

>> ALL RISE.  
HEAR YE, HEAR YE, THE SUPREME  
COURT OF FLORIDA IS NOW  
IN CEREMONIAL SESSION.  
GOD SAVE THE UNITED STATES, THE  
GREAT STATE OF FLORIDA AND THE  
SUPREME COURT.  
>> LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THE  
SUPREME COURT OF FLORIDA.  
PLEASE BE SEATED.  
>> GOOD AFTERNOON.  
WELCOME TO THE FLORIDA SUPREME  
COURT.  
WE HAVE A FULL HOUSE TODAY.  
WE GATHER HERE TODAY FOR WHAT,  
IN MY OPINION, IS ONE OF THE  
MOST IMPORTANT EVENTS IN OUR  
ANNUAL CALENDAR OF THE COURT,  
AND THAT IS TO HONOR THE WOMEN  
AND MEN OF OUR PROFESSION WHO  
VOLUNTEER THEIR LEGAL SKILLS TO  
HELP THOSE WHO OTHERWISE MIGHT  
NOT HAVE ACCESS TO JUSTICE.  
OUR MAIN AWARD, THE TOBIAS SIMON  
PRO BONO SERVICE AWARD, TAKES  
ITS NAME FROM A PIONEERING  
LAWYER WHOSE WORK HAS BECOME THE  
EXAMPLE FOR ALL FLORIDA  
ATTORNEYS.  
TOBIAS SIMON'S LEGACY INCLUDED  
PROVIDING ADVICE TO CLIENTS,  
REPRESENTING THE OPPRESSED  
MEMBERS OF OUR SOCIETY AND  
TEACHING THE SAME ETHIC TO  
SCORES OF STUDENTS.  
OUR STATE BAR'S PRO BONO EFFORTS  
TAKE INSPIRATION FROM HIS MEMORY  
AND AN EXPRESS PROVISION OF OUR  
CONSTITUTION THAT GUARANTEES  
ACCESS TO THE COURTS FOR ADDRESS  
OF ANY INJURY.  
MOREOVER, FOR MORE THAN A  
CENTURY AND A HALF THIS COURT  
HAS REPEATEDLY RECOGNIZED THAT  
THE PRACTICE OF LAW IS A  
PRIVILEGE THAT CARRIES WITH IT  
CERTAIN RESPONSIBILITIES AND  
OBLIGATIONS.  
BY TAKING THE OATH OF ADMISSION  
TO THE FLORIDA BAR, EVERY LAWYER  
SWEARS IN PART: I WILL NEVER  
REJECT FROM ANY CONSIDERATION  
PERSONAL TO MYSELF THE CAUSE OF  
THE DEFENSELESS OR OPPRESSED.  
WE CONVENE HERE TODAY IN  
CEREMONIAL SESSION TO HONOR  
THOSE IN OUR PROFESSION WHO HAVE  
SHOWN EXEMPLARY COMMITMENT IN  
PROVIDING LEGAL SERVICES TO  
PEOPLE WHO WOULD NOT OTHERWISE  
HAVE MEANINGFUL ACCESS TO OUR  
COURTS.  
THE FIRST YEAR IN WHICH PRO BONO  
HOURS WERE COMPILED IN 1993 TO  
'94 SHOWED THAT ATTORNEYS  
STATEWIDE DONATED ABOUT 800,000  
HOURS OF FREE SERVICE TO THE  
PEOPLE.

BY THE LATEST AVAILABLE REPORTING PERIOD, THE NUMBER HAS RISEN TO MORE THAN 1.7 MILLION HOURS.

WE ALSO GATHER HERE TO HONOR A JUDGE, A LAW FIRM, A VOLUNTARY BAR ORGANIZATION AND SPECIFIC ATTORNEYS FOR THEIR EXTRAORDINARY CONTRIBUTIONS. I KNOW OF NO OTHER PROFESSION THAT GIVES MORE FREELY AND UNSELFISHLY OF ITS SERVICES. FLORIDA LAWYERS HAVE DONATED MANY MILLIONS OF HOURS TO VOLUNTEERISM INCLUDING RELIGIOUS, CHARITABLE AND CIVIC WORK.

DURING THE 2012-'13 FISCAL YEAR OF THE FLORIDA BAR, FLORIDA LAWYERS CONTRIBUTED MORE THAN \$4.8 MILLION TO LEGAL AID AS WELL AS OVER 1.7 MILLION HOURS OF PRO BONO SERVICE.

THIS IS WORK DESERVING OF PUBLIC RECOGNITION WHICH IS THE REASON WE ARE HERE TODAY.

BEFORE RECOGNIZING SPECIFIC INDIVIDUALS OR GROUPS, I THINK IT ENTIRELY APPROPRIATE THAT WE ALL JOIN IN A ROUND OF APPLAUSE FOR THE MANY THOUSANDS OF MEMBERS OF THE FLORIDA BAR WHO HAVE RECOGNIZED THEIR RESPONSIBILITY AND DISCHARGED IT WITH SUCH UNSELFISHNESS.

[APPLAUSE]

THE CHIEF JUSTICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE HAD THE DIFFICULT TASK OF MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM A LONG LIST OF NOMINEES, ALL OF WHOM ARE DESERVING OF RECOGNITION.

IN THE OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE, THOSE WHO ARE BEING HONORED TODAY ARE SIMPLY THE MOST DESERVING.

THOUGH THE COMMITTEE'S TASK WAS NOT AN EASY ONE, I FULLY CONCUR IN ITS RECOMMENDATIONS.

I WOULD LIKE TO RECOGNIZE THE MEMBERS OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

THOSE WHO ARE PRESENT, PLEASE STAND NOW AND BE RECOGNIZED.

[APPLAUSE]

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE. AT THIS TIME I WOULD LIKE TO RECOGNIZE PRIOR RECIPIENTS OF THE TOBIAS SIMON PRO BONO SERVICE AWARD.

THOSE WHO ARE PRESENT, PLEASE STAND NOW AND BE RECOGNIZED.

[APPLAUSE]

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE. WE WOULD ALSO LIKE TO HONOR THE MEMBERS OF THE FLORIDA PRO BONO COORDINATORS ASSOCIATION.

THOSE OF YOU WHO ARE PRESENT,

WOULD YOU PLEASE STAND AND BE RECOGNIZED.

[APPLAUSE]

THANK YOU FOR ALL THE WORK THAT YOU DO IN YOUR AREA.

LET ME NOW TURN TO THE AWARDS. IN 2005 THE COURT ADDED A NEW AWARD TO RECOGNIZE A STATE COURT JUDGE FOR WORK TOWARD IMPROVING THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE AS IT RELATES TO PRO BONO WORK BY LAWYERS.

SPECIFICALLY, THIS AWARD HONORS THE JUDGE WHOSE WORK BEST EXEMPLIFIES THE ASPIRATIONAL GOAL DESCRIBED IN THE COMMENTARY TO CANON 4B.

THE COMMENTARY SAYS: SUPPORT OF PRO BONO LEGAL SERVICES BY MEMBERS OF THE BENCH IS AN ACTIVITY THAT RELATES TO IMPROVEMENT OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE.

THE COMMENT GOES ON TO SAY THAT: JUDGES MAY ENGAGE IN A NUMBER OF ACTIVITIES DESIGNED TO ENCOURAGE ATTORNEYS TO PERFORM PRO BONO SERVICES.

MOREOVER, THIS AWARD ALSO HONORS THE JUDGE FOR OUTSTANDING AND SUSTAINED SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC. IN KEEPING WITH THE ASPIRATION WE AS JUDGES COLLECTIVELY SHARE, IT IS MY PRIVILEGE AND HONOR TO ANNOUNCE THIS YEAR'S RECIPIENT OF FLORIDA'S DISTINGUISHED JUDICIAL SERVICE AWARD.

IT GOES TO JUDGE EMILY PEACOCK OF THE THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY.

[APPLAUSE]

SINCE HER ELECTION TO THE BENCH IN 2006, JUDGE PEACOCK HAS BEEN ASSIGNED TO THE FAMILY LAW AND JUVENILE DEPENDENCY DIVISIONS. SHE SPEAKS TO VOLUNTARY BAR GROUPS, VOLUNTEERS WITH STUDENTS.

SHE ACTIVELY IS INVOLVED WITH THE HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION AND HAS CO-CHAired SEVERAL BENCHMARK CONFERENCES FOR THE ORGANIZATION.

JUDGE PEACOCK HAS SERVED ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR THE HILLSBOROUGH ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN LAWYERS FOR SEVERAL YEARS. SHE HELPED THIS ORGANIZATION SECURE A GRANT TO FUND A PRESENTATION TEACHING ATTORNEYS HOW TO VOLUNTEER THEIR TIME TO FLORIDA KINSHIP CARE WHICH HELPS RELATIVE CAREGIVERS OF MINOR CHILDREN.

HER OTHER AFFILIATIONS INCLUDE THE BAR ASSOCIATION AND FAMILY LAW COURT.

SHE HAS SERVED AS A MEMBER OF

THE THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
PROFESSIONALISM COMMITTEE FOR  
SEVERAL YEARS.

IN THE TIME ALLOTTED, I CANNOT  
POSSIBLY DESCRIBE THE ENTIRE  
RECORD OF JUDGE PEACOCK'S PUBLIC  
SERVICE, BUT I INVITE ALL OF YOU  
TO REALIZE THE RECORD IN THE  
BOOKLET DISTRIBUTED HERE TODAY.  
YOU WILL SEE HOW THIS JUDGE IS  
AN INSPIRING EXAMPLE OF THE  
GOALS SET BY CANON 4B.

THE COURT NOW RECOGNIZES THE  
HONORABLE EMILY PEACOCK TO  
APPROACH THE BENCH, RECEIVE THE  
AWARD, SHAKE THE HANDS OF THE  
JUSTICES AND PROCEED TO THE  
PODIUM FOR REMARKS.

[APPLAUSE]

>> THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

>> GREAT.

GOOD TO GO FIRST, RIGHT?

[LAUGHTER]

WELL, THANK YOU VERY MUCH,  
HONORABLE CHIEF JUSTICE POLSTON,  
HONORABLE JUSTICES, PRESIDENT  
PETTIS, DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS OF  
THE AWARD COMMITTEE, HONOREES  
AND GUESTS WHO ARE BOTH HERE AND  
WATCHING ON THE VIDEO STREAM,  
THANK YOU FOR HONORING ME WITH  
THE CHIEF JUSTICE'S  
DISTINGUISHED JUDICIAL SERVICE  
AWARD.

I AM TRULY HONORED.

I NEED TO ACKNOWLEDGE I'M  
RECEIVING THIS ONLY AS PART OF A  
TEAM OF FAMILY, FRIENDS AND  
COLLEAGUES THAT DESERVE THANKS.  
THANK YOU TO MY FAMILY, SEVERAL  
OF WHOM HAVE TRAVELED HERE TO  
SEE ME RECEIVE THIS GREAT HONOR.  
I APPRECIATE YOUR ENCOURAGEMENT,  
COUNSEL, GUIDANCE AND MOST OF  
ALL YOUR LOVE.

THANK YOU TO THE HILLSBOROUGH  
ASSOCIATION FOR WOMEN LAWYERS  
WHO NOMINATED ME FOR THE AWARD.  
I APPRECIATE THEIR CONSTANT  
SUPPORT OF ME AND BY  
PROFESSIONAL ENDEAVORS AND THEIR  
CONSTANT SUPPORT OF MINORITIES  
AND WOMEN BOTH IN THE LAW AND IN  
THE COMMUNITY.

THANK YOU ALSO TO MY JUDICIAL  
ASSISTANT FOR EVERYTHING SHE  
DOES TO MAKE MY LIFE MUCH  
EASIER.

AND THANK YOU, ALL OF YOU WHO  
HAVE WORKED ON THE AWARDS  
COMMITTEE AND PARTICULARLY TO MY  
FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES ON THE  
COMMITTEE, GWEN YOUNG, THE  
HONORABLE CLAUDIA --

[INAUDIBLE]

GINNY TATE, BRITNEY MAXIE.

I'M ESPECIALLY PROUD OF THE PRO  
BONO WORK OF HILLSBOROUGH

COUNTY'S LAWYERS.  
TODAY TWO LAWYERS AND A LAW FIRM  
IN HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY ARE ALL  
RECEIVING AWARDS AT THE  
CEREMONY, AND I'M PROUD TO TELL  
YOU I'M THE FOURTH CONSECUTIVE  
HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY SERVICE  
YOUNG TO RECEIVE A JUDICIAL  
SERVICE AWARD.

ONE OF THE CASES WAS A PRO BONO  
LEGAL SERVICES PROJECT FOR  
FAMILIES WHO ARE RAISING  
RELATIVES' CHILDREN, KINSHIP  
CARE.

THERE ARE MORE THAN 300,000  
CHILDREN IN THE STATE OF FLORIDA  
THAT ARE IN RELATIVE CARE.  
THEY'RE BEING RAISED BY AUNTS,  
UNCLES, COUSINS, GRANDPARENTS,  
PEOPLE WHO ARE DOING WHAT IT  
TAKES.

THERE'S VERY LITTLE ASSISTANCE  
TO THESE PEOPLE AVAILABLE IN THE  
SYSTEM.

THEY NEEDED AND NEED PRO BONO  
ASSISTANCE WITH LEGAL MATTERS,  
OBTAINING FINANCIAL BENEFITS,  
EDUCATIONAL ISSUES, FUNDING,  
EVERYTHING THAT THEY NEED TO  
HELP RAISE THESE CHILDREN TO  
ADULTHOOD.

THERE WAS A KINSHIP CARE  
PROGRAM, AND STATE FUNDING HAS  
BEEN TERMINATED, SO THERE  
CONTINUES TO BE GREAT NEED.  
HILLSBOROUGH ASSOCIATION FOR  
WOMEN LAWYERS IS ABLE TO TRAIN  
VOLUNTEER LAWYERS TO ASSIST  
THESE FAMILIES THROUGH PRO BONO  
LEGAL SERVICES.

THERE IS WORK TO BE DONE IN THIS  
AREA AND IN MANY OTHER AREAS.  
THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITHOUT EASY  
ACCESS TO THE COURT ARE  
CONSTANTLY APPARENT.

THE ELDERLY, THE FINANCIALLY  
DISADVANTAGED, CHILDREN AND  
FAMILIES.

WE CAN HELP MEET THOSE NEEDS  
THROUGH PRO BONO WORK.

IT IS, PERHAPS, THE MOST  
IMPORTANT WORK LAWYERS CAN DO.

WE SHOULD USE OUR EDUCATION AND  
OUR BAR MEMBERSHIPS TO HELP  
INDIVIDUALS IN GREAT NEED WHO  
LACK THE ABILITY OR KNOWLEDGE TO  
ACT AS REMEDIES AVAILABLE IN THE  
COURT SYSTEM.

I LEARNED ABOUT GIVING BACK TO  
THE COMMUNITY FROM MY PARENTS  
WHO VOLUNTEERED IN COMMUNITY AND  
CHURCH ACTIVITIES.

MY HUSBAND AND MY DAUGHTER, WHO  
ARE HERE TODAY, ARE BOTH MEMBERS  
OF THE FLORIDA BAR AND GIVE PRO  
BONO LEGAL SUPPORT THROUGH THE  
AREA LEGAL SERVICES.

I DID THE SAME AS A LAWYER.

I'M PROUD TO SAY THAT MY LAW SCHOOL'S UNIVERSITY ENCOURAGES PRO BONO.

OUR JUDICIARY NEEDS TO BE DRUM MAJORS FOR JUSTICE, AS DR. KING WOULD HAVE TOLD US.

I'M HUMBLLED THAT ANY EFFORTS I HAVE MADE IN THIS REGARD IN THE PAST ARE WORTHY OF THE RECOGNITION.

I ASPIRE TO CONTINUE TO BE A DRUM MAJOR FOR JUSTICE, ENCOURAGING THE BAR TO GIVE BACK TO COMMUNITY THROUGH PRO BONO SERVICE.

THERE IS GREAT NEED ALL AROUND US, AND WE CAN ANSWER THAT CALL. THANK YOU.

[APPLAUSE]

>> WE'RE ALSO HERE TODAY TO RECOGNIZE A LAW FIRM FOR DISTINGUISHED PRO BONO CONTRIBUTIONS.

THIS IS A SPECIAL HONOR BECAUSE THE AWARD IS NOT GIVEN EVERY YEAR, BUT ONLY WHEN A TRULY DESERVING FIRM IS NOMINATED. THIS YEAR WE HONOR THE TAMPA FIRM OF STICHTER, RIEDEL, BLAIN & PROSSER.

IT HAS CONSISTENTLY BEEN RECOGNIZED AS ONE OF THE BEST PLACES TO WORK IN THE TAMPA BAY AREA BY THE TAMPA BAY BUSINESS JOURNAL.

THE FIRM'S COMMITMENT TO PRO BONO IS A LONGSTANDING TRADITION.

ITS ATTORNEYS DONATED APPROXIMATELY 700 PRO BONO HOURS TO A VARIETY OF PROJECTS LAST YEAR.

IN ADDITION, ATTORNEYS AT THE FIRM SERVE ON BOARDS AND COMMITTEES FOR CHARITABLE, CIVIC, RELIGIOUS, EDUCATIONAL AND SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS.

ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF THE FIRM'S COMMITMENT TO PRO BONO IS THAT IT DONATED OFFICE SPACE IN ITS DOWNTOWN TAMPA LOCATION TO THE BAY AREA LEGAL SERVICES CHILDREN'S LAW CENTER.

THE CENTER WORKS TO REDUCE THE TIME THE CHILDREN SPEND IN FOSTER CARE, AND BEING DOWNTOWN MEANS THAT ITS LAWYERS ARE CLOSE TO THE COURTHOUSE.

THE COURT NOW RECOGNIZES HARLEY RIEDEL TO APPROACH THE BENCH, SHAKE THE HAND OF THE JUSTICES, RECEIVE THE AWARD AND PROCEED TO THE PODIUM FOR REMARKS.

[APPLAUSE]

>> CONGRATULATIONS.

>> CHIEF JUSTICE, JUSTICES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, MANY RECIPIENTS, IT'S REALLY

INSPIRING AND HUMBLING TO BE  
HERE WITH SO MANY RECIPIENTS  
THIS YEAR WHO HAVE COMMITTED SO  
MUCH OF THEIR TIME AND EFFORT AS  
LAWYERS TO PRO BONO WORK.

MY CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OF THE  
RECIPIENTS HERE.

TRULY A HUMBLING EXPERIENCE.  
I AM PRIVILEGED TO INTRODUCE OR  
TO ACCEPT THIS AWARD ON BEHALF  
OF MY FIRM WHICH, AS CHIEF  
JUSTICE SAID, IS A BANKRUPTCY  
FIRM OF 17 LAWYERS.

SO WHEN YOU LOOK FOR PEOPLE IN  
NEED, YOU DON'T HAVE TO LOOK  
VERY FAR WHEN YOU'RE IN THE  
BANKRUPTCY BUSINESS, BECAUSE  
FINANCIAL DISTRESS --  
PARTICULARLY SINCE 2007 -- HAS  
BEEN GREAT.

AND PEOPLE WHO NEED  
REPRESENTATION IN FINANCIAL  
MATTERS IS GREAT.

I JOINED THIS FIRM ALMOST 40  
YEARS AGO WHEN IT WAS NOT REALLY  
A FIRM, BUT ONE EXTRAORDINARY  
LAWYER, DON STICHTER, WHO IS  
HERE.

AND, DON, WOULD YOU STAND?  
I WANT EVERYONE TO REALLY  
RECOGNIZE DON STICHTER.

[APPLAUSE]

JUDGE CARDOSO, BENJAMIN CARDOSO,  
BEFORE HE BECAME A JUSTICE IN  
THE UNITED STATES SUPREME COURT  
WROTE THAT MEMBERSHIP IN THE BAR  
IS A PRIVILEGE EARNED WITH  
CONDITIONS.

AN ATTORNEY IS RECEIVED INTO  
THAT ANCIENT FELLOWSHIP FOR  
SOMETHING MORE THAN PRIVATE  
GAIN.

I WAS FORTUNATE TO ASSOCIATE  
MYSELF WITH A LAWYER WHO  
BELIEVED IN THAT VISION, WHO  
BELIEVED IN JUSTICE CARDOSO'S  
VIEW THAT, WHO HAS INSTILLED  
THAT THROUGHOUT EVERY LAWYER IN  
OUR FIRM CONSULTING WITH CLIENTS  
ON A PRO BONO BASIS, VOLUNTEERS  
AND ARE ENCOURAGED TO DO SO.  
LARGELY AS A RESULT OF THE FIRM  
ETHOS THAT DON STICHTER  
INSTILLED IN US.

SO ON BEHALF OF ALL OF US I  
WOULD SAY AT OUR FIRM, WHEN I  
WAS A YOUNG LAWYER, SEEING AN  
EXAMPLE LIKE THAT MADE ALL THE  
DIFFERENCE IN MY CAREER.  
AND SO THOSE OF YOU WHO ARE  
OLDER LAWYERS HERE TODAY TO  
RECEIVE IT, REMEMBER YOUR  
EXAMPLE HAS BEEN A GREAT HELP TO  
THOSE YOUNGER.

AND FOR THOSE YOUNGER LAWYERS  
WHO ARE HERE OR WHO MAY BE  
WATCHING, I CAN ONLY ENCOURAGE  
THIS, YOU TO ENGAGE IN PRO BONO

WORK BECAUSE IT WILL BE THE MOST FULFILLING PART OF YOUR CAREER. AGAIN, THANK YOU ON BEHALF OF THE FIRM, DON STICHTER. THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

[APPLAUSE]

>> EACH YEAR THE COURT ALSO RECOGNIZES A VOLUNTEER BAR ASSOCIATION FOR ITS OUTSTANDING PRO BONO CONTRIBUTIONS.

THIS YEAR OUR WINNER IS THE CENTRAL FLORIDA BANKRUPTCY LAW ASSOCIATION WHICH SERVES ALL BANKRUPTCY PRACTITIONERS IN ORANGE, OSCEOLA, SEMINOLE, LAKE AND BREVARD COUNTIES.

THIS VOLUNTARY BAR ASSOCIATION OPENED A BANKRUPTCY PRO SE CLINIC IN JULY 2012.

STAFFED BY EXPERIENCED BANKRUPTCY ATTORNEY VOLUNTEERS, THE CLINIC OFFERS FREE INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE TO DEBTORS AND CREDITORS WHO ARE REPRESENTING THEMSELVES IN THE U.S. BANKRUPTCY COURT.

LAWYERS MEET ONE-ON-ONE TO HELP PRO SE LITIGANTS UNDERSTAND THE BANKRUPTCY PROCESS.

THEY ASSIST IN THE PREPARING OF COURT DOCUMENTS AND OFFER LIMITED, CASE-SPECIFIC ADVICE.

THE CLINIC RECEIVED ABOUT 30 REQUESTS FOR HELP EACH WEEK.

SINCE THE OPENING OF THE CLINIC, 93 ATTORNEY MEMBERS OF THIS VOLUNTARY BAR ASSOCIATION HAVE VOLUNTEERED AT THE CLINIC CONSULTING WITH NEARLY 400 PRO SE INDIVIDUALS.

THE COURT NOW RECOGNIZES JUSTIN M. LUNA, IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT, TO APPROACH THE BENCH AND RECEIVE THE AWARD, SHAKE THE HANDS OF THE JUSTICES AND PROCEED TO THE PODIUM FOR REMARKS.

[APPLAUSE]

>> CONGRATULATIONS.

>> WOW, WHAT AN HONOR.

CHIEF JUSTICE POLSTON, HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE JUDICIARY, HONORED GUESTS, FAMILY AND FRIENDS, ON BEHALF OF THE CENTRAL FLORIDA BANKRUPTCY LAW ASSOCIATION, WE THANK YOU FOR THIS PRESTIGIOUS AWARD.

IT IS A VERY RARE OCCURRENCE FOR AN ORGANIZATION LIKE OURS TO, ONE, BE IN THIS TYPE OF SITUATION, BUT ALSO A PERSONAL HONOR TO ME TO BE ABLE TO STAND HERE AT THIS PODIUM AND NOT HAVE TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS.

[LAUGHTER]

IF I COULD START FROM THE BEGINNING, THREE YEARS AGO WE SAW A NEED IN THE BANKRUPTCY



COURT IN ORLANDO.  
THERE ARE A NUMBER OF PRO SE  
LITIGANTS THAT WOULD FREQUENTLY  
ASK CERTAIN QUESTIONS THAT COULD  
NOT BE ANSWERED.

THERE WERE CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS  
THAT WOULD APPEAR IN COURT AND  
ASK WHY WERE THEY LOSING THEIR  
HOUSE, WHY COULDN'T THEY  
REAFFIRM THE DEBT?

UNFORTUNATELY, THE JUDICIARY  
COULD NOT ANSWER THOSE  
QUESTIONS.

AND THAT'S WHERE THE CLINIC  
COMES IN.

THE CLINIC HAS BEEN RUNNING FOR  
ABOUT A YEAR, AND LIKE THE COURT  
POINTED OUT, IT'S BEEN VERY  
SUCCESSFUL.

AND WE HOPE THAT THIS CLINIC  
WILL CONTINUE FOR THE  
FORESEEABLE FUTURE.

AS I UNDERSTAND IT, BOTH TAMPA  
AND JACKSONVILLE HAVE EXPANDED.  
WE'VE BEEN GETTING CALLS FROM  
ACROSS THE NATION FROM DIFFERENT  
VOLUNTEER ASSOCIATIONS ASKING  
HOW TO SET UP THIS TYPE OF  
CLINIC.

BUT THIS AWARD IS MORE OF A BEST  
ENSEMBLE CAST TYPE OF AN AWARD,  
SO I'D LIKE TO POINT OUT A  
COUPLE OF FOLKS THAT WERE  
INSTRUMENTAL IN MAKING THIS  
CLINIC A REALITY.

JEFF AINSWORTH, WHICH IS HERE  
TODAY, IS THE CO-FOUNDER OF THAT  
CLINIC.

JILL KELSO IS CURRENTLY THE  
CURRENT PRESIDENT OF THE BAR IN  
ORLANDO.

KELLY CRUMBECKER IS THE HEART  
AND SOUL OF IT.

I'D ALSO LIKE TO THANK THE  
JUDGES.

WITHOUT THEIR SUPPORT THIS  
WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN A REALITY.

I'D ALSO LIKE TO THANK THE  
AMERICAN COLLEGE OF BANKRUPTCY  
AND THE FEDERAL DISTRICT BAR  
FUND FOR PROVIDING SEED MONEY TO  
HELP THIS GET OFF THE GROUND.

WE HOPE THAT THIS CLINIC  
CONTINUES IN THE FORESEEABLE  
FUTURE.

THANK YOU FOR THIS PRESTIGIOUS  
AWARD.

THANK YOU.

[APPLAUSE]

>> I WILL NOW ASK EUGENE K.  
PETTIS, PRESIDENT OF THE FLORIDA  
BAR, TO PRESENT THE FLORIDA BAR  
PRESIDENT'S PRO BONO SERVICE  
AWARDS AND THEN INTRODUCE THE  
PRESIDENT OF THE YOUNG LAWYERS  
DIVISION FOR FURTHER REMARKS.

>> MAY IT PLEASE THE COURT,  
JUSTICES, MEMBERS OF THE FLORIDA

BAR, SPECIAL GUESTS, FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF OUR DISTINGUISHED HONOREES THIS AFTERNOON, IT IS INDEED AN HONOR AND A PRIVILEGE FOR ME TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS CEREMONY.

ON BEHALF OF PRESIDENT-ELECT GREG COLEMAN, PRESIDENT-ELECT-DESIGNATE RAY ABADIN, ALL OF THE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS AND THE MORE THAN 98,000 MEMBERS OF THE FLORIDA BAR, I WOULD LIKE TO CONGRATULATE EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU AWARD RECIPIENTS THIS AFTERNOON.

TODAY IS A VERY SPECIAL DAY NOT ONLY FOR EVERYONE HERE IN THIS COURTROOM, BUT ALSO THE MANY MILLIONS -- EXCUSE ME, MANY THOUSANDS OF FLORIDIANS WHO HAVE RECEIVED LEGAL ASSISTANCE THROUGH VOLUNTEER EFFORTS AND DIRECT PRO BONO SERVICES FROM THESE LAWYERS.

I'M VERY PROUD TO SAY THAT DURING THE YEAR 2012 TO 2013 OF THE FLORIDA BAR, FLORIDA LAWYERS CONTRIBUTED MORE THAN \$4.8 MILLION TO LEGAL AID AND OVER 1.7 MILLION HOURS OF PRO BONO LEGAL SERVICES.

FLORIDA LAWYERS ARE TRULY COMMITTED TO MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THEIR COMMUNITIES.

HERE ARE JUST A FEW EXAMPLES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY CONTRIBUTIONS MADE BY SOME OF TODAY'S FLORIDA BAR PRESIDENT'S PRO BONO SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS.

ONE OF THESE HAS TRAINED HUNDREDS OF OTHER PRO BONO VOLUNTEERS SO THEY CAN REPRESENT CHILDREN.

ANOTHER, WHO IS FLUENT IN SPANISH, HAS HELPED NUMEROUS INDIVIDUALS AND NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS.

ONE OF TODAY'S RECIPIENTS HAS CONCENTRATED HIS PRO BONO WORK IN THE AREAS OF GUARDIANSHIP, MEDICAID, PLANNING AND SPECIAL NEEDS TRUSTS.

ANOTHER HELPED TO CREATE VETERANS PRO BONO PROJECT AND HAS BEEN ACTIVE SINCE ITS INCEPTION IN RAISING FUNDING, RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS AND PARTNERING WITH LOCAL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.

OTHER PRO BONO SERVICES BY THESE INDIVIDUALS INCLUDE SERVING AS ATTORNEY AD LITEM AND GUARDIAN AD LITEM, DIRECTING WILLS, HANDLING LANDLORD/TENANT CASES AND BANKRUPTCY FILINGS. AND ASSISTING CLIENTS ON FREE LEGAL HOTLINES AND LEGAL AID

CLINICS AND IN COMMUNITY  
IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS ACROSS THIS  
STATE.

IN ADDITION TO THOSE THAT ARE  
OBSERVING THIS CEREMONY IN THIS  
COURTROOM TODAY, WE ALSO HAVE  
THE FORTUNE OF HAVING OUR  
WILLIAM LEE SMITH ACADEMY  
FELLOWS OBSERVING THIS ON THE  
SECOND FLOOR OF THIS COURT.  
AND I CANNOT THINK OF ANY  
GREATER ROLE MODELS FOR  
FULFILLING WHAT AN IMPORTANT  
PART OF OUR CREED OF  
PROFESSIONALISM, AND THAT'S  
DOING PUBLIC GOOD, THAN THOSE  
WHO ARE GOING TO BE HONORED HERE  
THIS AFTERNOON.

AGAIN, I THANK EACH OF YOU  
HONOREES, YOUR FAMILIES AND YOUR  
FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES.  
THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

[APPLAUSE]

I WILL NOW ASK EACH OF THE  
RECIPIENTS OF THE FLORIDA  
PRESIDENT'S PRO BONO SERVICES  
SERVICES AWARDS TO COME FORWARD  
TO RECEIVE YOUR CERTIFICATE WHEN  
I CALL YOUR NAME.

YOU CAN THEN PROCEED AND SHAKE  
THE HANDS OF THE JUSTICES.  
FROM THE FIRST CIRCUIT, VIRGINIA  
MARIE BUCHANAN.

[APPLAUSE]

FROM THE SECOND CIRCUIT, SONIA  
CROCKETT.

[APPLAUSE]

FROM THE THIRD CIRCUIT, A. LEIGH  
CANGELOSI.

[APPLAUSE]

FROM THE FOURTH CIRCUIT, WILLIAM  
W. GALLOGLY.

[APPLAUSE]

FROM THE FIFTH CIRCUIT, JOSEPH  
M. MASON JR.

[APPLAUSE]

FROM THE SIXTH CIRCUIT, JESSICA  
L.C. RAE.

[APPLAUSE]

FROM THE SEVENTH CIRCUIT, DAVID  
J. RODZIEWICZ.

[APPLAUSE]

FROM THE EIGHTH CIRCUIT, NANCY  
E. WRIGHT.

[APPLAUSE]

FROM THE NINTH CIRCUIT, JOSEPH  
L. AMOS JR.

[APPLAUSE]

FROM THE TENTH CIRCUIT, DAVE  
CONNOR.

[APPLAUSE]

FROM THE ELEVENTH CIRCUIT, DAVID  
MANGIERO.

[APPLAUSE]

FROM THE TWELFTH CIRCUIT,  
MICHAEL HARSHMAN.

[APPLAUSE]

[LAUGHTER]

FROM THE THIRTEENTH CIRCUIT,  
KAREN MEYER BUESING.

[APPLAUSE]

OUR FOURTEENTH CIRCUIT  
RECIPIENT, SUSAN V. CARROLL,  
COULD NOT MAKE IT TODAY, BUT WE  
CONGRATULATE HER AS WELL.

[APPLAUSE]

OUR FIFTEENTH CIRCUIT, AMY U.  
HICKMAN.

FROM THE SIXTEENTH CIRCUIT,  
DAVID VAN LOON.

[APPLAUSE]

FROM THE SEVENTEENTH CIRCUIT,  
STEPHEN B. MOSS.

[APPLAUSE]

FROM THE EIGHTEENTH CIRCUIT,  
GARY SIEGEL.

[APPLAUSE]

FROM THE NINETEENTH CIRCUIT,  
MARIA FRANCES CALDARONE.

[APPLAUSE]

FROM THE TWENTIETH CIRCUIT,  
TIMOTHY G. HAINS.

[APPLAUSE]

OUR OUT-OF-STATE RECIPIENT,  
WILLIAM FLETCHER McMURRY OF  
LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY, WAS UNABLE  
TO ATTEND.

LET'S GIVE ALL THE RECIPIENTS A  
ROUND OF APPLAUSE.

[APPLAUSE]

AND AS OUR RECIPIENTS TAKE THEIR  
SEAT, I WILL CALL TO THE PODIUM  
THE YOUNG LAWYERS DIVISION  
PRESIDENT, MELANIE GRIFFIN.

>> GOOD AFTERNOON CHIEF JUSTICE,  
JUSTICES, PRESIDENT PETTIS AND  
OTHER ASSEMBLED GUESTS.

IT IS MY PLEASURE TO INTRODUCE  
TO YOU TODAY LAURA WARD.

NELSON MANDELA ONCE SAID THAT A  
FUNDAMENTAL CONCERN FOR OTHERS  
IN OUR INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY  
LIVES WILL GO A LONG WAY IN  
MAKING THE WORLD THE BETTER  
PLACE WE SO PASSIONATELY DREAMT  
OF.

IT IS BECAUSE OF THE FUNDAMENTAL  
CONCERN OF LAURA WARD THAT THE  
WORLD IS A BETTER PLACE.

DESCRIBED BY HER PEERS AS DEEPLY  
PASSIONATE AND AN INSPIRATION IN  
ACTION, LAURA HAS CONSISTENTLY  
CONTRIBUTED OVER 200 HOURS PER  
YEAR TO THE LEGAL NEEDS OF THE  
POOR SINCE 2010.

AS A RESULT, PARENTS, CHILDREN,  
VETERANS AND OTHERS WHO WOULD  
NOT OTHERWISE BE REPRESENTED  
HAVE FOUND A STRONG VOICE  
THROUGH LAURA.

WHAT MAY BE MOST IMPRESSIVE IS  
THE WEEKLY VETERANS CLINIC THAT  
SHE ESTABLISHED AT HER LOCAL VA  
HOSPITAL ALL WHILE SERVING AS A  
FULL-TIME ASSOCIATION AT THE  
PRESTIGIOUS LAW FIRM OF DLA

PIPER WHERE SHE RECEIVED THE FIRM'S PRO BONO AWARD. LAURA IS ALSO A CANDIDATE FOR JUDGE AND A LOYAL FRIEND, DAUGHTER, WIFE AND PROUD MOTHER OF TWO BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTERS. SHE IS A PERFECT EXAMPLE OF THE TYPE OF ATTORNEY ALL YOUNG LAWYERS STRIVE TO BE, AND IT IS WITH THAT THAT THE YOUNG LAWYERS DIVISION COULD NOT BE MORE PROUD TO INTRODUCE TO YOU OUR 2014 PRO BONO AWARD RECIPIENT, LAURA WARD.

[APPLAUSE]

>> HI, SWEETHEART.

[LAUGHTER]

THANK YOU, MELANIE.

CHIEF JUSTICE, JUSTICES OF THE COURT, PRESIDENT PETTIS, DISTINGUISHED AWARD WINNERS, FAMILY AND GUESTS, IT IS MY HONOR TO ACCEPT THIS AWARD. FOR ME, DOING PRO BONO WORK IS PART OF MY JOB, SO I FEEL A LITTLE BIT UNUSUAL ACCEPTING AN AWARD FOR THIS.

BUT I AM HUMBLED, AND I AM HONORED TO BE HERE ACCEPTING THIS AWARD.

THANK YOU TO THE HILLSBOROUGH ASSOCIATION FOR WOMEN LAWYERS FOR NOMINATING ME FOR THIS AWARD.

I AM HONORED TO HAVE RECEIVED YOUR NOMINATION.

THANK YOU TO THE FLORIDA BAR YOUNG LAWYERS DIVISION BOARD OF GOVERNORS FOR REVIEWING THE APPLICATIONS AND FOR SELECTING ME.

COMMUNITY SERVICE IS AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH HAS BEEN A PART OF MY LIFE FOR AS LONG AS I CAN REMEMBER.

I HAVE, I THINK, TO CREDIT MY MOM AND DAD WHO ARE HERE TODAY FOR INSTILLING IN ME THE VALUE OF DOING GOOD.

THE GOLDEN RULE WAS A VERY BIG PART OF OUR HOUSEHOLD GROWING UP.

FOR ME, AS LONG AS I CAN REMEMBER EVEN STARTING IN MIDDLE SCHOOL AND THROUGH HIGH SCHOOL, I WOULD DO THINGS LIKE COLLECT USED STUFFED ANIMALS FROM MY FRIENDS, LOAD THEM INTO MY PARENTS' WASHING MACHINE AND DRYER AND HAVE MY DAD HELP ME BUNDLE THEM UP AND TAKE THEM TO DELIVER THEM TO INNER CITY DAYCARES.

IT'S ALWAYS JUST BEEN A PART OF SOMETHING THAT I THOUGHT WAS SO IMPORTANT, AND I THANK MY PARENTS FOR INSTILLING THAT VALUE IN ME.

IT'S JUST SERVED ME REALLY WELL.  
IN MY PRACTICE PRO BONO IS SOME  
OF MY MOST FUN WORK.

IT IS -- MY PRACTICE HAS BEEN  
COMMERCIAL LITIGATION.  
SO THE PRO BONO WORK I HAVE DONE  
RANGING FROM REPRESENTING  
PARENTS OF CHILDREN WHO HAVE  
BEEN WRONGFULLY ABDUCTED TO NOW  
RUNNING AND SERVING OUR VETERANS  
THROUGH OUR VA CLINIC HAS BEEN  
SOME OF THE MOST REWARDING AND  
FULFILLING WORK.

THE THANK YOUS THAT YOU GET FROM  
THE PRO BONO CLIENTS ARE SO MUCH  
DIFFERENT, AND I WOULD SAY  
BETTER, THAN THE THANK YOUS YOU  
GET FROM SOME OF YOUR CORPORATE  
CLIENTS.

AND IT IS JUST SUCH REWARDING  
AND FULFILLING WORK.

TO THE YOUNG LAWYERS HERE TODAY,  
TO ANY LAW STUDENTS HERE TODAY,  
TO THE FOLKS IN THE LEADERSHIP  
ACADEMY, I WOULD SAY -- I WOULD  
URGE YOU TO DO PRO BONO WORK.  
IT IS A WAY TO HONE YOUR SKILLS.  
IT IS PART OF OUR OBLIGATION AS  
LAWYERS.

BUT IT IS A TREMENDOUS,  
TREMENDOUSLY SATISFYING WORK FOR  
ALL OF US, AND I THINK IT MAKES  
YOU A BETTER LAWYER.

IT'S MADE ME A BETTER LAWYER.  
I'M FORTUNATE TO BE IN A  
WONDERFUL LAW FIRM, DLA PIPER,  
THAT IS A LEADING GLOBAL FIRM  
THAT ALSO PROMOTES PRO BONO  
WORK.

LOU CONWELL, WHO IS HERE TODAY,  
HAS APPRECIATED ME BECAUSE HE'S  
THE PARTNER THAT HAS TO GO  
AROUND AND TALK TO OTHER LAWYERS  
ABOUT DOING MORE PRO BONO WORK.  
HE'S NEVER HAD TO HAVE THAT  
CONVERSATION WITH ME.

I SAY, LOU, I WANT TO DO THIS  
KIND OF WORK, AND LOU SAYS IF  
YOU WANT TO DO IT, I'LL GET IT  
APPROVED.

SO THANK YOU, LOU, FOR BEING  
HERE, AND THANK YOU FOR YOUR  
SUPPORT.

THANK YOU TO BAY AREA LEGAL  
SERVICES WHO ALSO SUPPORTED ME  
IN GETTING THIS AWARD AND HELPS  
US IN HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY WITH  
OUR VA CLINIC.

AND FINALLY, TO MY HUSBAND MARK,  
WHO IS HERE SOMEWHERE WITH MY  
2-YEAR-OLD THAT I HEAR, THANK  
YOU FOR ALWAYS SUPPORTING ME IN  
ALL OF MY ENDEAVORS AND IN  
ANYTHING THAT I WANT TO DO.  
HE SUPPORTS ME, AND I'M GRATEFUL  
FOR THAT.

TO MY DAUGHTER, WHO YOU ALL  
HEAR, WILL BE 2 YEARS OLD

TOMORROW AND MY OTHER DAUGHTER WHO IS HERE WHO IS FIVE WEEKS OLD, THEY HAVE NO IDEA WHY THEY'RE HERE --

[LAUGHTER]

THEY'RE TOO YOUNG TO UNDERSTAND. BUT I HOPE THAT ONE DAY THEY'LL BE PROUD OF THE SMALL PART THAT I'VE BEEN ABLE TO PLAY IN OUR LEGAL COMMUNITY AND THAT WE WILL BE ABLE TO INSTILL IN THEM THE IMPORTANCE THAT WE ALL RECOGNIZE IN THIS ROOM, THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING A PART OF SOMETHING GREATER THAN OURSELVES.

SO THANK YOU ALL SO MUCH FOR THIS WONDERFUL AWARD, I'M HONORED.

[APPLAUSE]

>> IT IS NOW MY PRIVILEGE AND HONOR TO ANNOUNCE THIS YEAR'S RECIPIENT OF THE FLORIDA LEGAL PROFESSION'S HIGHEST PUBLIC SERVICE HONOR.

THE TOBIAS SIMON PRO BONO SERVICE AWARD THIS YEAR GOES TO KAREN MEYER BUESING.

FOR MORE THAN 30 YEARS, MS. BUESING HAS WORKED AS AN EMPLOYMENT LAWYER REPRESENTING MANAGEMENT BEFORE LOCAL, STATE AND FEDERAL AGENCIES, COURTS AND ARBITRATION PANELS.

SHE HAS PROVIDED PRO BONO LEGAL SERVICES TO THE POOR IN THE TAMPA BAY AREA FOR JUST AS LONG. IN JUST THE LAST YEAR, SHE LOGGED MORE THAN 180 HOURS OF PRO BONO SERVICE.

HER SERVICE STRETCHES FAR AND WIDE.

IN THE LAST SEVERAL YEARS, SHE AND HER HUSBAND HAVE OPENED THEIR HOME TO YOUTH LACKING STABLE HOMES INCLUDING TWO WHO STILL LIVE WITH HER FAMILY TODAY AND ATTEND COLLEGE.

SHE HAS ALSO IMPACTED THE LIVES OF YOUNG WOMEN ORPHANED WHO WERE VICTIMS OF GENOCIDE.

IN HER COMMUNITY MS. BUESING HAS SPORDED BAY AREA LEGAL SERVICES IN A VARIETY OF IMPORTANT WAYS. SHE WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN FOUNDING THE PROSPERITY CAMPAIGN OF HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY TO HELP THE WORKING POOR APPLY FOR TAX CREDITS.

THIS INCLUDES THE EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT WHICH SOMETIMES GOES UNCLAIMED BECAUSE OF A LACK OF AWARENESS.

IN ITS FIRST YEAR, THE PROSPERITY CAMPAIGN CAPTURED MORE THAN 11 MILLION FOR THE WORKING POOR OF HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY.

MS. BUESING HAS PROVIDED

HUNDREDS OF HOURS OF PRO BONO SERVICES TO NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS.

SHE HAS WORKED WITH LEGISLATORS ON BEHALF OF THE LAZY DAYS HOMELESS YOUTH PROGRAM WHICH WAS FOUNDED TO CALL ATTENTION TO THE PLIGHT OF HOMELESS CHILDREN AND TEENS AND PROVIDE OUTREACH SERVICES.

SHE HELPED ORGANIZE HILLSBOROUGH YOUTH FORUM LAST YEAR WHERE HOMELESS YOUTH TOLD THEIR STORIES TO AN AUDIENCE WHICH INCLUDED GOVERNOR RICK SCOTT.

SHE DIRECTED STAGE READINGS FOR A PROFESSIONAL THEATER COMPANY THAT RAISED \$8,000 IN A SINGLE NIGHT FOR AT-RISK TEENS.

IT IS MY PLEASURE TO ASK THIS YEAR'S AWARD RECIPIENT, KAREN MEYER BUESING, TO APPROACH THE BENCH, RECEIVE YOUR AWARD, SHAKE THE HANDS OF THE JUSTICES AND PROCEED TO THE PODIUM FOR REMARKS.

[APPLAUSE]

>> MAY IT PLEASE THE COURT, JUSTICES, BAR LEADERS, AWARD WINNERS AND HONORED GUESTS, I AM DEEPLY HONORED TO BE HERE.

I THANK THE HILLSBOROUGH ASSOCIATION FOR WOMEN LAWYERS FOR NOMINATING ME AND THE FLORIDA SUPREME COURT AND THE FLORIDA BAR FOR RECOGNIZING ALL OF US HERE TODAY.

MY CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OF THE AWARD WINNERS.

YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS ARE SIMPLY NOTHING LESS THAN EXTRAORDINARY.

TOBIAS SIMON WAS ONLY 52 YEARS OLD WHEN HE DIED, BUT HE LEFT US A REMARKABLE LEGACY AS A CIVIL RIGHTS ADVOCATE.

I'M PROUD TO FOLLOW IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ANOTHER AKERMAN ATTORNEY, RICHARD MILLSTEIN, WHO WON THIS AWARD IN 1996, AND ALSO OF ALEX AKERMAN JR., WHO LEFT HIS OWN CIVIL RIGHTS LEGACY WHEN HE JOINED THE NAACP IN DEFENDING THREE BLACK MEN WRONGLY FRAMED ON A RAPE CHARGE HERE IN FLORIDA.

I GREW UP IN A MIDDLE CLASS FAMILY, THE DAUGHTER OF A CAREER ARMY MAN WHO RETIRED FROM SERVICE, BECAME AN AEROSPACE ENGINEER IN COCOA BEACH. THE WHOLE HIGH SCHOOL WAS COMPRISED COMPLETELY OF ENGINEERS KITS.

I WAS UTTERLY UNFAMILIAR WITH POVERTY.

IT SIMPLY DIDN'T EXIST IN OUR TWO-BLOCK-WIDE TOWN.

THAT CHANGED EARLY IN MY CAREER



WHEN I TOOK A CASE THROUGH THE BAY AREA LEGAL SERVICES VOLUNTEER LAWYERS PROGRAM.

A POOR, UNEDUCATED WOMAN HAD BEEN TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF BY AN UNSCRUPULOUS ROOFER WORKING HAND IN HAND WITH AN UNSCRUPULOUS FINANCE COMPANY.

SHE'D GIVEN THEM A \$20,000 MORTGAGE ON HER HOME FOR WORK WORTH ABOUT \$1200, AND SHE LOST SOME OF THE MEAGER INCOME SHE WAS GETTING TAKING CARE OF SOME KIDS, AND SO THEY WERE FORECLOSING.

I SAVED HER HOUSE, BUT WHAT I REALIZED WAS HOW TENUOUS THE THREAD THAT HELD HER LIFE TOGETHER AND THE LIVES THAT THE OTHER CLIENTS SERVED BY ORGANIZATIONS LIKE BAY AREA LEGAL SERVICES.

IF THEIR CAR BROKE DOWN, THEY LOST THEIR JOB.

IF THEY LOST THEIR JOB, THEY LOST THEIR HOUSE.

IF THEY LOST THEIR HOUSE, THEY LOST THEIR JOB.

EVERYTHING WAS SO, SO TENUOUSLY CONNECTED.

A SETBACK THAT WAS A MERE INCONVENIENCE TO ME COULD COST THEM EVERYTHING.

SEVEN YEARS AGO I GOT A MUCH MORE UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL LOOK AT POVERTY AND THE LIFE OF THE DISADVANTAGED.

MY HUSBAND BOB AND I -- MY HUSBAND ACTUALLY WAS AT A Y LEADERSHIP EVENT WHERE A 19-YEAR-OLD SPOKE ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS TO KIDS WHEN THEY AGE OUT OF FOSTER CARE.

AT THE TIME THAT WAS AT THE END OF THEIR JUNIOR YEAR, TYPICALLY THEN OR THE BEGINNING OF THEIR SENIOR YEAR, AND SUDDENLY THEY HAVE TO PAY FOR FOOD, CLOTHING, SHELTER, UTILITIES AND MANAGE THEIR OWN LIVES.

IT'S NO SURPRISE THAT MOST OF THEM AT THAT TIME DROPPED OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL.

THIS YOUNG LADY HAD FOUND A Y FAMILY WHO GAVE HER ROOM AND BOARD HER SENIOR YEAR AND WAS MAKING A PITCH FOR OTHERS TO DO THE SAME SO THAT KIDS COULD FINISH HIGH SCHOOL.

SHE HAD COBBLED TOGETHER SCHOLARSHIPS AND WAS THEN GOING TO COLLEGE.

WE AGREED TO DO THAT, BUT THEN SHE CALLED US AND ASKED IF WE WOULD TAKE HER 14-YEAR-OLD YOUNGER SISTER INSTEAD.

SHE WAS AT RISK, SHE HAD BEEN IN AND OUT OF FOSTER CARE HOMES FOR

MANY YEARS.

WE DID THAT AND BEGAN A JOURNEY  
THAT FOREVER CHANGED OUR LIVES.  
IN THE SEVEN YEARS SINCE WE  
FIRST TOOK HER IN -- YES, SHE  
STAYED FOR SEVEN YEARS --

[LAUGHTER]

WE HAVE TAKEN IN FIVE OTHER  
YOUTH WHO LACKED A STABLE HOME  
OR WERE OUTRIGHT HOMELESS.  
ONE WAS 15, THE OTHERS WERE ALL  
18 OR OLDER.

NONE OF THEM WERE IN THE FOSTER  
CARE SYSTEM, EXCEPT HER.  
SHE HAD BEEN.

THERE ARE NO DOLLARS ATTACHED TO  
HOMELESS YOUTH WHO ARE NOT IN  
THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM AND,  
THEREFORE, THERE ARE NO  
SERVICES.

MOST OF THESE KIDS ARE LACKING  
IN FORMAL EDUCATION AND SIMPLE  
LIFE SKILLS.

SOME HAVE MADE THE KIND OF BAD  
CHOICES THAT YOU MAKE WHEN NO  
ONE SHOWS YOU HOW TO MAKE THE  
GOOD ONES.

THESE KIDS, LIKE MOST PEOPLE WHO  
ARE POOR AND UNEDUCATED, HAVE NO  
VOICE.

AND EVEN WHEN THEY DO AND THEY  
TRY TO SPEAK, NO ONE LISTENS.

I CANNOT COUNT THE TIMES THAT  
WE'VE BEEN ABLE TO MAKE A  
DIFFERENCE IN THE LIFE OF A  
HOMELESS YOUTH SIMPLY BY PICKING  
UP THE PHONE AND SAYING, HELLO,  
I'M AN ATTORNEY, AND I'M TRYING  
TO HELP A YOUNG LADY WHO'S  
TRYING TO GET ENROLLED IN THE  
LOCAL COUNTY HEALTH PROGRAM.

AND SHE KEEPS GETTING A LETTER  
SAYING SHE'S NOT ELIGIBLE WHEN  
I'M SURE SHE IS.

LET'S TALK.

OR, HELLO, I'M AN ATTORNEY, AND  
I'M WORKING WITH A HOMELESS  
YOUTH WHO WORKS PART TIME FOR  
MINIMUM WAGE, READS AT THE THIRD  
GRADE LEVEL AND JUST SHOWED ME A  
CONTRACT YOU HAD HIM SIGN WHERE  
HE AGREED TO PAY 28,000 FOR A  
\$7,000 CAR AT 28% INTEREST.

SHALL WE TALK?

OR, HELLO --

[LAUGHTER]

I'M AN ATTORNEY AND I'M TRYING  
TO HELP THE YOUNG WOMAN WHOSE  
CAR WAS STRUCK AND TOTALED LAST  
WEEK.

SHE'S LEFT MULTIPLE MESSAGES FOR  
THE ADJUSTOR WHO'S NEVER CALLED  
HER BACK.

ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS SAY, HELLO,  
I'M AN ATTORNEY, AND WE CAN OPEN  
DOORS THAT ARE CLOSED TO THE  
POOR, THE UNEDUCATED AND THE  
DISENFRANCHISED.

MY HUSBAND BOB AND I ARE BOTH ATTORNEYS, AND HE HAS BEEN MY PARTNER IN THIS EXTRAORDINARY HOMELESS YOUTH ADVENTURE. THESE KIDS HAVE FACED IMMENSE CHALLENGES TRYING TO CROSS THE BRIDGE FROM POVERTY TO THE MIDDLE CLASS. EVERY NOW AND AGAIN I'M FRUSTRATED AT THE LACK OF RESOURCES, AND I WANT TO PLAY THE LOTTERY -- WHICH MY SON SAYS IS A TAX FOR PEOPLE WHO CAN'T DO MATH --

[LAUGHTER]

SIMPLY SO THAT I CAN INDULGE THE FANTASY OF FUNDING A HOMELESS YOUTH SHELTER AND TRAINING CENTER. BUT BOB'S RESPONSE ALWAYS BRINGS ME BACK TO REALITY. HE ALWAYS SAYS, KAREN, WE ALREADY WON THE LOTTERY. AH, THAT WE DID. ALL OF US DID. WE ARE SO VERY PRIVILEGED. WHEN MY KIDS WERE GROWING UP, I USED TO TELL THEM IT WAS REALLY IMPORTANT THAT THEY REACH FOR THE STARS, BUT WHEN THEY GRABBED HOLD OF ONE, IT WAS THEIR OBLIGATION TO REACH BACK DOWN AND EXTEND A HAND TO SOMEONE ELSE WHO WAS NOT SO FORTUNATE. I'M PROUD TO SAY THAT THEY HAVE BOTH DONE SO, AND SO HAVE ALL OF YOU AWARD WINNERS. MY CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OF YOU. YOU ARE MAKING A HUGE DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF OTHERS. BUT WE ARE FEW AND THE NEEDS ARE MANY. LEGAL SERVICES ORGANIZATIONS CONTINUE TO FACE CUTS IN FUNDING THAT MEAN FEWER PEOPLE CAN RECEIVE SERVICES. BY CONTRIBUTING TIME -- AND IF NOT TIME, THEN MONEY -- ALL OF US CAN HELP THOSE WHO CANNOT HELP THEMSELVES. IF YOU HAVE NOT YET ROLLED UP YOUR SLEEVES AND GOTTEN INVOLVED IN PRO BONO SERVICES, I WOULD ENCOURAGE YOU TO DO SO. SIMPLY BY BEING AN ATTORNEY, YOU CAN OPEN DOORS THAT ARE CLOSED TO OTHERS. SO PICK UP THE PHONE AND OPEN THAT DOOR. YOUR EFFORTS WILL CHANGE NOT ONLY THE LIVES OF THOSE YOU HELP, BUT YOUR OWN. AND THANK YOU SO MUCH.

[APPLAUSE]

>> THOSE OF YOU HONORED HERE TODAY, THOSE EVERYWHERE IN

FLORIDA WHO HONOR THE SPIRIT OF PUBLIC SERVICE, LET ME URGE YOU, THERE IS NO GREATER CAUSE THAN SERVING JUSTICE EVEN WHEN IT MEANS PLACING YOURSELVES BETWEEN THE JUST CAUSES OF THE POOR AND OPPRESSED AND THE UNJUST OPINIONS OF THE POWERFUL. IN SO DOING, YOU HELP THOSE IN NEED, BUT THAT IS NOT ALL THAT YOU DO.

AS TOBIAS SIMON RECOGNIZED, SUCH SERVICE HELPS PRESERVE MANY OF THE RIGHTS BASIC TO OUR REPUBLIC.

THIS IS THE VERY ESSENCE OF THE RULE OF LAW WHICH HAS MADE THIS NATION GREAT.

IN THIS VEIN, LET'S GIVE A LAST ROUND OF APPLAUSE FOR ALL OF OUR AWARD WINNERS.

[APPLAUSE]

ON A FINAL NOTE, WE INVITE EVERYONE HERE WHO IS NOT AN AWARD WINNER TO PROCEED TO THE ROTUNDA FOR A RECEPTION CELEBRATING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THIS YEAR'S RECIPIENTS.

AND WE ASK THAT THE RECIPIENTS OF THE AWARDS REMAIN HERE IN THE COURTROOM FOR PHOTOGRAPHS, AND YOU WILL LATER JOIN OUR GUESTS IN THE ROTUNDA.

THE CEREMONIAL SESSION NOW STANDS ADJOURNED.

>> ALL RISE.