

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

4 IN THE MATTER OF: ) Thursday, August 21, 2008  
 5 ) 2:00 p.m.  
 6 CEREMONY OF INVESTITURE )  
 7 OF ) Superior Court  
 8 JOHN A. PARKINS, JR. ) Courtroom No. 8B  
 9 ) New Castle County Courthouse  
 10 AS AN ASSOCIATE JUDGE OF )  
 11 THE SUPERIOR COURT )

12 PRESIDING: HON. MYRON T. STEELE, CHIEF JUSTICE  
 13 SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE

14 SITTING: HON. JAMES T. VAUGHN, JR., PRESIDENT JUDGE  
 15 SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE

16 HON. RICHARD R. COOCH, RESIDENT JUDGE  
 17 SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE

18 PRESENT: HON. RUTH ANN MINNER, GOVERNOR  
 19 STATE OF DELAWARE

20 ELIZABETH J. PARKINS

21 ANDREA C. RODGERS, ESQUIRE

22 WILLIAM J. WADE, ESQUIRE

23 REV, CANON THOMAS B. JENSEN

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

1 August 21, 2008  
2 Courtroom No. 8B  
3 2:00 p.m.

4 PRESENT:

5 As noted.

6 - - - - -

7 PRESIDENT JUDGE VAUGHN: Good afternoon,  
8 ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to this Special  
9 Session of the Superior Court of the State of  
10 Delaware for the Investiture of John A. Parkins,  
11 Junior, as a Judge of the Court. Please remain  
12 standing. All right. We will begin with the  
13 invocation by Reverend Canon Thomas B. Jensen of  
14 the Episcopal Diocese of Delaware.

15 Welcome, sir.

16 REVEREND JENSEN: Thank you. Let us pray.

17 (Invocation by Rev. Canon Thomas B. Jensen.)

18 PRESIDENT JUDGE VAUGHN: Resident  
19 Judge Cooch will now lead us in the Pledge of  
20 Allegiance.

21 (Pledge of Allegiance led by Resident Judge  
22 Richard R. Cooch.)

23 PRESIDENT JUDGE VAUGHN: Ladies and  
gentlemen, to my right is Chief Justice Myron T.

1 Steele of the Supreme Court of Delaware, and to my  
2 left is where Superior Court Judge John A. Parkins,  
3 Junior, will be sitting soon.

4 In the jury box are the Superior Court  
5 Judges and Commissioners, and also members of the  
6 Supreme Court who are here today in robes for this  
7 special session of the Court.

8 I would like to recognize the many family  
9 members and friends of our next Superior Court  
10 Judge who are present today, and in particular I  
11 would like to recognize Elizabeth Parkins and her  
12 partner Lisha Osborne. Elizabeth is John's  
13 daughter. I would like to recognize John's  
14 granddaughter Alexis Osborne Parkins, which --  
15 where did she go? Okay. Also, John's daughter  
16 Rebecca. Well, John's daughter Rebecca Andresen is  
17 unable to be with us today because she lives in  
18 Seattle. John's brother Thomas Parkins and his  
19 wife, Linda Parkins. John's aunt, Helen Adams.  
20 Another aunt, Shirley McCahan. And John's  
21 administrative assistant at Richards,  
22 Layton & Finger, Linda Loveless.

23 Did I miss anybody? Okay. Sometimes people

1 show up at the last minute that weren't expected,  
2 so I wanted to make sure the list is complete.

3 The Court recognizes the many family members  
4 and friends of our next Superior Court Judge. I  
5 would like to recognize the members of the General  
6 Assembly who are here, and in particular the  
7 members of the Senate who confirm the judges. And  
8 I'd like to also recognize the members of the  
9 Delaware Judiciary who are here today, and also the  
10 members of the Bar, and all of John's many friends.  
11 To all, a warm and special welcome to the Superior  
12 Court.

13 We are here today to commemorate the  
14 beginning of John Parkins' career as a member of  
15 the Superior Court, our state's general  
16 jurisdiction trial court. The proceeding is one of  
17 investiture where the historical robing is one of  
18 special ceremony, significance, and public  
19 commitment under oath. The robe itself is a symbol  
20 of impartiality and of the judge's solemn duty to  
21 administer equal justice on behalf of the people we  
22 serve.

23 During the administration of the oath of

1 office, John's fiancée, Andrea C. Rogers, Esquire,  
2 will hold the Bible. John's daughter, Elizabeth J.  
3 Parkins, will then assist with the robing.

4 (Administration of Oath of Office and  
5 Robing.)

6 PRESIDENT JUDGE VAUGHN: Before today's  
7 speakers are recognized, I would like to warmly  
8 welcome John to the Superior Court. He brings  
9 outstanding credentials to the Court from the years  
10 of experience as a Deputy Attorney General and  
11 private practitioner. His qualifications and  
12 experience make him fully deserving of the honor  
13 which the Governor and the Senate have conferred  
14 upon him. I know that John and I will have no  
15 trouble at all working very well together in our  
16 new relationship as colleagues on the Superior  
17 Court. Each of us on the Superior Court look  
18 forward to working with John as our newest  
19 colleague.

20 I would now like to recognize the Honorable  
21 Ruth Ann Minner, Governor of the State of Delaware,  
22 for your remarks, Governor.

23 GOVERNOR MINNER: Thank you. Let me, first,

1 say congratulations, Judge Parkins.

2 JUDGE PARKINS: Thank you.

3 GOVERNOR MINNER: It is, indeed, my pleasure  
4 to be here. To the esteemed Chief Justice, a warm  
5 welcome, because we are happy to be here with you.  
6 I've had the opportunity to see you twice just  
7 recently, which is a real pleasure.

8 To Judge Vaughn, thank you very much.  
9 Indeed, a pleasure to see you.

10 To all the members of the Judiciary who make  
11 us proud, because we have the best courts in the  
12 country, and it's recognized across the country as  
13 I travel. Everyone will say: Oh, you're the state  
14 with the outstanding judges. Just recently I had  
15 the opportunity to explain our system of appointing  
16 judges to governors of about six states who were  
17 concerned about the way their judges are elected  
18 and thinking that perhaps they should change what  
19 they're doing. And, so, we are extremely proud of  
20 our judges here in Delaware, but we are also  
21 extremely proud of the fact that we have a system  
22 that is fair and is truly justice.

23 I have to tell you that I enjoy very much

1 having the opportunity to meet with people who are  
2 being considered for the judgeship. And normally  
3 they're a little bit on edge and a little bit  
4 concerned. But I had a gentleman come into my  
5 office and introduce himself and tell me a little  
6 bit about him and his family. And he's very proud  
7 of his family. I can assure all of you that. And  
8 was just so at ease sitting and chatting with me.  
9 And I thought if he could do that in the Court with  
10 the people who he'll be dealing with, he will make  
11 a very good judge. There is no question about  
12 that, because he showed concern for all of the  
13 things that we talked about, and I thought he would  
14 make an outstanding judge.

15 He has established himself here in the State  
16 of Delaware and the legal community. Many people  
17 told me he is an outstanding person, very highest  
18 character, but also a very warm and caring person.  
19 Working for private law firms, as well as serving  
20 in the Delaware Department of Justice, his  
21 experience is unquestionable. He has had some of  
22 the toughest cases, as some of his co-workers told  
23 me, and has done exceptionally, and they are very

1 pleased with him.

2 I think probably if there were anything that  
3 perhaps I questioned, it was the fact that many of  
4 his co-workers said: Please, don't take him away  
5 from us. We need him. And I'm sure he probably  
6 got that from a lot of those people when he was  
7 talking to them, as well. But it's obvious that he  
8 will make an outstanding Superior Court Judge, and  
9 I look forward to seeing him serve. He is skilled  
10 in all of the traits that he needs by way of  
11 criminal and civil matters. He does have a very  
12 strong character, and, yes, his years in the  
13 courtroom will be a tremendous asset to him as he  
14 works in the courts and with the other judges.

15 I know John has many family members and  
16 friends here today, and I know they're all  
17 extremely proud of him, but I'm going to ask you to  
18 join me in one thing. The last thing I said to  
19 John as he was leaving my office is: I expect you  
20 to do an outstanding job and make me proud of you.  
21 Now you have all of your family members who are  
22 expecting you to continue to make them proud of  
23 you, as well, and I'm sure you will do that.

1 JUDGE PARKINS: Talk about pressure.

2 GOVERNOR MINNER: Yes. Congratulations and  
3 best wishes as you move into this new position.

4 JUDGE PARKINS: Thank you, Governor.

5 PRESIDENT JUDGE VAUGHN: Thank you very  
6 much, Governor Minner, for those remarks.

7 I would now like to recognize Chief Justice  
8 Steele for his remarks and an introduction.

9 CHIEF JUSTICE STEELE: Thank you, President  
10 Judge. It's always a pleasure for me to return to  
11 Superior Court, which I still consider home, and  
12 it's wonderful to see the people that currently  
13 populate the Court and to welcome the newest  
14 addition.

15 When Judge Parkins called me to ask me if I  
16 would briefly speak -- emphasis "briefly," I'm  
17 sure, in his mind and mine -- he said, "Well, the  
18 Governor will, of course, speak first, and then  
19 Bill Wade will speak for our firm. And Bill is  
20 very engaging and entertaining, and he'll be  
21 humorous. You can return us to somber."

22 On an occasion of joyous ceremonial  
23 solemnity, we welcome into our ranks today an

1 accomplished practitioner from the private sector.  
2 I think that's an important indicator. It's an  
3 indicator that public service remains attractive to  
4 those who are far better situated economically than  
5 those of us already serving the public's interest.  
6 No one should underestimate the importance of the  
7 sacrifice that Judge Parkins undertakes to serve,  
8 nor the significance to the Delaware Judiciary as  
9 an institution, that he's willing to do so.

10 Diversity in our institutional family means  
11 more than the benefits that derive from age,  
12 gender, ethnic race, and religious distinctions.  
13 Our Bench is strengthened by the ability to draw  
14 from the rich, intellectual and different practice  
15 experiences of members of our Bar. We face  
16 continuing challenges stemming from an ability to  
17 attract candidates from successful diverse private  
18 practice environments, a broadly based pool of  
19 applicants, given our decreasing progress in pay  
20 and benefit structures within state government.

21 It should come as no surprise to anyone that  
22 representative organizations such as national and  
23 international in-house corporate counsel look

1 carefully around the country to see which state  
2 jurisdictions populate their Bench with private and  
3 with public sector attorneys and make judgments  
4 about the quality of those Benches accordingly.

5 We in Delaware are, indeed, fortunate that  
6 we continue to be able to mix the best of public  
7 and private sector candidates into what I like to  
8 think of as a richly diverse cocktail, stimulating  
9 to the taste, look, and feel of potential  
10 litigants. Judge Parkins adds to that richly  
11 diverse tapestry in the best of ways.

12 I salute Governor Minner for weaving him  
13 into our cloth. We are very much aware of the  
14 embarrassment of riches that you face every time  
15 you confront the difficult decision of choosing the  
16 best candidate from so many good candidates. We  
17 think you've done an extraordinary job here.

18 We congratulate the Senate for confirming  
19 Judge Parkins and confirming the Governor's good  
20 judgment, and commend him for undertaking the  
21 formidable task of serving as an equal among the  
22 many who make up our nation's finest trial court.  
23 I know your colleagues have in the grand tradition

1 of Superior Court welcomed you with cheer,  
2 enthusiasm, and heartfelt support. So do we all.

3 PRESIDENT JUDGE VAUGHN: Thank you, Chief  
4 Justice.

5 CHIEF JUSTICE STEELE: It is now my pleasure  
6 to introduce the engaging, entertaining, the  
7 humorous William J. Wade, Esquire. He will speak  
8 for the firm.

9 PRESIDENT JUDGE VAUGHN: Ladies and  
10 gentlemen, Bill's remarks may seem somewhat  
11 irreverent at times, but Judge Parkins has  
12 requested that he make them.

13 MR. WADE: Thank you for the disclaimer,  
14 your Honor.

15 Governor Minner, Chief Justice Steele, Judge  
16 Vaughn, members of the Judiciary, elected  
17 officials, friends and family of John. This is a  
18 first, I'm told. No one has ever used a PowerPoint  
19 presentation at an investiture ceremony, so anyone  
20 who bet I would be the last to do something with  
21 technology just lost.

22 My purpose here today is to give John's new  
23 judicial colleagues a little background on the

1 newest judge. I should say that I've had  
2 assistance in this PowerPoint from Daniel White, my  
3 colleague at the firm, a litigation support  
4 specialist. So he will share any blame that goes  
5 around.

6 So in terms of the background, like most of  
7 us, John started out as a little baby. But he was  
8 different from most of us, and his parents were  
9 actually somewhat embarrassed by the difference.  
10 And they actually doctored most of his baby  
11 pictures like this one. We were lucky in our  
12 research to be able to find the original of the  
13 picture. You've got to admit it looks just like  
14 John. So that's his real baby picture which we  
15 were able to uncover.

16 Well, John grew up pretty much a normal kid.  
17 Here he is at Christmas in 1951 seeing Santa. At  
18 this time John does not have the beard. He is  
19 referred to, however, as an example of our youngest  
20 generation. My, how things have changed.

21 So, anyway, John, of course, then went on to  
22 school, and here's one of his early class pictures.  
23 You probably can't pick out John right away, but he

1 is, naturally, right in the middle of the front  
2 row. And even at that tender age, John was sort of  
3 on the forefront of fashion. Here he is. Who else  
4 had the guts to blend a checkered shirt and the  
5 plaid socks? Oddly, that look never took, but it  
6 still may catch on. I don't know.

7           Anyway, as a boy, John loved not only  
8 school, but he loved sports, as well. He was a  
9 great baseball player, and here he is in his team  
10 picture on the Newark Aces. If you look closely at  
11 the picture, these are a bunch of serious young  
12 kids. They all have scowls and hard looks on their  
13 face, with one exception. Among the scowls and  
14 hard looks, there's one happy guy. As Ed McMahon  
15 used to say, "Here's Johnny."

16           So he didn't only play baseball, but John  
17 engaged in other sports, as well. In high school  
18 he ran track. Here's his picture from the yearbook  
19 in the Track and Field Club. It appears that the  
20 fast guys are sitting in the back, and they got  
21 uniforms. But as you can see, John eventually got  
22 a uniform. That's him on the far right. And this  
23 is a unique picture. John in his own hand wrote

1 the word balloon there, which says, "Wait. My  
2 shorts are ripped." And he actually wrote that in  
3 the yearbook of a lovely young girl who he went to  
4 school with and who actually went on to become my  
5 wife. That's how I uncovered that picture. And  
6 that's just one of those bizarre Delaware stories.

7 So, anyway, John, you know, he was engaged  
8 in academics, as well. Here's his senior class  
9 picture. Nothing too remarkable about it, except  
10 above the picture there it starts off with the  
11 phrase, "Has strong affinity for dimes and  
12 pencils." I have no idea what that means, but I'm  
13 very worried. That's something, maybe we can get  
14 to the bottom of that later.

15 Anyway, we did find proof that John had some  
16 higher education. This is his I.D. card from the  
17 University of Delaware, which I suppose proves  
18 matriculation. John asked me fervently to skip  
19 over his college years. And, so, he's got the robe  
20 now. I'm going to do that.

21 So next it was off to Washington, the School  
22 of Law, where John excelled and he developed all  
23 the tools which have made him such a great trial

1 lawyer today. Well, I guess he isn't anymore. He  
2 was a great trial lawyer. But although talented  
3 and smart, John seems to have lacked a little focus  
4 in law school. In this picture from the yearbook,  
5 John was asked his career plans. His answer was,  
6 "Best opportunity."

7 That's a kind of drive, John.

8 JUDGE PARKINS: Actually, originally it was  
9 "An opportunity."

10 MR. WADE: Well, leaving law school, John  
11 first went into private practice for a few years,  
12 and then he joined the Office of the Attorney  
13 General where he served with distinction and he  
14 rose to become the head of the Appellate Division  
15 in the Attorney General's Office.

16 He left that office in 1985 to join  
17 Richards, Layton & Finger where he has been a very  
18 valued friend and colleague to all of us, and where  
19 he enhanced his reputation as one of the state's  
20 best trial lawyers.

21 On a personal level, John and I have shared  
22 or did share adjoining offices for more than ten  
23 years, I believe. And in that time John became to

1 me a valued friend, a confidant, a sounding board,  
2 a steam-letting-off device, and a wise counselor.  
3 He taught me a lot in those years, and I'm truly  
4 appreciative.

5 He taught others, as well. He taught at the  
6 Widener Law School as an adjunct professor, and he  
7 did a lot of teaching within the firm. He was  
8 often asked to make presentations at our litigation  
9 department meetings. He was often asked to make  
10 presentations with other meetings of the firm. And  
11 he was asked to teach and mentor our young  
12 associates, and he did a fabulous job of that.

13 One other hallmark that maybe says the most  
14 about John's character at the firm is his  
15 thoughtfulness and his concern for others. From  
16 the night cleaning people to the most senior  
17 partner, John cared about their lives and went out  
18 of his way to show it. That sort of genuineness  
19 and concern will certainly be missed. His  
20 graciousness was a benefit to us all. And, in  
21 fact, he was probably the most popular, well-liked  
22 lawyer in the firm. I think I can say that without  
23 any concern.

1           And, so, we're going to miss John greatly,  
2           and as the Governor indicated, we sure did try to  
3           dissuade him, but it was not to be done. I think  
4           he's always wanted to be a public servant and to  
5           have this job, and we're very happy for him to have  
6           it.

7           One other thing that gives John a little  
8           assistance in taking this role on the Bench is that  
9           he has some jury experience. Apparently, a long  
10          time ago, but, nonetheless, he does have a little  
11          experience.

12          While he was at the firm, John took a  
13          vacation one time and went off to a fantasy camp.  
14          He was a little disappointed to find out at this  
15          camp he had to play baseball, but he did go there,  
16          and he did very well. It was a Phillies Fantasy  
17          Camp, and look at that swing. How about that.  
18          Well, he was so good that one of the scouts at the  
19          fantasy camp was heard to say, "John reminds me of  
20          Babe Ruth at the plate." That's a pretty high  
21          honor. But, apparently, he was talking about the  
22          dinner plate and not the baseball plate. So John  
23          came back to the law.

1           Oddly enough, we have no pictures of John at  
2 work. We do, however, have one picture that shows  
3 John's penchant for what we at the firm like to  
4 call business development. Actually, here's John  
5 on the course. And I've been told that, but for  
6 that dangly belt thing, he might have got best  
7 dressed golfer of the year.

8           So John is giving all this up for a life in  
9 a robe. And we didn't have a picture of John in  
10 his robe yet, so we made one up. And he looks darn  
11 good in it, I think. Although, I think court will  
12 start late until you learn that zipper thing, John.  
13 Maybe you can practice.

14           Well, I hope this presentation gives the  
15 Court some sense of what their newest colleague is  
16 like. Of course, some things you can't show in  
17 pictures and they just don't come through. So in  
18 addition to what you've seen, let me assure all of  
19 you that John is a person of the highest integrity.  
20 He's a smart, yet practical, guy. He comes with a  
21 pretty good sense of humor. He's a fair and  
22 compassionate man, and he cares about people and  
23 has a highly developed sense of justice. John will

1 definitely add to what is already an outstanding  
2 Court, and the Court should be very happy to have  
3 him.

4 To John, I mean Judge Parkins, as you don  
5 your robe and join your new family on the Bench to  
6 launch your judicial career, on behalf of all of us  
7 here, let me wish you good luck and Godspeed.

8 JUDGE PARKINS: Thank you, Bill.

9 PRESIDENT JUDGE VAUGHN: Thank you, Bill.

10 It's now my privilege to call upon our new  
11 Superior Court judge for his greeting.

12 JUDGE PARKINS: Thank you, Judge Vaughn.

13 Governor Minner, Chief Justice, members of  
14 the Supreme Court, and my new colleagues, members  
15 of the Bar, family most of all, and friends, it's a  
16 pleasure, certainly, to have you all here.

17 Before I begin my prepared remarks, I think  
18 I should offer some thanks. One, first, is to  
19 Governor Minner. Your term, as your second term,  
20 is gradually coming to a close, and it won't be  
21 long before you can spend more time on your farm in  
22 Milford with your grandchildren, and I suppose at  
23 that time you'll have an opportunity to reflect on

1 your long career and your successful career. I  
2 know that you will take great pride in the fact  
3 that not only were you the first woman to be  
4 Delaware's governor, but you were one of Delaware's  
5 best governors. And I think you should take pride  
6 in the legacies that you have left to the State,  
7 including the legacy that you have left to the  
8 Judiciary.

9 You, as much as anyone, have understood the  
10 importance of a good, sound, excellent judiciary,  
11 not only to the citizens of our state, but also to  
12 Delaware's national reputation for judicial  
13 excellence. You have paid attention to the needs  
14 of the Judiciary, and, most importantly, you have  
15 taken care to nominate excellent people to judicial  
16 positions throughout your career. And I promise  
17 you that I will do everything I can so that years  
18 from now when you reflect on your nominations, you  
19 will be as proud of my nomination as I know you are  
20 already proud of the other nominations that you  
21 have made.

22 To the Senate, I much appreciate and thank  
23 them for the confidence that they have placed in

1 me. In particular, I would like to thank Senator  
2 Adams, and my own Senator Liane Sorenson, and also  
3 Senator Steve Amick.

4 Steve Amick and I were classmates at Newark  
5 High School back in 19-hmm-hmm-hmm, and I've known  
6 Steve ever since. He has brought to the General  
7 Assembly, first as a member of the House of  
8 Representatives, and later to the Senate, a  
9 reasoned, thoughtful approach to the State's  
10 problems, and I suspect or I know that the State is  
11 a little bit poorer today because of his decision  
12 not to seek another term.

13 I also want to thank the Judicial Nominating  
14 Commission and Mike Parkowski, as well as the other  
15 lawyers and laypeople on that Commission. Until  
16 you become involved in the process of judicial  
17 selection, you have no idea how much effort and  
18 time these volunteers put into the selection  
19 process. But if it were not for them, we would not  
20 have the excellent judiciary that we have today.

21 And, finally, I would like to thank  
22 Richards, Layton & Finger. A month ago I cut the  
23 cords with the firm that I love very much, and with

1 people, both lawyers and staff, who are very dear  
2 to me and will always be dear to me. It has been a  
3 difficult process to leave them, to say good-bye to  
4 them. But most recently I'm grateful for the fact  
5 that Richards, Layton & Finger has asked if it  
6 could provide the after-investiture party, and I  
7 hope all of you will be able to join us over at the  
8 Third Floor of Rodney Square as soon as we are  
9 finished here.

10 Now for my prepared remarks. On July 4th,  
11 1939, the New York Yankees played a doubleheader  
12 against the Washington Senators. 62,000 people  
13 jammed into Yankee Stadium, but they were not there  
14 primarily to see the Senators play, because the  
15 Yankees had designated that day as Lou Gehrig  
16 Appreciation Day. It seems that about two weeks  
17 before Gehrig had been diagnosed with ALS, which  
18 was then known as a fatal disease, and one that  
19 certainly ended Gehrig's career.

20 Between innings, between the games, the  
21 festivities took place in which Gehrig was honored,  
22 and at the end Gehrig hobbled to the microphone,  
23 and he uttered the words for which he is famous

1           today. Forgive me. I can't do the echoes. He  
2           said, "Today I consider myself to be the luckiest  
3           man on the face of the earth."

4                       Well, I don't for a moment believe that this  
5           event compares to Lou Gehrig Appreciation Day, but  
6           I can do one thing better than Lou Gehrig, and that  
7           is I can tell you that for my entire life I have  
8           considered myself to be the luckiest man on the  
9           face of the earth, because I have been given  
10          opportunities which I did not deserve on merit, but  
11          I have been given them because of good fortune.  
12          For the next seven minutes or so I intend to tell  
13          you a little bit about the good fortune that I've  
14          had throughout my life.

15                       My good fortune began the moment I was born,  
16          because I was born into a close-knit and loving  
17          family. My father was just home from the war when  
18          I was born where he was a young infantry officer.  
19          And on the morning of June 6th, 1944, he was dumped  
20          into the English Channel in water over his head and  
21          managed to make it to the beach and across Omaha  
22          Beach, while many of his friends and comrades were  
23          slaughtered on the beach. If any of you have ever

1           seen the movie "Saving Private Ryan," you will  
2           undoubtedly remember the opening scenes. My father  
3           was on that beach at that time.

4                     He sought to imbue to his sons a sense of  
5           personal courage and a sense of attention to duty.  
6           Probably succeeded better with my brother than he  
7           did with me, but he tried.

8                     My mother was a saint, in my view. She  
9           is -- she sought to teach her boys, well, respect  
10          for one another and compassion for others. And my  
11          parents had plenty of help in raising their sons,  
12          for I had two sets of aunts and uncles who took an  
13          active interest in our lives and who became an  
14          integral part of my brother's life and my life.  
15          And my two aunts are here today.

16                    Would you please both stand up. Shirley  
17          McCahan. My Aunt Tinky is 91, and my Aunt Shirley  
18          is considerably younger.

19                    I've also had the good fortune of having two  
20          wonderful daughters, Elizabeth or Betsey, and  
21          Rebecca, who cannot be here today because she has a  
22          family in Seattle, and it's hard to bring little  
23          ones on a flight back here. They were wonderful

1 daughters, never causing any problems, except for  
2 an occasional messy bedroom, Betsey. And the best  
3 luck of all, I suppose, is that they grew up both  
4 to be loving mothers and successful women. They  
5 have presented me with three grandchildren, one of  
6 whom is here today, and you can occasionally hear  
7 her, and two of whom are in Seattle. And as you  
8 might guess, they all have their grandfather  
9 twisted around their little fingers.

10 Maybe the best stroke of luck I've ever had  
11 was last October when the love of my life, and my  
12 soulmate, and my best friend, in an exercise of  
13 extreme bad judgment, agreed to marry me, and  
14 that's Andrea Rogers.

15 The first part of my career was yet another  
16 stroke of luck, and one that I did not deserve.  
17 When I was able to clerk, I got a job clerking for  
18 the Delaware Supreme Court, and for then Chief  
19 Justice Daniel F. Wolcott, and then Associate  
20 Justice Daniel L. Herrmann. You could not pick a  
21 better way in which to start a law career than to  
22 clerk for those gentlemen. They taught me so much  
23 about respect of the law, and about respect of the

1 courts, and how Delaware lawyers do things. And,  
2 in fact, they inspired me to one day become a  
3 judge. And, frankly, it is because of them that I  
4 am sitting here today.

5 Now, if you ever see their portraits, and,  
6 in fact, Justice Herrmann's portrait is right  
7 behind me, they look like stern individuals. Well,  
8 frankly, I'm here to tell you they were not. They  
9 did not take themselves seriously. I remember one  
10 time when I was clerking and I ran into Justice  
11 Herrmann in the men's room. And it was a pretty  
12 difficult day that day, a lot of work to get done.  
13 And he looked at me, and he sighed, and he said,  
14 "You know, this is just about the only room in the  
15 entire building where everyone seems to know what  
16 they're doing."

17 After I left the Court, I went to work for  
18 the firm of Murdock, Longobardi, Schwartz & Walsh.  
19 And the lawyers here will recognize the names  
20 Longobardi, Schwartz and Walsh, as they all  
21 eventually became members of the Federal Judiciary,  
22 that other judiciary. I was so fortunate to work  
23 there. Again, a stroke of good luck, because they

1           were good teachers.

2                       I remember one time Peter Walsh, now Judge  
3 Walsh, and I hope he won't mind if I refer to him  
4 as Peter for a moment, asked me to prepare a draft  
5 of a brief. And I wrote a draft of a brief. And,  
6 by golly, I thought this was great. It was so  
7 good, it was probably suitable for framing. And,  
8 in fact, maybe even the firm would even hang this  
9 draft brief in the conference room to show it off.

10                      Well, I got it back from Peter, and at first  
11 I didn't recognize it, because there didn't seem to  
12 be any typewriting on the page. It was all covered  
13 with pencil edit marks, and changes, and things of  
14 that nature. It was a humiliating experience for  
15 me. But the reason I remember it is that Peter  
16 then sat down with me and told me why he made the  
17 changes. It would have been easy enough for him to  
18 just write me off as a hopeless cause and spend  
19 less time finishing the brief himself. But,  
20 instead, because I was so lucky to work with these  
21 teachers, he taught me what I had done wrong and  
22 taught me how to do it better.

23                      Now, I know that Peter Walsh probably forgot

1 about that sometime after my annual review, but he  
2 forgot about that shortly thereafter. But 35 years  
3 later I still remember a man who cared so much  
4 about training a young lawyer that he took the time  
5 to explain to me how to do things better.

6 My next stop was at the Attorney General's  
7 Office where I was at age 29 just about one of the  
8 oldest deputies there. I began representing the  
9 Department of Correction. And one snowy afternoon,  
10 late in the afternoon, I received a call from Jim  
11 Vaughn.

12 PRESIDENT JUDGE VAUGHN: John, this is Jim  
13 Vaughn. The correctional officers are about to go  
14 out on strike. Is there anything you can do for  
15 me?

16 JUDGE PARKINS: The President Judge is not  
17 the son of Jim Vaughn. He is actually a clone. So  
18 that afternoon we gathered a team of young deputy  
19 attorneys general to prepare an application for a  
20 temporary restraining order and to present sometime  
21 later that night or early the next morning. And we  
22 stayed up most of the night.

23 Now, in those days, as it is now, I believe,

1 the Department of Justice didn't have any provision  
2 to pay overtime to secretaries. And, so, they were  
3 able to leave. And, understandably, they did,  
4 particularly because it was snowing. So we had to  
5 stay. Now, most of the deputy attorneys general,  
6 like myself, had no idea how to type. But there  
7 was one very bright, dedicated young deputy  
8 attorney general who was, I think, a skilled  
9 typist. And, so, she volunteered, even though it  
10 was snowing and would have preferred to go home, to  
11 stay up all night and type the materials as we  
12 produced them.

13 She was an extraordinarily bright young  
14 deputy and was able to edit them as she typed them.  
15 Keep in mind this is in the days before computers,  
16 and, so, all we had was an IBM Selectric, and it  
17 had to be right the first time it hit the page.  
18 And I'll never forget the fact that she gave up an  
19 evening of comfort in order to pitch in and to  
20 work. Now, today, with the exception of Judge  
21 Silverman, we refer to that young deputy attorney  
22 general as Justice Berger.

23 In 1985 my luck ran again, as I was asked to

1 join the firm of Richards, Layton & Finger. Now,  
2 think how fortunate you can be, how much you can  
3 learn, if you're a young attorney, or middle-aged  
4 attorney at that time, who got to work with people  
5 like Jim McKinstry and Max Bell, who got to try  
6 cases before a jury with Ned Carpenter and got to  
7 write briefs for Norm Veasey. My God, what a great  
8 education that was. And if I had a question, I  
9 could walk down the hall, and I could ask Jane  
10 Roth, or Tom Ambro, or Steve Herrmann, or Dick  
11 Elliott, or Allen Terrell, and I always got good  
12 advice. How fortunate I was, and I didn't deserve  
13 any of that.

14 But the thing I think I learned the most  
15 from Richards, Layton & Finger was not about the  
16 law, but about respect for the courts and  
17 compassion for other people. Frank Balotti is one  
18 of the best lawyers I have ever known. He is also  
19 one of the kindest men I've ever met. And I have  
20 seen him interact with people for years now. And I  
21 must tell you that if I could pick a role model for  
22 my little grandson, Padraig John, it would be  
23 either Padraig's father or Frank Balotti. And the

1 word, the byword, in Richards, Layton & Finger is,  
2 what it is, and has been, and always will be,  
3 "civility."

4 Now, I consulted a lot with Bill Wade about  
5 several things: The law and my golf swing. He was  
6 successful in helping me with the law, but never  
7 succeeded in helping me much with my golf swing.  
8 But, in any event, I remember one time when I was  
9 writing a brief for the Third Circuit Court of  
10 Appeals, and the New York lawyer on the other side  
11 had basically lied about what was in the record.  
12 So I wrote a passage which is edgier, so to speak,  
13 than I'm used to writing. And I was a little  
14 concerned about it.

15 So I took the brief next-door to Bill, and I  
16 didn't point out that paragraph. And I said,  
17 "Bill, would you read over the brief and give me  
18 your comments"? And he said sure. And the next  
19 morning sitting on my desk was the draft of the  
20 brief. And there was only one mark on the brief,  
21 and it was that paragraph was circled. And next to  
22 it Bill wrote simply the words, "You're better than  
23 this." I learned a lot from Bill Wade, and, again,

1           it's something I never deserved to get.

2                       My luck struck yet again when a dream of 36  
3           years came true when I joined this Court. I  
4           learned one thing immediately upon arriving here,  
5           and that is how much I don't know. But,  
6           fortunately, I have excellent teachers over there.  
7           Now, I can't promise you what kind of judge I'm  
8           going to be, but I can promise you one thing. I'm  
9           going to be an eager student of these teachers over  
10          here so that I can learn as much as I'm capable of  
11          learning how to do the job.

12                      Finally -- I'm sure you're glad to hear that  
13          word -- I want to thank all of you. I have been  
14          privileged and honored to have you as my friends.  
15          I can't tell you how much members of the Bar and  
16          other friends mean to me, and I am truly honored by  
17          your presence here today.

18                      Now you can see why it is that I can  
19          honestly say that today I consider myself, and for  
20          my entire lifetime I have considered myself, to be  
21          the luckiest man on the face of the earth.

22                      Now, in the words of Ned Carpenter, one of  
23          my many mentors, take the rest of the day off.

1                   PRESIDENT JUDGE VAUGHN: John, thank you.  
2                   Thank you for those excellent remarks, and  
3                   congratulations and best wishes to you on your  
4                   appointment.

5                   Ladies and gentlemen, this concludes the  
6                   Special Session of the Superior Court of Delaware.  
7                   And as Judge Parkins has mentioned, you are all  
8                   welcome to greet him at a reception at Richards,  
9                   Layton & Finger on the Third Floor at One Rodney  
10                  Square, 920 North King Street. Thank you all for  
11                  being here, and court is now adjourned.

12                  (Investiture ceremony adjourned at 2:52  
13                  p.m.)

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