

I also know what it's like to withstand the rigor of a Barry Albin searing questioning. You see, I got it as a 19-year-old, and it was never easy then, and what a phenomenal Justice that Justice Albin has been.

I've had the benefit and the fortune of learning from many judges who have taught me what it is and what it is like to be a wonderful judge, a true judge. I clerked on the Sixth Circuit of the United States Court of Appeals for Al Engle. Al Engle was an 18-year judge on the United States Court of Appeals, but he was a year and a half as a trial judge, but he never stopped being a trial judge. And I'd sit down at his desk, and I would present a legal issue to him, and it would have come up to the U.S. Court of Appeals, and he'd say, "Stop! Tell me who are the parties, who's affected by this, who's impacted?" I still remember him saying, "I don't want to know the what or the why until you tell me the who." He would say, "justice, John, is not about our words or our books, it is about people. Never forget the impact on each and every one of them."

But, I would say that, from a perspective of judging, to be a Supreme Court Justice, that the best role model I have didn't wear a black robe, but taught me every day about integrity, hard work, decisiveness, fairness, respect, character, humanity. Thank you, Dad. I've learned from the best, and I will always strive to be better. Let me tell you one thing, I don't approach a podium like this without you.

I know Mom would be incredibly proud. I know Mom's watching us right now, and I know in some sort of weird ghost movie, Demi Moore, Patrick Swayze, kind of way that she tightened my tie on the walk up here, that she made sure that my shoes were shined last night.

The irony is not lost on me that the seat that we are here talking about, the seat at issue, belongs to my second boss at the U.S. Attorney's Office, Lee Solomon, Justice Solomon, who served this court with incredible dignity and with incredible respect and incredible grace, and that that seat opens up on your birthday, Dad.

I have tried to follow these principles that I've learned throughout my career, as a trial attorney at the Department of Justice, as a federal prosecutor in New Jersey, at the New Jersey Attorney General's Office, where I followed who I would describe as the unfollowable example of Senator Chiesa, my friend, my confidant, my brother in many ways.

And I worked these last couple of years at Rutgers, where I worked with a president who steered a steady and principled ship through a series of unimaginable storms.

And next to you is Senator Bramnick, who has been for decades, such a wonderful friend, such a great mentor, such a brilliant legislator. Thank you, Senator Bramnick, for everything that you have done for me. Thank you so much for everything you do for my family and for the state of New Jersey.

Nancy Brannegan, thanks for standing by my father's side and our side for the past decade, with such love and support.

My sister is here to join us, my lifelong best friend. My mother- and father-in-law who have been such wonderful parents-in-law but who also brought me the greatest gift of my life. That's my wife.

You better hold it together, alright? So, focus right here. So, Mary Jude, you've given so much of yourself so I could feed my soul and quench my thirst to give back to this crazy state of ours. Everybody owes you a debt of gratitude. I owe you all the love in my heart.

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