

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

IN RE: INVESTITURE OF THE HONORABLE LYNNE M. PARKER

BEFORE: HONORABLE PRESIDENT JUDGE JAMES T. VAUGHN  
HONORABLE RESIDENT JUDGE RICHARD R. COOCH  
HONORABLE JOSEPH R. SLIGHTS, III, J.  
HONORABLE JEROME O. HERLIHY, J.  
HONORABLE FRED S. SILVERMAN, J.  
HONORABLE WILLIAM C. CARPENTER, JR., J.  
HONORABLE MARY M. JOHNSTON, J.  
HONORABLE MICHAEL P. REYNOLDS

APPEARANCES:

CHARLES M. OBERLY, III, ESQUIRE

INVESTITURE TRANSCRIPT  
JULY 24, 2008

PATRICIA L. GANCI, RPR, CRR  
SUPERIOR COURT OFFICIAL REPORTERS  
500 N. King Street, Suite 2609, 2nd Floor  
Wilmington, Delaware 19801-3725  
(302) 255-0653  
July 24, 2008  
Courtroom No. 8B

3:00 p.m.

PRESENT:

As noted.

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PRESIDENT JUDGE VAUGHN: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to this special session of the Superior Court commemorating the investiture of Lynne M. Parker as a Commissioner of the Superior Court of Delaware. Please remain standing for the Pledge of Allegiance which will be led by Commissioner Parker's children, Sam and Tia.

(Whereupon the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.)

PRESIDENT JUDGE VAUGHN: Let me begin today by introducing those who are seated with me here on the bench. To my right is Resident Judge Richard R. Cooch of the Superior Court. To my left is Judge Joseph R. Slights, III, of the Superior Court. To the left of Judge Slights is where Commissioner Parker will be seated soon. In the jury box are Superior Court Judges and Commissioners with robes on for this special session of the Court.

I would like to recognize the members of Commissioner Parker's family who are present here today, and in particular her husband, The Honorable Charles M. Oberly, III, Esquire. Welcome.

MR. OBERLY: Thank you.

PRESIDENT JUDGE VAUGHN: Her children, Sam and Tia, who you saw just a moment ago right there; her parents, Jacob and Joy Parker. Welcome, Mr. and Mrs. Parker. Her aunt, Gail Solomon, welcome. And her sister-in-law, Beverly Parker. Have I missed anyone?

MS. PARKER: My niece was able to make it, Ilene Parker.

PRESIDENT JUDGE VAUGHN: What was her name?

MS. PARKER: Ilene Parker.

PRESIDENT JUDGE VAUGHN: Ilene, welcome. The Court welcomes all who are present for this occasion, including those who will speak today and who will be introduced shortly.

We are here today to commemorate the beginning of Lynne Parker's career as a member of the Superior Court, our state's general jurisdiction trial court. The proceeding is one of investiture where the historical robing is of special ceremony, significance, and public commitment under oath. The robe itself is a symbol of impartiality and of the Judge or Commissioner's solemn duty to administer equal justice on behalf of the people who we serve.

For the administration of the oath of office, Commissioner Parker's children, Sam and Tia, will hold the bible. Her parents, Jacob and Joy, will then assist with the robing.

Lynne, are you ready?

MS. PARKER: I am.

PRESIDENT JUDGE VAUGHN: Okay. Put your right hand on the bible.

MS. PARKER: Okay.

PRESIDENT JUDGE VAUGHN: And repeat after me: I, Lynne M. Parker.

MS. PARKER: I, Lynne M. Parker.

PRESIDENT JUDGE VAUGHN: Do proudly swear.

MS. PARKER: Do proudly swear.

PRESIDENT JUDGE VAUGHN: To carry out the responsibilities.

MS. PARKER: To carry out the responsibilities.

PRESIDENT JUDGE VAUGHN: Of the office of Commissioner.

MS. PARKER: Of the office of Commissioner.

PRESIDENT JUDGE VAUGHN: Of the Superior Court of Delaware.

MS. PARKER: Of the Superior Court of Delaware.

PRESIDENT JUDGE VAUGHN: To the best of my ability.

MS. PARKER: To the best of my ability.

PRESIDENT JUDGE VAUGHN: Freely acknowledging.

MS. PARKER: Freely acknowledging.

PRESIDENT JUDGE VAUGHN: That the powers of this office.

MS. PARKER: That the powers of this office.

PRESIDENT JUDGE VAUGHN: Flow from the people.

MS. PARKER: Flow from the people.

PRESIDENT JUDGE VAUGHN: I am privileged to represent.

MS. PARKER: I am privilege to represent.

PRESIDENT JUDGE VAUGHN: I further swear.

MS. PARKER: I further swear.

PRESIDENT JUDGE VAUGHN: Always to place the public  
interest.

MS. PARKER: Always to place the public interest.

PRESIDENT JUDGE VAUGHN: Above any special or personal  
interest.

MS. PARKER: Above any special or personal interest.

PRESIDENT JUDGE VAUGHN: And to respect the right.

MS. PARKER: And to respect the right.

PRESIDENT JUDGE VAUGHN: Of future generations.

MS. PARKER: Of future generations.

PRESIDENT JUDGE VAUGHN: To share the richest art.

MS. PARKER: To share the richest art.

PRESIDENT JUDGE VAUGHN: And natural heritage.

MS. PARKER: And natural heritage.

PRESIDENT JUDGE VAUGHN: Of Delaware.

MS. PARKER: Of Delaware.

PRESIDENT JUDGE VAUGHN: In doing so.

MS. PARKER: In doing so.

PRESIDENT JUDGE VAUGHN: I will always uphold and defend.

MS. PARKER: I will always uphold and defend.

PRESIDENT JUDGE VAUGHN: The Constitutions of my country and my state.

MS. PARKER: The Constitutions of my country and my state.

PRESIDENT JUDGE VAUGHN: So help me God.

MS. PARKER: So help me God.

PRESIDENT JUDGE VAUGHN: Congratulations.

COMMISSIONER PARKER: Thank you.

(Applause.)

JOY PARKER: It is our honor for Your Honor. Last time I dressed her was when she was three and I didn't enjoy it as much.

PRESIDENT JUDGE VAUGHN: Before recognizing today's speakers, I would like to warmly welcome Lynne to the Superior Court. Her qualifications and experience make her fully deserving of the honor which the Governor and Senate of this state have preferred upon her. Each of us on the Superior Court look forward to working with Lynne as our newest colleague.

I now invite Judge Slights to give any remarks.

JUDGE SLIGHTS: Thank you, President Judge Vaughn,

colleagues, honored guests, and most importantly, friends and family of Commissioner Lynne Parker. It is an honor to be asked to participate in this ceremony as we elevate Commissioner Parker to her new position on the Superior Court. And it's a pleasure to witness this great day in the life of my friend and her family.

I don't think I knew at the time I prepared my remarks that Lynne would be sitting right next to me. So I'm going to have to be careful what I say because I'm in striking distance, which I had not anticipated. So if you see me revising my speech as I go, you'll know why.

I've known Lynne for as long as she's been a lawyer. She sat for the bar with my wife, Ellen, who's here. And together they endured the summer of pain, as I like to call it, my endearing reference to the summer that we all enjoy as we study for and prepare to take the Delaware Bar Exam.

I remember Ellen coming home from the bar review course and telling me how she had met the nicest woman named Lynne Parker. She told me how generous Lynne was, how Lynne was introducing her to people in the class, and helping her along the way. Ellen was a Texas native, and I literally dragged her to Delaware kicking and screaming. She knew no one here, but my occasionally dysfunctional family, and I could tell you that that was not terribly comforting to her.

Thankfully, Lynne took Ellen under her wing. For instance, Ellen told me that Lynne would arrive to the bar review class each day with coffee and a doughnut or muffin. Lynne had such a generous soul that when she would notice that Ellen did not have anything to eat, she would regularly offer her her half-eaten doughnut or muffin, usually with the filling dripping out onto the table and say, Here, have a bite. Really, you should have something to eat. And when Ellen would politely decline, she would wave it in front of her. She'd say, Are you sure? Come on, you need to eat something.

So you might say to yourself, okay, that's a bit unusual, offering a half-eaten doughnut to someone you've just met, but to me it shows how warm and welcoming and, frankly, how unpretentious Lynne is as a person. And it shows a side of her personality that will serve her well as a Commissioner, compassion.

Lynne will join a group of Commissioners who in my book are the best in the business. She's replacing a judicial officer who served the Court with honor and distinction, very big shoes to fill. But Lynne is up to the challenge. Governor Minner chose wisely. Lynne's depth of experience as a litigator and a trial lawyer and her cool and steady demeanor will be huge assets to the Court. There is much to do. We are facing ever increasing civil and criminal caseloads, and even with recent and



much appreciated fortification, we're still stretched very thin here. We need more than just a body to fill this vacancy, more than just a lawyer to do the work the way the citizens expect it to be done. We need fair, decisive, and discerning public servants who are willing to make the commitment to serving and delivering justice at the highest levels. I am more than confident, I am certain, that Lynne Parker will deliver those qualities and then some.

Upon his retirement from this Court, Judge Quillen observed that this is a court of courageous and independent people. It has a tough love camaraderie that is unrivaled, just like a family. I couldn't agree more. The love that Judge Quillen talked about that we share with each other on this Court is, indeed, tough love. We expect a lot from each other, but we also help each other to do our best. And at the end of the day, you really can't ask for more than that.

On behalf of our Judges and Commissioners and a staff that we are all very proud of, including our prothonotary staff, investigative service officers, court reporters, judicial assistants, law clerks, court administrators, bailiffs, everyone at Superior Court, Lynne, welcome to the Superior Court family. I know you will thrive here, and we thank you for your willingness to serve. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER PARKER: Thank you.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT JUDGE VAUGHN: Thank you, Judge Slights. I now recognize Resident Judge Cooch who will introduce our next speaker.

RESIDENT JUDGE COOCH: Thank you, President Judge Vaughn. I'm also very pleased to have been asked to participate in the investiture of Lynne Parker and to also welcome you, Lynne, as a judicial officer on this Court.

It's now my privilege to introduce Commissioner Parker's husband, Charles M. Oberly, III, for some remarks. I first got to know Charlie about 1975 when we were both in the Criminal Division of the Attorney General's Office. Just think, Charlie, that was only about nine years after Miranda vs. Arizona was decided. That dates us a bit, perhaps. Charlie went on, of course, to be elected Attorney General three times and has had a distinguished public and private career, most recently becoming a partner at Wolf Block. But I know that Commissioner Parker will continue to establish her own distinguished professional path, now in the public sector.

Mr. Oberly, you have the floor.

MR. OBERLY: Thank you very much, President Judge Vaughn, and fellow Associate Judges Cooch and Slights, and now my wife who is a Commissioner in this Court. Perhaps, the more embarrassing aspect of this or maybe the more sobering aspect,

Judge Cooch, is in 1975 when you and I first met as young prosecutors in the Attorney General's Office, Lynne was entering the third grade.

I cannot tell you ... I am -- I always find it difficult to talk about family. I always have, and I think Fred Silverman can tell you all that since he's been around me for 20 years. So I'll do my best to say I'm obviously very proud of Lynne. This is a culmination of 17 years as an attorney, and I am pleased that others will now have to -- actually, I'm really pleased that others are going to have to stand up when she walks in a room. She's been practicing, and I'm tired of doing it.

I'm not here to give a long, lengthy comment regarding Lynne, but when I'm up here to shed, perhaps, some light on your newest Commissioner as I know her possibly better than anyone else. And I'm not suggesting her parents don't know her as well as I do, but I've had an opportunity to spend the better part of the last 10 years or close to it with Lynne. Lynne is a beautiful person. She is a loyal person. She is an understanding person. She is an incredibly patient person. She's generous, as Judge Slights has indicated with the doughnut story, and she's unflappable. And she needs all of those traits just to be married to me.

As my wife, I've been able to observe all of these traits and I've been truly blessed to be able to be around her

during these last 10 years. And I couldn't be more proud of her having taken this opportunity to leave a private law firm where she had been associated with as an associate and a partner for 17 years. And for the last several years, watching her travel close to 100 miles a day going back and forth to work at least three days a week over in Marlton, New Jersey, driving back at nighttime in the winter when it was dark, hoping at some point in time she would decide that there would be a better job or something that would not have so many dead hours on the road. It's not like riding the train to Philadelphia or Washington where you actually can do work. You're driving yourself alone in a car to a place like Marlton, New Jersey. You can't really do any work at all, I mean, and she doesn't like talking on the telephone. And I think New Jersey even has some regulations on what you can do on the cell phone.

So just from the viewpoint of her productivity and availability and quality of life, being able to be here in Delaware full-time is just going to be a tremendous thing for both our family, as well as for her, and also will give you the opportunity to have someone who is working for this Court all of the working hours of the day except for the 10 minutes it takes to get from our house to get in here.

I don't know how easy it is for anybody in anticipation of taking a new job to determine what they're going to be like.

Who is this person? How will they be working for us or with us? And I think, perhaps, one of the things to judge somebody is when they've been a member of one family and they suddenly leave. And I say this is somewhat sudden. This came up -- Lynne, for those of you who do not know it, when we spoke about this and we had just mentioned it, let it pass. And it was the day before the deadline at noon that the applications had to be in that Lynne and I talked about it. She said, Well, I think I will put my name in for this. And she had to pay I think it was \$40 extra for Federal Express in New Jersey to get the application in to the hands of the nominating committee before noon, and she made it by I think 30 minutes.

Lynne wrote an e-mail to her firm dated July 22nd saying good-bye. And I thought I would read that e-mail to you because I think it gives you some understanding of what Lynne is like.

And it said: To everyone: Cheers. Hello to all. It seems appropriate that my last e-mail be to all of you. In a moment I will be turning off the lights in my now clean, empty office and walking out the door for the last time. I remember when it all began. Over 17 years ago I turned on the lights in my clean, empty office for the first time. I was young, single, and inexperienced. Tonight I will be going home to my husband and children. Trial binders lined my office from all of the

cases litigated between then and now. I was your second chair at trials, and then at some point I became the first chair. You whispered in my ear to assure that proper objections were being made, and then at some point I had become the whisperer rather than the whispeeree. You were there for me when I needed proofreading, somebody to bounce ideas, strategy off of, a shoulder to cry on, and a friend to share good results.

The first week that Hollstein Keating was in existence was exhausting, exhilarating, and exciting. We could have all gone out for a drink to celebrate if only our paychecks had been signed.

To say that I enjoyed working with you, that I thank you for all that you've done for me, and that Hollstein Keating was a major part of my life would not fully convey all that you mean to me. My thoughts and prayers will always be here. And now without further ado, I turn off my lights.

This morning, I intercepted an e-mail to the current Court that Lynne wrote. I guess I honestly should say that I wrote it in anticipation of what she would have written to you. And her e-mail reads as follows: Thursday, July 24th, 2008, approximately 3:15 p.m. To the Superior Court Judges, the Commissioners, and Court personnel. Subject: Hello. Hello to the Honorable Judges in Superior Court, the Commissioners, and all Court personnel. It seems appropriate that I introduce

myself through my first e-mail. Tomorrow I will be turning on the lights in my now clean and nearly empty office as a Superior Court Commissioner. While I am now an experienced attorney, I enter this phase of my life as an inexperienced judicial officer looking forward to the challenges ahead and to working with such highly regarded Judges, Commissioners, and Court staff. I am here to serve this Court, my fellow Commissioners, the Court staff, and the people of this State.

As I learn my role with the Court, please do not hesitate to whisper in my ear when I need assistance or am unsure of how to handle a certain matter. I will not hesitate to ask for help, but I am not so presumptuous to assume I will not need help. From my initial introduction and orientation, I know the entire Court staff are available and eager to assist me in my transition to becoming an effective Superior Court Commissioner. The first few weeks will surely be exhausting, exhilarating, and exciting. And I'm happy to know our paychecks are always properly signed.

To say that I anticipate enjoying working with all of you would be an understatement. I have been on cloud nine since the day Governor Ruth Ann Minner made the call to me. While few of you know me very well, I can assure you that I will work as hard as I am able and as long as is necessary to make the Superior Court of the State of Delaware the best that it can be.

I am truly fortunate to be given this opportunity and I will not let you down. Tomorrow morning I will not have to drive over 40 miles to and from my old office in Marlton, New Jersey. Tomorrow morning before 9 a.m. I will turn on my new light and begin my new career as your newest Commissioner, signed Lynne.

I again say I'm very proud of you.

COMMISSIONER PARKER: Thank you.

PRESIDENT JUDGE VAUGHN: Thank you, Charlie.

Our next speaker, Dale Dube, is unavoidably unable to be here today, and I'll defer to Lynne to explain that further. So it is now my privilege to call upon our new Superior Court Commissioner for her readings. Commissioner Parker.

COMMISSIONER PARKER: Thank you. I first want to say that when Governor Minner called and nominated me as Commissioner, I called Charlie and I said to him, From now on when I wake up in the morning, I want you to rise. And then we both cried.

Bill Gates said that for those who have been given so much, much is expected of them. I want to thank the Judicial Nominating Committee, Governor Minner, and the Senate for having given me so much. I know that much is expected of me. And I look forward to, embrace, and welcome this tremendous opportunity to assist in the administration of justice in Delaware.

I want to thank President Judge Vaughn, Resident Judge



Cooch, and Judge Slight as well as all of the other Superior Court Judges, Commissioners, and the Superior Court personnel, and the other Court personnel for reaching out to me, for holding my hand through this process, and for making me feel so welcome.

I am looking forward to working with all of you and to learning from all of you. And as I develop, I hope to rise to become an esteemed addition and a significant contribution to this Court.

I want to thank Judge Slight, and I do want to correct that Ellen did take the doughnut at first until she got enough courage to tell me no thank you, and to Charlie for their kind and touching words.

Dale Dube, a close friend and a very gifted lawyer, was a product of the storms last night. She has no electricity in her house, and there's some trees that fell in her roadway. And she's not able -- it is physically impossible for her to get here. She can't physically get her car out of her street. I know she would have wanted to share this moment with me, and I'm sorry that she couldn't be here. I want to thank Fran Haney for her assistance in making today come to fruition.

As I sit here today and see those that are near and dear to me, I realize that everything we are and who we have become is a result of the influences and sacrifices of our loved ones. I want to thank my family and friends for dropping

everything, re-arranging their busy schedules, and for many traveling for miles to be here today to share in this momentous occasion.

I am so fortunate that both my parents are here to share in this honor. My parents, from the day I was born, have never left my side. Indeed, they have dedicated their lives to my well-being and to that of my three siblings. They sacrificed so much to provide all that they could. Through their sacrifices and their teachings important values, respect, caring, and sharing were instilled in me. They helped shape who I am today. Perhaps, the only way to truly thank those who have dedicated their lives to you is to pay it forward and to make the same sacrifices and to attempt to instill the same values in my own children. Sammy and Tia, I love you both so much, and I am proud of who you are and of the people you are becoming.

And to my husband, my partner, my everything, I can't thank you enough for your support, encouragement, and insight, for your confidence, caring, and compassion. You are the man of the utmost integrity. You, more than anyone, have taught me your word is your badge of honor. I learn from you every day. I admire you. I'm proud of you. I love you.

To those who have been given so much, much is expected of them. I will do everything I can to ensure that the honor placed upon me is justified. Thank you all.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT JUDGE VAUGHN: Thank you, Lynne, for those excellent comments. Congratulations on your appointment.

COMMISSIONER PARKER: Thank you.

PRESIDENT JUDGE VAUGHN: Ladies and gentlemen, this concludes the special session of the Superior Court. You are all welcome to greet our new Commissioner at a reception which will be held out on the 8th floor lobby. Court is adjourned.

(Whereupon the proceedings concluded at 3:30 p.m.)