

SIR THOMAS MORE AWARD

THANK YOU, BISHOP PEREZ. I WANT TO EXPRESS MY APPRECIATION TO THE CHURCH AND THE AKRON BAR ASSOCIATION FOR SPONSORING THIS AWARD. SAINT THOMAS MORE IS VERY SPECIAL TO LAWYERS, AND THE AWARD IS EMBLEMATIC OF THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE CHURCH AND THE BAR. IT'S GOOD TO SEE THE RELATIONSHIP IS HEALTHY AND STRONG.

THESE PROCEEDINGS ARE ELEVATED BY THE PRESENCE OF HIS EXCELLENCY BISHOP PEREZ HERE TODAY, AND I AM VERY GRATEFUL TO HIM FOR ATTENDING. I ALSO THANK FATHER ROSING FOR HIS GRACIOUSNESS AND PATIENCE IN SHEPHERDING ME THROUGH THE PREPARATIONS FOR THIS SERVICE. WE HAVE A LOT OF RELIGIONS IN OUR FAMILY, BUT CATHOLICISM ISN'T ONE OF THEM SO HIS GUIDANCE HAS BEEN INVALUABLE. WHEN HE CALLED TO GIVE ME THE NEWS, I WAS OVERCOME WITH SURPRISE AND GRATITUDE, WHICH PERSISTS TO THIS DAY.

THERE IS A LIST OF PRIOR AWARD RECIPIENTS IN THE BACK OF THE PROGRAM. I ASK THAT YOU NOT LOOK AT IT, BECAUSE YOU WILL SURELY HEAR, AS I DO, A VOICE INSIDE YOUR HEAD ASKING "WHAT'S *HE* DOING ON THERE? I AM INCREDIBLY HUMBLED TO BE COUNTED AMONG THESE PEOPLE.

ANYONE WHO KNOWS ME KNOWS I'M PROUD OF WHAT LAWYERS DO. MY FATHER USED TO SAY "IT FEELS GOOD TO HELP PEOPLE." HE WAS RIGHT; AND LAWYERS ARE GIVEN A SPECIAL SET OF SKILLS FOR THAT PURPOSE. BUT GETTING A LAW DEGREE IS JUST THE BEGINNING. IF YOU'RE LUCKY, THEN YOU HAVE MENTORS WHO SHOW YOU HOW TO USE THOSE SKILLS PROPERLY. AND I WAS TAUGHT BY THE BEST: FIRST BERNIE ROSEN, BOB BLAKEMORE AND THE PEOPLE AT BLAKEMORE, ROSEN AND NORRIS, AND LATER BY THE LIKES OF KARL HAY, FRANK QUIRK, JERRY WHITMER AND OSCAR HUNSICKER AT BROUSE McDOWELL.

I GOT TO WALK WITH GIANTS AT BROUSE, LIKE LINDA KERSKER, CLAIR DICKINSON, JOHN FAIRWEATHER, AND OTHERS. AND IT'S BEEN A PRIVILEGE TO SEE THE YOUNG LAWYERS THERE GROW INTO THE VERY BEST THE PROFESSION HAS TO OFFER. I'VE OFTEN TOLD THE BROUSE FOLKS: "I'M PROUD TO BE YOUR PARTNER" AND I MEANT IT EVERY TIME.

FROM MY INVOLVEMENT WITH THE AKRON AND OHIO STATE BAR ASSOCIATIONS I GOT TO KNOW "THE AKRON LAWYER" AND "THE OHIO LAWYER" AND IN ALL MY TRAVELS I'VE FOUND NONE BETTER.

LIKE MANY OF US I HAVE HAD THE SUPPORT OF A GREAT FAMILY. MY SISTER BECKY IS OUR FATHER'S DAUGHTER

THROUGH AND THROUGH, AND HER HUSBAND JOHN IS ONE OF GOD'S NOBLEMEN. OUR SONS MIKE AND ADAM ARE MARVELOUS, FORMIDABLE MEN. AND THEY'RE SMART: MIKE MARRIED ILANA, AND ADAM MARRIED ERIN, TWO MARVELOUS, FORMIDABLE, SMART WOMEN. THE FOUR OF THEM AMAZE US AND MAKE US PROUD EVERY DAY. AND OUR GRANDCHILDREN, PJ AND AINSLEY, ARE THE LIGHT OF OUR LIVES.

AT THE CENTER OF ALL THIS OF COURSE IS ROSE, A MARVELOUS, FORMIDABLE AND SMART WOMAN IN HER OWN RIGHT. SHE SAW TO IT THAT WHATEVER LUCK WE'VE ENJOYED WAS LEAVENED WITH THE IMPORTANT THINGS IN LIFE LIKE HARD WORK, INITIATIVE, DEDICATION, LOYALTY, HUMOR AND LOVE. AFTER 47 YEARS TOGETHER WE CALL EACH OTHER OUR LIFE PARTNER. IN THE INTEREST OF FULL DISCLOSURE, FROM TIME TO TIME I'VE BEEN DEMOTED FROM PARTNER TO ASSOCIATE, AND SOMETIMES DOWN TO LAW CLERK. THANKFULLY I'VE BEEN ABLE TO REHABILITATE MYSELF. BUT THE RECOGNITION I RECEIVE FOR ANY ACHIEVEMENT IS DUE TO HER ENCOURAGEMENT AND SUPPORT. AND MAKE NO MISTAKE: WITHOUT HER, WHEREVER I MIGHT BE TODAY, IT WOULDN'T BE HERE.

HARD WORK AND GOOD LUCK ARE NOT UNRELATED AND THE COMBINATION IS THE GREATEST OF BLESSINGS. SO I'M

**BLESSED TO RECEIVE THIS AWARD. I'LL TREASURE IT ALWAYS,
AND MY GRATITUDE FOR IT WILL BE ETERNAL.**

**I'LL CLOSE WITH THE PRAYER OF ST. THOMAS MORE:
“LORD, GRANT THAT I MAY BE ABLE IN ARGUMENT,
ACCURATE IN ANALYSIS, STRICT IN STUDY, CANDID WITH
CLIENTS AND HONEST WITH ADVERSARIES. SIT WITH ME AT
MY DESK AND LISTEN WITH ME TO MY CLIENT’S PLAINTS.
READ WITH ME IN THE LIBRARY AND STAND BESIDE ME IN
COURT, SO THAT TODAY I SHALL NOT, IN ORDER TO WIN A
POINT, LOSE MY SOUL. AMEN”**

THANK YOU SO VERY MUCH.