

Remarks Upon His Retirement

Gray Thoron

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REMARKS UPON HIS RETIREMENT

Gray Thoron

This is a wonderful evening for which Pattie and I want to express our deep thanks and appreciation. What better way to celebrate than by getting together with good friends and colleagues! Thank you, Peter, for organizing and making the occasion possible.

Thank you also for extraordinarily kind remarks. I must, however, admit that I would hate to be cross-examined under oath as to their complete accuracy and reliability. There is a muse of exaggeration and hyperbole that somehow moves in on such occasions and invariably succeeds in blinding, even the most sober-sided and truthful of speakers, to the human failings of their honorees—blinding them both to what ought to have been done but was not, and to what ought not to have been done but was. There is, however, no mistaking the tremendous warmth and feeling which pervade your words and were impossible to miss.

It is only appropriate to take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation for the privilege of serving for thirty-one years as a member of this wonderful faculty family. For me, these years have been without exception extraordinarily stimulating, creative, and above all, satisfying.

My responsibilities for the first seven of these years were primarily decanal and administrative. This was an exciting period—challenging, worthwhile and productive. It was marked by an unexpectedly high degree of faculty, student and alumni support that contributed greatly to the Law School's forward progress between 1956 and 1963.

The remaining twenty-four years permitted my return to the primarily academic pursuits which first drew me to law teaching, and especially the opportunity to work closely with a large number of highly qualified and strongly motivated law students in a formative period of their lives. In the process I have happily developed close and continuing ties of friendship with many of those whom I first met in the classroom. It is a source of special joy that four in this category are at this evening's celebration: Bud Relihan of our class of 1959, Bruno Colapietro and Faust Rossi of our class of 1960, and Mark Solomon of our class of 1984.

At this point, I must pay special tribute to three wise, patient and understanding Deans—Ray Forrester, Roger Cramton and Peter Martin—each of whom consistently encouraged and supported

my special interests and endeavors—interests and endeavors that have not always followed traditional university faculty patterns.

I fully recognize that the Cornell Law School has given me the opportunity, in an academic setting of great quality, and to an extent that few law school would have been likely to give, to immerse myself deeply in my two professional loves. First, the opportunity to work with the law, with lawyers, and with the organized Bar, in striving to improve both the legal process and the professional standards of those engaged in law practice. Second, the opportunity to work with so many able and dedicated students in helping them better understand not only the law, but to sensitize them to the major pitfalls, temptations and pressures that lawyers invariably face, emphasizing the need to integrate personal goals and values with the goals and standards and aspirations of a great profession. My ultimate aim has been to help each student become a useful, respected, and dedicated member of the Bar.

It is my hope that the Cornell Law School will continue to seek out and encourage one or more faculty colleagues with similar teaching and professional interests.

I can assure you that entering the ranks of the emeriti will not terminate either my close ties with or deep affection for the Cornell Law School and its students and alumni. Pattie and I will continue to make Ithaca our home. I will continue as an active colleague working on several important projects relating to lawyer professional responsibilities, with emphasis on issues that are of special concern to law students and beginning members of the Bar. I shall also remain available as an informal consultant to discouraged law students, especially those who have needlessly begun to doubt their own self-worth as a result of their inability to win a hoard of immediate offers from recruiters for large corporate big city law firms.

Thank you again for this wonderful evening, for being here, and for the part that all of you have played in making Cornell and the Cornell Law School such a rewarding academic and professional base.