 with an eye doctor, a dentist, an accountant,
19 financial adviser, a mechanic, all of whom are
20 individuals of high character and who have been
21 rooting me on to do well and who I can turn to to
22 seek counsel in difficult times on life issues.

23 As many of you know, I grew up in the U.S.

1 Virgin Islands. When the news broke that I received
2 a nomination of the Governor and confirmation by the
3 Senate for this position, the outpouring of support
4 and well wishes from elementary and high school
5 friends, Senators and many others were overwhelming.
6 I am pleased to share this accomplishment with them
7 because they're the ones that held me accountable
8 and provided guidance and discipline.

9 Growing up, when I did wrong, I would not only
10 be chastised by my parents, but jurisdiction was
11 conferred on all of the old ladies on the block that
12 witnessed my infraction, and they were allowed to
13 exact immediate punishment. I guess that's sort of
14 like criminal contempt today.

15 My uncle [REDACTED], a recent retiree of the United
16 States Navy who grew up in St. Croix with me is here
17 with his family, as well as my friend John who went
18 to elementary school with me.

19 And I was pleasantly surprised today to find
20 out that my childhood friend who I knew from the age
21 of three, [REDACTED], and his wife came up to surprise me.
22 I was almost -- my knees buckled, let's put it that
23 way.

1 (Applause.)

2 Now, while I recognize that the person I am
3 today has a lot to do with all of the people that
4 have imparted into me, I'm going to take this
5 opportunity to single out only a few of those
6 individuals that are instrumental in this
7 accomplishment. There are many, so I cannot mention
8 everyone. But even if I miss you by name, know that
9 the fact that you are invited and here today, you're
10 much appreciated.

11 When I consider my journey to the bench, and
12 particularly this stop, I have a lot to be grateful
13 for. And I don't take this opportunity lightly. In
14 fact, I view service from the bench as very weighty.
15 While life as a jurist can be very rewarding, there
16 are sacrifices that are attendant to serving as a
17 judge. And usually the sacrifice and burden are
18 felt by your immediate family.

19 To my wife [REDACTED], words cannot express
20 how grateful I am to have you in my corner. To have
21 your support while I serve in this capacity means
22 the world to me. I could not imagine doing this job
23 without your hundred percent buy-in. Your prayers,

1 your encouragement, and even your words of caution
2 serves to keep me focused.

3 I love and cherish you for who you are and who
4 you continue to be to me. My sacrifice, while real,
5 pales in comparison to the sacrifices that you make
6 on a daily basis for our family. I love you.

7 To my children, you make the job of parenting
8 enjoyable. I see [REDACTED] slouching, can you sit up?
9 The reward and joy your mom and I experience just to
10 see your daily growth in wisdom, character and
11 stature are immeasurable. The honor and respect you
12 all show to us are noteworthy.

13 You all shattered the myths of terrible twos,
14 prickly teens and uncontrollable teenagers. And
15 while you are all prone to error, you continue to
16 strive for excellence in your character.

17 My parents are here with me today. And they
18 have been pillars of support in my life. To the
19 extent that I am even considered to tangentially
20 possess traits that are associated with a successful
21 judge, I learned them from you. You all have raised
22 me to strive for excellence and pursue wisdom. But
23 importantly, you made certain that I saw the value

1 of treating every human being as deserving of
2 dignity and respect.

3 My dad loves old wise sayings and proverbs.
4 He regularly reminded me of the words in Proverbs
5 that "If one gives an answer before he hears it is
6 folly and shame."

7 He would often tell us that there is no need
8 to be loud and obnoxious to prove a point. And you
9 will gather more flies with honey than with vinegar.
10 The one who states his case first seems right until
11 the other comes and examines him. These are just a
12 few of the many proverbs and wise sayings that my
13 dad imparted in me. And I've incorporated those
14 lessons in my daily life and in judging. Thank you
15 for training me.

16 To my mom, you are a prayer warrior. You are
17 constantly praying for my brother and I, and knowing
18 that keeps me leveled.

19 My brother and his wife, and my niece and
20 nephew, [REDACTED], they flew in from
21 [REDACTED] to support me at this event. My brother has
22 always been my best friend and supported me
23 unflinchingly. I know at times he thought he was my

1 older brother, but he's actually my younger brother.

2 I remember when, as a teenager, he would save
3 his grass cutting earnings to send to me while I was
4 at college to help me out with spending money. I
5 want to thank you for your support.

6 My mother-in-law, sisters-in-law are here with
7 me. My father-in-law could not make it today, but
8 he's supported me over the years. I've often said
9 that you can drop the "in-law" reference when it
10 comes to you guys, because you've always treated me
11 as one of your own.

12 My wife would often say that if she ever had
13 to go to her mother with a complaint -- not that she
14 would ever have to do such a thing about me -- of
15 course I'm speaking hypothetically -- her mother
16 would likely reply, "And what did you do?"

17 I love you all and appreciate you.

18 I have a host of other family and friends that
19 came in to support me from New York, New Jersey,
20 Maryland, and D.C. I thank you for your unwavering
21 support.

22 I've been blessed to have two grandparents who
23 are still alive. My grandmother is in Trinidad; my

1 grandfather is in New York. My aunt and her fiance
2 [REDACTED] -- [REDACTED] and her fiance [REDACTED] are
3 here to support me in representation of my
4 grandfather.

5 I could not begin to name each of you or the
6 Court would be forced to pay overtime wages to the
7 staff. So suffice it to say, thank you.

8 To my Court of Common Pleas family, I
9 appreciate you. To my CCP judicial colleagues, I
10 was a junior member of the Court, but you welcomed
11 me with open arms. You made it clear that I was a
12 valuable part of the Court from the outset.

13 Chief Judge Smalls, your leadership made it
14 possible for me to not only learn the art of
15 judging, but to learn it quickly. Your mentorship
16 was invaluable.

17 The other judicial officers were gracious with
18 their time, and I appreciate how we were able to
19 seamlessly integrate as a family and pitch in for
20 one another.

21 To the CCP staff, I can say without a doubt,
22 you made my work on the bench easy. From the
23 bailiffs, to the clerks, to Kelly, the receptionist.

1 There were times early on when I was lost with
2 respect to protocol, and you guys with dignity and
3 honor pointed me in the right direction.

4 A quick anecdote. I remember shadowing a jury
5 trial calendar, and while reviewing the process my
6 eyes started to glaze over. My third day on the
7 bench, the clerk on the jury trial calendar,
8 Charmar, looked at me and said, "I think I see those
9 glazed eyes of yours. Don't worry, I got you, Judge
10 Rennie."

11 And this was a sentiment and attitude of all
12 the clerks, the bailiffs and other staff at CCP
13 during my tenure. You definitely have my heart.

14 Now to my Superior Court colleagues, thank you
15 for rolling out the red carpet for me. I had judges
16 reaching out to me even before I officially began.
17 Judge Rocanelli comes to mind.

18 Everyone has bent over backwards to make my
19 transition smooth and to assure that my decision to
20 join the Court was the right one.

21 President Judge Jurden has gone out of her way
22 to make certain that my transition was smooth, from
23 the confirmation process until now. That staff has

1 been amazing as well. They have pitched in when I
2 did not yet have a civil clerk and the judicial
3 secretaries reached out to my judicial secretary
4 with advice on how to navigate scheduling and other
5 processes in the Court.

6 Oh, this reminds me, my judicial secretary,
7 [REDACTED], started with me when I was in CCP, and I
8 think I just might keep her. She's been a trooper
9 at navigating this process with me, and works hard
10 to keep me on track. Thank you.

11 I would be remiss if I didn't thank the
12 Superior Court administrative staff that worked
13 tirelessly on the logistics to make this investiture
14 possible: Susan Judge, Kristin Deangelo, Linda
15 Carmichael, and Shiela Kumpf. As well as many
16 others behind the scenes. Thank you.

17 Emilie, I would like to thank you for your
18 friendship. I vividly recall you making time for me
19 to provide an outside perspective on the partnership
20 process when I was in the cusp of making partner and
21 you at the time had already made partner. Your sage
22 advice was beneficial in helping me to navigate that
23 process.

1 I enjoy serving alongside you in the Delaware
2 Leadership Breakfast Committee, and I've had the
3 opportunity to witness your dedication to the Prayer
4 for the Spiritual Health of Delaware and its
5 leaders.

6 My former partners from Fox Rothschild came
7 out to support me, thank you. It was an honor to
8 serve as your law partners, and I hope that I make
9 you all proud.

10 I'd like to thank my church family. You all
11 have been brothers and sisters to me in every sense
12 of the word. Thank you for your constant prayers
13 and words of encouragement and helping to keep me
14 focused on what is important in life.

15 Finally, but certainly not least, I would like
16 to thank Governor Carney for nominating me to this
17 position. I will endeavor to fulfill my role as a
18 judicial officer in a manner that will validate your
19 decision.

20 I also wish to thank the Senate and the
21 Judicial Nominating Committee for their vote of
22 confidence.

23 I look forward to the opportunity to continue

1 to serve the public in my role as a Superior Court
2 judge.

3 Thank you all for coming and God bless you.

4 (Applause.)

5 PRESIDENT JUDGE JURDEN: And with that,
6 ladies and gentlemen, we are adjourned, with a
7 reception immediately following outside. I hope all
8 of you can stay and congratulate and celebrate our
9 new judge.

10 Thank you all for attending.

11 (Applause.)

12 (Investiture ceremony adjourned at 3:53
13 p.m.)

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1
2 *CERTIFICATE OF COURT REPORTER*

3
4 *I, Karen L. Siedlecki, RMR, Official Court*
5 *Stenographer of the Superior Court, State of*
6 *Delaware, do hereby certify that the foregoing is*
7 *an accurate transcript of the proceedings had, as*
8 *reported by me, in the Superior Court of the State*
9 *of Delaware, in and for New Castle County, in the*
10 *case herein stated, as the same remains of record*
11 *in the Office of the Prothonotary at Wilmington,*
12 *Delaware, and that I am neither counsel nor kin to*
13 *any party or participant in said action, nor*
14 *interested in the outcome thereof.*

15 *WITNESS my hand this 30th Day of April 2018.*

16
17
18 */s/ Karen L. Siedlecki*

19 *Karen L. Siedlecki, RMR*
20 *Official Court Reporter*
21
22
23