

## **OPENING STATEMENT OF WILLIAM H. BRIGHT, JR.**

Good afternoon Chairman McDonald, Chairman Lawlor and members of the Judiciary Committee.

My name is Bill Bright, and it is truly a pleasure to appear before you. I am both honored and humbled to be considered for a position on the Connecticut Superior Court. I want to thank Governor Rell for putting my name before you. I want to thank the Committee for the time and effort it commits to this important task.

I firmly believe that you are a product of your environment, and I have been blessed to have learned from, been mentored by and, most importantly, raised by those who have taught me not only what it means to be a good lawyer, but what it means to be a fair and good person.

I was born in Camden, NJ in 1962. I grew up in the small town of Stratford, NJ. I am the oldest of three brothers. From the time my brothers and I were 4, 3 and 2 years old, my mother had the sole responsibility for raising us. She did a wonderful job stressing the values that guide us today- personal responsibility, treating others as you would want to be treated, and the importance of education. My grandparents, aunts and uncles - mostly first generation Italian immigrants, showed us the importance of family and hard work. While money was never abundant, we always felt safe and nurtured. In return, we were expected to give our best and do our best at any endeavor.

I graduated from high school in 1980 and was the first person in my family to attend college. I went to Dickinson College in Carlisle, PA, where I graduated in 1984. From there, I went to the University of Chicago Law School and graduated with honors in 1987.

Upon graduating from law school I joined the Hartford Office of Cummings & Lockwood and was an associate and then partner in the firm's Litigation Department. I was Chair of the Litigation Department from 2001-2003. In October, 2003, the Hartford Office of Cummings & Lockwood joined McCarter & English, a Northeast Regional law firm, based in Newark, NJ. I have been a partner at M&E since then. While at M&E I have been the Practice Group Leader for the Firm's Business Litigation practice and the Managing Partner of the Hartford Office.

Up until today, I have spent my entire legal career working in the same office in CityPlace in Hartford. For over 20 years, I have had the privilege to work with and learn from some of the best attorneys in the State. My practice has centered on resolving business disputes of almost every type. I have represented individuals, large and small businesses, governmental bodies, land trusts and non-profit organizations. I have also handled a number of pro bono criminal, family and civil rights matters.

I have tried cases in Connecticut courts, in courts around the country, and in arbitration proceedings. I have also had the opportunity to argue before the Connecticut Supreme Court and the Second Circuit Court of Appeals. The cases have ranged from helping individuals resolve family business disputes, to defending large industry leaders against claims in excess of

\$100,000,000, to representing two Connecticut towns in a significant water rights dispute. The one common denominator of all of these cases has been that they were all important to our clients, and required of me and those with whom I work the same high level of dedication and effort, regardless of the amount at stake.

Through my experiences I have had to study and learn several different areas of law, as well as several different businesses, technologies and fields. This challenge has always kept the practice exciting and invigorating.

My experiences have also taught me that how you treat people is as important as what you know or the substance of what you say. Although being a good lawyer requires aggressive advocacy on behalf of one's clients, I have always worked with opposing counsel and the court to make the process move as smoothly as possible. Cooperation between the lawyers and the court to bring a matter to a fair closure, whether through trial, settlement or plea should always be the goal. I have always tried to follow this philosophy as an attorney and would hope to do so as a judge.

Personally, I have been married to my wife Jennifer for over 22 years. We have been together for 27 years, having met as freshmen at Dickinson College. We have four boys- Chris (19), Kevin (16), Tim (13) and Greg (12). We have lived in Columbia since January, 1988. We have always tried to be active in Town. I have coached youth sports for 15 years, and am the Chair of Columbia's Recreation Commission. I am also the Town's hearing officer for zoning violation disputes. Jennifer recently completed a four year term on the Board of Education and is currently on the Library Building Committee.

While I gain great satisfaction from volunteer service to our community, after 20 years in private practice, I very much have a desire to make public service my vocation. For someone who loves the law and being in the courtroom, I can think of no better public service than being a judge. While I knew from the first time I participated in a debate in sixth grade that I wanted to be a lawyer, I never dreamt that I would have the opportunity in front of me today. I assure you that if confirmed I will perform the duties of a judge diligently, fairly and humbly.

Thank you again for your time and consideration.