

Final Thoughts From My Rocking Chair



THIS PAST YEAR has been a very special one in my life. I have had the honor, as president of NDAA, to serve you and, as our motto says, “To be the voice of America’s Prosecutors and to Support Their Efforts to Protect the Rights and Safety of the People.” It has been an unbelievable honor and I am proud to have been that voice and support those efforts on behalf of America’s 39,000 prosecutors located in over 3,000 offices across the country.

I am also proud to be a prosecuting attorney and, as I have often said this past year, I believe we should all be proud to be prosecutors because as we all know, we are... the real public defenders. We fulfill the second part of our motto every day as we protect the rights and safety of the people in every city and county in this country.

One of my themes this year has been that people go into prosecution for one of two reasons: either to get a lot of trial experience quickly before chasing the big money or because they have the passion to be a prosecutor. Both of these are very valid reasons. I hope that if you started prosecuting just to get the trial experience before moving on, that along the way you developed the passion and decided to stay in prosecution. If you started in prosecution because you had the passion, I hope you still have it. I began prosecuting because I had the passion and after almost 30 years I still have that passion. I consider myself very blessed to be able to say that.

So, regardless of which reason caused you to start in prosecution, why stay in prosecution? Maybe you stay because every day you look into the eyes of people who have been victimized by crime. You may look

into the eyes of the parent, spouse or child of a murder victim who looks to you to hold accountable the person who took their loved one from them. You may look into the eyes of an elderly person who has been financially exploited or violently victimized and is no longer able to live independently. Or, you may look into the eyes of a child who is the victim of sexual or physical abuse.

Regardless of whose eyes you are looking into, you know they are depending on you to give them some sense of justice. They have no one else to depend on at that point—only you. What a great feeling it is when you are able to give them that sense of justice they so desperately need! There is no better feeling in the world. I suspect that is why we stay in prosecution—because we can make a difference to those that have no one else to depend on.

I guess that is why it has been such a tremendous honor to serve as your president this past year. It is because of what you do, day in and day out. You work hard to make a difference and to do justice. Your only goal is to uphold that second part of our motto. You serve to protect the rights and safety of the people. You do it often at great sacrifice to your families and you don’t get thanked nearly often enough. It is because of what you do that this year has been such an honor for me.

So from the bottom of my heart, and on behalf of all those in your respective jurisdictions who depend on you to protect them, thank you. Thank you for your tireless devotion and constant effort to seek justice. You do make a difference.