

REMARKS BY
SPEAKER CASPER R. TAYLOR, JR.
ON THE OCCASION OF THE
PRESENTATION OF THE
SECOND ANNUAL SPEAKER'S MEDALLION

I AM HONORED TODAY TO PRESENT, ON BEHALF OF THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES, THE SPEAKER'S MEDALLION, WHICH IS AWARDED ANNUALLY TO AN INDIVIDUAL IN RECOGNITION OF OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC WHICH HAS ENRICHED OR IMPROVED OUR QUALITY OF LIFE. THE AWARD ITSELF IS A SILVER MEDAL THAT HAS BEEN CREATED TO SYMBOLIZE THE HISTORIC AUTHORITY AND PURPOSE OF THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES WITH AN ENGRAVING OF THE MACE ON ONE SIDE AGAINST A BACKDROP DEPICTING THE MARYLAND FLAG. THE MACE HAS BEEN IN THE POSSESSION OF THIS HOUSE FOR MORE THAN 300 YEARS, AND IS CARRIED IN BY THE CHIEF CLERK EACH DAY WE ARE IN SESSION. ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MEDAL IS ENGRAVED THE 1794 GREAT SEAL OF THE STATE OF MARYLAND AND THE WORDS: "INDUSTRY THE MEANS AND PLENTY THE RESULT".

THIS IS THE SECOND YEAR THAT WE WILL BESTOW THE SPEAKER'S MEDALLION. YOU WILL RECALL THAT OUR FIRST RECIPIENT LAST YEAR WAS DR. WILLIAM RICHARDSON, WHO AT THAT TIME WAS RETIRING AS PRESIDENT OF JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY. HE SIGNIFIED THE EXCELLENCE REPRESENTED BY THE SPEAKER'S MEDALLION NOT ONLY FOR HIS DISTINGUISHED CAREER IN EDUCATION AND ADMINISTRATION AT THAT PREMIER UNIVERSITY, BUT ALSO FOR THE COUNTLESS HOURS THAT HE DEVOTED TO HELPING US IMPLEMENT AND SHAPE HEALTH CARE PUBLIC POLICY BY SERVING AS THE FIRST CHAIR OF THE HEALTH CARE ACCESS AND COST COMMISSION. THE 1993 LANDMARK HEALTH CARE REFORM ACT FASHIONED IN LARGE MEASURE BY THIS HOUSE WAS ALSO A PRODUCT OF DR. RICHARDSON'S HARD WORK AND VISION AS A VOLUNTEER ON THE COMMISSION.

TODAY, WE HONOR TWO KINDRED SPIRITS WHO SHARE MUCH IN COMMON WITH EACH OTHER. JUDGE ROBERT C. MURPHY PRESIDED OVER THE COURT OF SPECIAL APPEALS FROM 1967 THROUGH 1972, WHEN HE WAS APPOINTED CHIEF JUDGE OF THE COURT OF APPEALS. SINCE THAT TIME, HE HAS PRESIDED OVER MARYLAND'S HIGHEST COURT WHICH HAS ISSUED OPINIONS THAT HAVE TOUCHED THE LIVES OF ALL MARYLANDERS. HE HAS SAGELY INTERPRETED THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WHAT THE LAW SAYS AND WHAT THE LAW DOES. HE HAS HELPED SHAPE JUDICIAL POLICY FOR MORE THAN A QUARTER CENTURY, AND HIS ANNUAL STATE OF THE JUDICIARY ADDRESS HAS LED TO NUMEROUS REFORMS OF THE JUDICIAL PROCESS ITSELF. EVEN THOUGH OUR COURT SYSTEM SUFFERS FROM THE SAME PRESSURES OF DELAY AND MOUNTING CASELOADS THAT TROUBLE MOST URBAN JURISDICTIONS, JUDGE MURPHY'S VISION AND ADMINISTRATIVE ABILITY HAVE MOVED MARYLAND'S CIRCUIT COURT TRIAL SYSTEM TO THE FOREFRONT OF NATIONAL ATTENTION WITH INNOVATIVE COMPUTER PROGRAMS, NOVEL SCHEDULING TECHNIQUES, AND THE EFFICIENCY FOR WHICH THAT SYSTEM IS KNOWN.

CHIEF JUDGE MURPHY ASCENDED THROUGH THE LEGAL RANKS: FROM ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL TO DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL AND THEN ATTORNEY GENERAL. IN 1972, HE BECAME THE YOUNGEST CHIEF JUDGE OF THE COURT OF APPEALS SINCE THE REVOLUTION.

TODAY, WE ALSO HONOR CHIEF JUDGE ROBERT F. SWEENEY. JUDGE SWEENEY BEGAN HIS LONG CAREER OF PUBLIC SERVICE WITH TEN YEARS IN THE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, RISING FROM AN ASSISTANT TO DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL. IN 1971, JUDGE SWEENEY WAS SWORN IN AS CHIEF JUDGE OF THE NEWLY CREATED DISTRICT COURT OF MARYLAND. AT

THAT TIME, THE COURT SYSTEM WAS A HODGEPODGE OF MUNICIPAL COURTS AND PEOPLE'S COURTS THAT LACKED LEADERSHIP AND A UNIFIED CLEAR MISSION. HE WAS GIVEN THE PIONEERING TASK OF SHAPING, BUILDING, AND CREATING AN EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE DISTRICT COURT SYSTEM, WHICH HE HAS ACCOMPLISHED OVER THE YEARS WITH STYLE AND VIGOR. TODAY, THE DISTRICT COURT SEES MORE OF MARYLAND'S CITIZENS THAN ANY OTHER COURT -- AND FOR MANY THIS COURT IS THEIR FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH OUR JUDICIAL SYSTEM. JUDGE SWEENEY'S ABILITY TO EFFECTIVELY ADMINISTER THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A CENTRALIZED CALENDAR, COMPUTER SYSTEM AND DOCKET HAVE BROUGHT MUCH CREDIT TO OUR STATE AND HAVE ADVANCED THE CAUSE OF MAKING JUSTICE ACCESSIBLE TO OUR CITIZENS.

AS YOU CAN SEE, BOTH OF THESE JUDGES HAVE A LOT IN COMMON. OVER THE YEARS THEY HAVE REMAINED GOOD FRIENDS AND THE PARALLELS OF THEIR PUBLIC SERVICE CAREERS ARE AMAZING. MOST PEOPLE DON'T KNOW THAT THEY WERE BOTH BORN IRISH CATHOLICS IN THE SAME YEAR -- 1926. JUDGE MURPHY IS ACTUALLY ONE MONTH YOUNGER THAN JUDGE SWEENEY, BUT THAT DOESN'T COUNT BECAUSE JUDGE SWEENEY SPENT ONE DAY AS A MEMBER OF THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES IN 1959 DURING A SPECIAL SESSION; AND AS ALL OF US KNOW, THE ADVANTAGE ALWAYS STAYS WITH THE HOUSE. THEY ARE BOTH FROM BALTIMORE AND THEY BOTH SERVED THEIR NATION IN THE NAVY FROM 1944 THROUGH 1946. BOTH OF THESE GENTLEMEN WILL BE VERY YOUNG 70-YEAR-OLDS ON THEIR NEXT BIRTHDAY, AND UNDER OUR CONSTITUTION WILL TAKE MANDATORY RETIREMENT.

BOTH JUDGES CLEARLY REPRESENT THE BEST OF OUR TRADITION OF PUBLIC SERVICE. THEY HAVE TRIED TO CHANGE THE WORLD IN THEIR OWN RESPECTIVE WAYS, BY MAKING MARYLAND A MORE JUST AND EQUAL PLACE TO LIVE FOR ALL OF ITS CITIZENS. EACH HAS SET A MORAL EXAMPLE FOR OUR CITIZENS, AND MORE IMPORTANTLY, FOR OTHER JUDGES TO FOLLOW. FINALLY, EACH HAS LIVED UP TO THE IDEAL OF BEING TRUE TO THEMSELVES FIRST AND THEN TRUE TO THE STATE THAT THEY HAVE SERVED FOR ALMOST THREE DECADES. AND SOMEHOW, THROUGH ALL OF IT, THEY HAVE RETAINED THEIR KEEN WIT AND TREMENDOUS SENSE OF HUMOR.

AND SO, AS SPEAKER, ON BEHALF OF EACH OF OUR MEMBERS, I SAY TO CHIEF JUDGE MURPHY AND CHIEF JUDGE SWEENEY, WITH EQUAL MEASURES OF ADMIRATION AND GRATITUDE, THAT THIS CHAMBER TODAY PAYS HOMAGE TO YOU; AND WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME, EFFORT, AND COMMITMENT TO PUBLIC SERVICE AS I NOW PRESENT EACH OF YOU WITH THE SPEAKER'S MEDALLION.