

REMARKS

*E. Stewart Jones, Jr.**

PROFESSOR CONNORS: Right now I'd like to introduce the Chair of the Board of Trustees, who will also discuss the stature that Professor Siegel has placed Albany Law School in: Stew Jones.

(Applause)

MR. JONES: Thank you, Professor. Thank you Chief Judge Kaye.

Should I speak for the assembled multitudes here in affirming unanimously the resolution that the Court of Appeals has adopted?

I didn't have the good fortune to have Professor Siegel as a professor, or to place it another way, he didn't have the misfortune of having me as a student.

(Laughter)

But he clearly has had an enormous impact on this institution and on the practice of law in New York.

One of the great Supreme Court Justices and certainly one of the most quotable Supreme Court Justices, Oliver Wendell Holmes, told us as lawyers and as a profession that he viewed life as action and passion, and it was therefore incumbent upon us as lawyers to share in the action and passion of our times professionally, at the peril of being judged not to have lived.

Professor Siegel has not only shared in the action and passion of his times within our profession, but he's created the action and passion of our times in our profession. He has been a leading voice, if not the leading voice, for the practice of law in the State of New York.

I said that I did not have the benefit of an association in a classroom with Professor Siegel, but I have had the benefit of his advice as the Chairman of the Board. And, as that law student wrote in a blog that we should listen to Professor Siegel's advice on how the law school is to run, believe me I received considerable

* E. Stewart Jones, Jr. graduated from Williams College in 1963 and Albany Law School in 1966. Mr. Jones has been the Chairman of the Albany Law School Board of Trustees since 2007.

advice from Professor Siegel as how the law school should run, and most of it was right on the money. So, hopefully, we will continue to listen and continue to implement.

I have a nephew, Matthew, my brother's son, who did have the good fortune to be in Professor Siegel's thrall for his three years of law school. And I can tell you that he came through that experience a far different person than he was than when he began.

Professor Siegel was not only his teacher but he was also his mentor and he became his friend. And Matthew, who began law school with considerable reservation about the law, about becoming a lawyer, came through this school devoted to the practice. And he would be the first to tell you that that was credited to Professor Siegel and only Professor Siegel. Neither his father nor his uncle had anything at all to do with it.

(Laughter)

Of course, many students will tell you that one of the *quid pro quos* for Professor Siegel's mentoring, and *quid pro quo* is a very dangerous term to use in the presence of the U.S. Attorney, Mr. Garcia over here.

(Laughter)

One of those *quid pro quos* of course is to play racquetball with Professor Siegel and to assure at the conclusion of the event that Professor Siegel has won.

(Laughter)

Matthew learned that lesson quickly and did very well because of it.

(Laughter)

We are all in Professor Siegel's debt, not only as lawyers but as a profession.

When I started here Sam Hesson, who is one of the architects of the Civil Practice Law and Rules—and in fact, Pat Connors has told us that it started in 1963, that was the year that I started law school here—he told us about the Civil Practice Law and Rules and he was the dean for the last two years that I was here. But it took Professor Siegel to tell us what the Civil Practice Law and Rules and what civil practice generally in New York meant, how it applied, and what outcome it required.

Multitudes of lawyers, not only from this law school but from law schools throughout this state and law schools from throughout the United States who had to come to New York and practice in New York, have learned through Professor Siegel's body of work, his

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knowledge, and his instruction.

So his reach is incredibly broad. People who practice law in the Adirondacks without a secretary and by themselves, to the mega firms in New York that house a thousand lawyers, to the city court judge in a remote outpost in Upstate New York, to the judges in the Court of Appeals and the Appellate Divisions throughout this state, have all learned at the knee and through the body of work that Professor Siegel has produced. And, we are all indebted to him for that and we'll be indebted to him for as long as law is practiced in the State of New York.

(Applause)

But I believe—I'm a graduate of this school and a proud graduate of this school, and much of that pride is rooted in an institution that Professor Siegel's presence has made much better.

All of us who are associated with Albany Law School should recognize that this institution is far more prominent than it would have been had Professor Siegel not been here. He has enhanced the stature of this school, not only in the State of New York and throughout the appellate courts and the Court of Appeals, but nationally. He has advanced our reputation. He has been our most public advocate. He is our most distinguished representative.

Professor Siegel has been our most visible and dominating presence in this profession. And, that has inured not only to the benefit of the law school but to everyone who is associated with and has graduated from this law school, because it has validated our diplomas, it has validated our graduation from this school, and it has accredited this school throughout this land.

So there is no way we can possibly do credit to him this evening for all he's meant to us and to this institution, and we should acknowledge that and recognize there's simply not enough time for that this evening.

So, Professor Siegel, from the Board of Trustees, from this law school, from this institution, everyone who has ever graduated or been associated with it, thank you, thank you, thank you.

(Applause)

As Chairman of the Board of Trustees it is and will continue to be my view and my hope and my goal that this law school will at some point in time recognize Professor Siegel permanently with an endowed chair in civil practice in his name. And I would ask all of you who have a connection to this law school that, as we go forward, to consider that as a goal and objective of yours. It's the least we

can do for him. He deserves it. He's earned it. The law school needs an endowed professorship in Professor Siegel's name.

One of the great movies about the law was *To Kill a Mockingbird*.¹ And there was a scene in that movie that speaks to admiration and respect, and I think it captures the admiration and respect that we should have for Professor Siegel who we honor today and forevermore.

You'll recall that as Atticus Finch is leaving the courtroom, the courtroom is as filled as this room is tonight. Everyone stands up, they rise, and Atticus's son turns to the narrator and says, "What are they doing?"² And he says, "They're standing because your daddy's passing by."³

That is Professor Siegel. He's passing by today and he deserves that type of admiration and respect.

I'd ask you to stand and recognize him.

(Applause)

The law school is doing something unique, distinctive, and never before done today. And, I'd ask Professor Siegel and Chief Judge Kaye to come forward.

Chief Judge Kaye is an honorary alum of the class of 1984, she graduated here eighteen years after I did and she looks eighteen years younger than I do, but I ask you both to come forward so that I can present you with the keys to Albany Law School.

(Applause)

PROFESSOR CONNORS: Thank you very much, Stew.

¹ TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD (Brentwood Productions 1962).

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*