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Chief Justice Shepard's 25 years of leadership of our State's legal system has truly been transformative. We have heard a great deal about his extensive contributions to not only Indiana jurisprudence, but also his contributions nationally. You simply cannot overstate his influence nor his modest manner. He is always been the first to point out the contributions and accomplishments of others.

As the president of the Indiana Judges Association, I have the daunting task of remarking upon the difference he has made in the lives of Indiana's judges. The Chief has overseen the modernization of the court system in Indiana from the creation of problem-solving courts, the birth of a computerized case management system, plain English civil jury instructions, increased educational opportunities for judges, and professional development for our staffs. The Chief oversaw the implementation of a system to measure the distribution of cases among the counties, so the legislature would have a tool to determine where the work, not merely the politics, justified more judges.

His concern went beyond the workplace to the individuals who wear the robes. Understanding the stresses upon the bench and bar, the Judges and Lawyers Assistance Program was created not to condemn, but to cure the curse of substance abuse and mental health problems among our brethren. Professional speakers and quarterly articles emphasized the importance of a healthy work life balance to a judiciary presiding over daily trauma in our courts. He knows each one of us individually and at my first district meeting 14 years ago, I was surprised when he called upon each one of the 30 or 40 judges in attendance by name, without aid.

During the 1990's and at the beginning of this new century, morale among the judiciary was at its lowest. We had not had an adjustment in pay for more than a decade. Some fine judges left the bench to return to the practice of law to afford college for their children. We and our families questioned whether our compensation was a reflection of the worth our State placed upon our work. The Chief used his considerable political skills, and not so subtle arm-twisting, to pull victory from the jaws of defeat and today the judges and their families are very appreciative that our compensation is treated just as other state employees are treated. Chief Justice Shepard has made us proud of what we do and what we stand for. As he departs our ranks, he leaves behind a judiciary with high morale, well prepared for our work, with good friends in the other branches of government, and eager for the challenges of the future.

A former president of Harvard University, James Conant, said: "Each honest calling, each walk of life, has its own elite, its own aristocracy based on excellence of performance." There can be no dispute but that Chief Justice Shepard is our profession's aristocracy based upon excellence of performance. Many of you in attendance today may not be aware that the Chief is an anglophile. One of his many interests is the English monarchy which I think is particularly appropriate today, given that he has been the head of our judiciary for all these many years. As a remembrance of his service to us and of the trial judges' respect and admiration for him, the Indiana Judges Association would like to present to him a Queen Victoria 1897 Jubilee Highly Decorated Doulton Burslem Throne Beaker.