

C.J. Brent E. Dickson Remarks at Swearing-in Ceremony
August 6, 2012

Thank you Governor Daniels, and all our speakers, for your thoughtful words of encouragement. Thanks also to all of you who have joined with us this morning to reaffirm and support Indiana's judiciary.

I cannot help but to be supremely grateful to Almighty God for the remarkable privilege of living in Indiana, and in the United States, where we each enjoy freedom and sacred liberties, and where we are governed by, and responsible to, our fellow citizens—as Everett Greene sang to us: "especially the People, that's America to me." And now, to realize that I have a special opportunity of service to the State of Indiana, my feelings of honor, gratitude, and responsibility are especially profound.

This occasion would never have occurred without the encouragement, support, and love, of my wife of 49 years—Jan Aikman Dickson. Jan was recently honored by the National Center for State Courts for her service to the judiciary by founding, nurturing, and serving the national Judicial Family Institute. Thank you, Jan, for your years of "aiding and abetting justice"-- especially your justice—me.

Thanks also to my sons, Drew, Kyle, and Reed, for the sacrifices they endured when I chose to leave private law practice and to become a Supreme Court justice, right in the middle of their careers as college, high school, and middle school students. I am very proud of the fine men they have become, and I am so pleased that they are

each here today.

Today represents the approaching conclusion of a period of significant change for the Indiana Supreme Court. This is in stark contrast to the recent 11 year period without any alteration in the composition of the Court—the longest such period in Indiana history. But since then, there have been three vacancies in our five-person court. Ted Boehm, a brilliant and prolific justice, retired two years ago. Frank Sullivan, an extraordinary servant leader, officially departed from the Court just last Tuesday. And earlier this year, Randy Shepard's retirement ended his 25 years of nationally acclaimed leadership as our Chief Justice.

Two of the recent vacancies have been now been filled, and by October we will likely again be a 5-person Court. Our new Justices Steve David and Mark Massa have settled in and are doing excellent work. And we have become great friends in the process. And I am also fortunate that Justice Robert Rucker, a strong, steady, constant, regular hand and his thoughtful jurisprudence will be continuing to serve the Court in the future.

Your "new" Indiana Court intends to continue in the tradition of the recent past – which has made the Indiana judiciary highly-esteemed both in Indiana and nationally. Indiana's appellate opinions are cited by courts in other states.

We aim to continue our proud tradition of being a non-political court—deciding cases solely on the facts and the law. And we respect the separate roles the Indiana Constitution sets out for all three of the

branches of government.

We are determined to "wage civility" at every opportunity—in the collegiality of our own deliberations, in the mutual respect expressed in our majority and dissenting opinions, and in our outreach to enhance civility in lawyers and trial judges.

In our administrative responsibilities, we are committed to continuing, with renewed energy, the Court's best practices and openness to creative innovations, with fiscal responsibility. In this effort, we vigorously support Indiana's counties and judges who are pleading for the Odyssey case-management system. And we will seek mutual cooperation with the other case-management systems already in use, to enable full access by all Indiana courts to full case information from every other Indiana county.

In closing, your Indiana Supreme Court – despite its current new faces and new roles – is nevertheless proceeding full speed ahead. We seek to continue the Court's tradition of collegial collaboration, sound and stable jurisprudence, effective administration, and respect for our teammates in the legislature and executive branches of government.

We are here to serve. Thank you.

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