

REMARKS OF SENATOR BOB DOLE
WASHBURN UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW
TOPEKA, KANSAS -- MAY 14, 1983

THE MEMBERS OF THIS GRADUATING CLASS CAN NOW CLAIM THE HONOR OF HAVING SURVIVED THREE YEARS OF THE MOST DEMANDING EDUCATIONAL CURRICULUM THAT CAN BE UNDERTAKEN BY ANY STUDENT. I CAN ASSURE THE PARENTS WHO MAY BE PRESENT TODAY THAT THE VALUE OF THAT EDUCATION -- AS I CAN ATTEST FROM MY OWN EXPERIENCE AT WASHBURN LAW SCHOOL -- IS SECOND TO NONE, AND THAT THESE GRADUATING STUDENTS ARE WELL PREPARED TO ENTER THE LEGAL PROFESSION.

EXPERIENCE SHOWS THAT THE PATHS THAT THESE GRADUATING STUDENTS WILL TAKE FROM THIS DAY FORWARD WILL RADICALLY DIVERGE. SOME WILL ENTER PRIVATE PRACTICE; SOME WILL BEGIN THEIR CAREERS IN GOVERNMENT AGENCIES; SOME WILL GO INTO CORPORATE WORK, AND YET OTHERS, PERHAPS, INTO POLITICS. LAW IS A WAY OF LIFE THAT FINDS MANY EXPRESSIONS; AND EACH OF THESE DIRECTIONS IS AN EQUALLY AUSPICIOUS BEGINNING FOR A NEW LAWYER. BUT WHATEVER PATH IS CHOSEN, EACH GRADUATE TODAY WILL SOON DISCOVER WHAT ALL OTHERS BEFORE HAVE DISCOVERED: THAT THE REAL EDUCATION WHICH THEY SEEK WILL COME ONLY AFTER SOME YEARS OF STRIVING TO RESOLVE THE COMPETING INTERESTS OF THE PEOPLE THEY WILL REPRESENT.

I DON'T AGREE WITH THOSE WHO HOLD THAT LAWYERS ARE THE SOURCE OF THE DIFFICULTIES WE FACE IN MODERN AMERICA. I THINK SOMETIMES THAT THE PROCESS OF ADVOCACY, CHALLENGE, AND

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CONFRONTATION THAT IS INHERENT IN THE LAW FRIGHTENS THOSE WHO WOULD BE MORE COMFORTABLE IN A WORLD WITHOUT CONFLICTS. OF COURSE, THERE ARE LAWYERS WHO HAVE NO MOTIVE HIGHER THAN PERSONAL GAIN, AND WHO GIVE NO CONSIDERATION TO THE IMPACT THAT THEIR ACTIONS HAVE ON THE INSTITUTIONS OF OUR SOCIETY. BUT THOSE ARE IN THE MINORITY; AND THE INCONTROVERTIBLE FACT REMAINS THAT MUCH OF OUR PROGRESS IN CREATING A FAIRER, MORE OPEN SOCIETY HAS COME BECAUSE LAWYERS HAVE HAD THE COURAGE TO CHALLENGE OUR PEOPLE AND THEIR LEADERS TO HIGHER STANDARDS IN THE CONDUCT OF THEIR AFFAIRS.

MY OWN EXPERIENCE, FROM COUNTY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE TO THE UNITED STATES SENATE, CONVINCES ME THAT THE TASK THAT YOU, AND ALL LAWYERS, ARE CALLED TO IS SIMPLY THIS: THAT YOU USE THE INSTRUMENT OF CHANGE AND SOCIAL POLICY THAT IS THE LAW AS A FORCE FOR RECONCILIATION AND RENEWAL AT ALL LEVELS OF OUR NATIONAL LIFE. IF YOU ARE NOT UP TO THAT TASK, THEN YOU MIGHT AS WELL PUT THE DIPLOMAS AWAY AND CHOOSE ANOTHER VOCATION, FOR YOU WILL BE AN UNWANTED OBSTACLE TO THE GROWTH OF THE COMMUNITY IN WHICH YOU WORK. IF YOU ARE UP TO THAT TASK, THEN BE SURE THAT YOU ARE NEEDED AND THAT THERE IS WORK FOR YOU TO DO.