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#### SWEARING IN OF DEVAL L. PATRICK

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, a few days ago, I attended the ceremony in which Deval Patrick was sworn in as head of the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice. While I have made remarks for the Record about how impressive and competent I think he is, and how capable he is personally, I believe that the comments he delivered at his swearing-in ceremony should be read by all my colleagues. They are a strong and eloquent expression of his goals in this important position, and so I ask that his comments be placed in the Record at this point.

The comments follow:

Statement of Deval L. Patrick, Assistant Attorney General, Civil Rights Division

Thank you all so much. I know the members have to leave because they have to vote. And I thank them very much for coming, as they depart.

General Reno, General Corelick, General Days, General Bryson, distinguished guests and friends, old and new, I am extremely touched by the kind words that my friends and colleagues have said today.

Usually, you have to die before people will say that kind of thing about you.

I am so honored to be standing here this morning and so grateful, really grateful to all of you for coming to bear witness to this event.

I am a great believer that important occasions should be marked by ceremony. And I value the presence of so many of you, especially with tax returns due tomorrow.

My special thanks to my friends and mentors, Solicitor General Days, Judge Lindsay, and Judge Reinhardt, whom I know privately as Drew, Reg, and Judge Reinhardt.

And for me, you each reflect that marvelous combination of brilliance and soul that has been such a model of humanity and citizenship for me and, I know, for so many others.

My family is also here in force and in many extensions. And I want to introduce some of them.

My bride, Diane, you have met. Our daughters, Sarah and Katherine are down in front. I won't ask you to stand up. Don't worry.

My mother, Emily Patrick, is here; my in-laws, John and Lillian Bemus.

My sister, Rhonda Sigh and her children, Bianca and Brandon; my siblings-in-law, Jay Bemus and Iola Wright, and also Lynn and Bobby Chavis and their sons, Robb and Ryan.

I am so blessed to have each of you with me today and always. And I thank you, too.

We have too many special friends here today to mention, but I have to single out just two. And they are Eddie Quaintance and Darla Weissenberg. And I would just like for them to stand for a second.

I'm going to tell you why. Mrs. Quaintance was my sixth

grade teacher.

Mrs. Weissenberg was my seventh grade teacher.

Mrs. Weissenberg is the person who steered me to a foundation in Boston that you have heard about, called "A Better Chance," and onto a new level of educational challenge, because she thought I was special.

And Mrs. Quaintance is the person who taught me to believe I was special. And that made it possible for me to accomplish something with the opportunities that were handed to me.

And I am very honored that you are here with us today.

Finally, I want to thank my new boss and friend, Janet Reno. I was hoping she wouldn't tell that hug story.

I have to work with these people, you know.

The Attorney General's leadership of and commitment to this Department and to the principle for which it is named are extraordinary and palpable. And her compassion makes it possible for her to keep her own heavy responsibilities, and ours, in perspective.

I consider myself and the nation fortunate, indeed, to have her where she is.

Some say that the Civil Rights Division has lacked leadership, that it has languished in a leadership vacuum.

I have to tell you after 11 working days on the job, that I have learned otherwise, that otherwise is true, because in this interregnum, and in so many others, in some 34 years in the division, Jim Turner has served with ability and grace as Acting Assistant Attorney General.

We calculate that Jim has served longer--I think this is right--in his accumulated terms as acting AAG than seven out of the eleven former appointed AAGs.

Many, many people--mostly reporters--have asked me what our agenda will be in the Civil Rights Division.

And I have usually replied that it's not time quite yet to answer that; that only after a few days on the job, the best I can say is that our formal goals will be developed collaboratively, in consult with the advocacy groups and with ourselves.

Then I usually add that I have a personal commitment to defending the Voting Rights Act against the several recent attacks on its gains to making banks make lending decisions fairly to developing an expansive jurisprudence under the Americans With Disabilities Act and to broadening opportunities for minorities and women to equal advancement in the work place and in the schools.

But the unifying theme of our work is quite a bit broader than that. The real and ultimate agenda is to reclaim the American conscience. Our true mission is to restore the great moral imperative that civil rights is finally all about.

This nation, as I see it, has a creed. That creed is deeply rooted in the concepts of equality, opportunity and fair play.

Our faith in that creed has made us a prideful nation, and enabled us to accomplish feats of extraordinary achievement and uplift.

And yet, in the same instant, we see racism and unfairness all around us. In the same instant, we see acts of unspeakable cruelty and even violence because of race, or ethnicity, or gender, or disability, or sexual orientation.

They present a legal problem, to be sure. But they also pose a moral dilemma. How can a national founded on such principles, dedicated to such a creed, sometimes fall so short?

And let me assure you: That is a question asked not just by intellectuals and pundits of each other. It is asked by

simple, every day people of each other and of themselves, in barber shops and across kitchen tables, in the mind's silent voice on the bus ride home from work, in the still, small times when conscience calls.

To be a civil rights lawyer, you must understand what the laws mean. But to understand civil rights, you must understand how it feels; how it feels to be hounded by uncertainty and fear about whether you will be fairly treated; how it feels to be trapped in someone else's stereotype, to have people look right through you.

To understand civil rights, you must understand that the victims of discrimination feel a deep and helpless pain, and ask themselves bitterly the very question of morality I have just posed.

And what will be our answer? Will we sit back and claim that we have no answer, or that it is not our business to devise one?

Will we shrink from the moral dimension of our work? Well, let me tell you now: We will not shrink.

The answer to the question is, ``No.'' There is a moral dimension. And we will assert it.

And the reason, the reason I make you that unequivocal pledge is simply this: I have a personal stake in the business of the Civil Rights Division.

I know what we can accomplish through vigorous enforcement, through calm determination, and through effort.

I know that the business of the Civil Rights Division has opened up jobs to black workers. I know that the Civil Rights Division has opened up apartments to Hispanic families.

I know that the Civil Rights Division has opened up whole new vistas of active lift to people with disabilities.

I know that the Civil Rights Division has vindicated the rights of Asians and Jews and so many others to be safe from organized bigotry; the right of young black men to be safe from excessive police force.

I know that the Civil Rights Division has made it possible for prisoners to retain their human dignity even when they surrender their freedom.

And I know that the Civil Rights Division has helped create the most integrated Congressional districts in the South, and the most integrated classrooms in the world.

I know because I have lived it. I know because I can look around this room and see every kind of woman and man, joined here in one brief but illustrative moment of harmony, common in our humanity and in our resolve.

And I know that when the American people see what I see here right now, they see the same possibility, the same hope, and the beginning of the answer to the question of conscience that the American creed poses.

Our divisions are of our own creation. They are not beyond our power to resolve them.

Our cynicism is but our own fear. It is not beyond our courage to conquer.

Our despair is of our own relenting. It is not beyond our faith.

We have but so many moments, I think, where the confluence of opportunity and resolve is in this wondrous balance. And so it is right now.

This Administration, with its commitment to forward movement, now greets this nation, yearning to reclaim its moral center. Let us meet this opportunity with sufficient commitment, with sufficient resolve and with wisdom. Destiny asks of us no less.

Of my new colleagues in the Civil Rights Division, I ask

from you your most solemn commitment and resolve, and all of the force of intellect I know you amply possess.

Bring to your task, and to ours, your hard work and your faith in the American promise. And with it, we can create opportunity. And we can also inspire hope.

Bring to this task intellectual honesty, determination, imagination, and humanity. And we cannot and will not fail.

Of the American people, those here and elsewhere, I ask you only this: Give us your commitment to equality. Give us your sense of history and of the great unfinished agenda which derives from it.

And we will set your hearts afire, and help you know what I know about what is possible in America.

Dr. King said, ``Cowardice asks the question: Is it safe? Expediency asks the question: Is it polite? Vanity asks the question: Is it popular? But conscience, conscience must ask the question: Is it right?''

Ladies and gentlemen, as American citizens, so must we.

We may not redeem the sleeping soul of this great republic and recreate the civil rights consensus that made possible the moral high points of this nation in my tenure, or even in my lifetime. But let us begin.

Thank you very much.

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