

OPENING REMARKS OF BARBARA BRAZZEL-MASSARO

Good morning Chairman McDonald and Chairman Lawlor and Members of the Judiciary Committee.

It is my pleasure to have this opportunity to appear before you today and answer any questions you may have about my nomination for a Superior Court Judge.

I would also like to take a moment to thank Governor Rell for bestowing this distinct honor and privilege in nominating me for this position.

Here with me today is my husband Carl Massaro and some of my colleagues and friends.

By way of personal background, I was born in Washington D.C. the third of four children with two older brothers and one younger sister. My father devoted himself to law enforcement and passed away just two years ago.

My mother who is 82 years young has just recently retired. She has been my greatest supporter. She insisted that her "girls" have the opportunity to attend college and be given the chance to develop a career. Without her, I would not be honored with this nomination. Although she gave up her opportunity to accept a college scholarship, she worked to give each of her children educational opportunities and thus I learned the value of hard work. By her example, I have learned humility, honesty, compassion and sacrifice. She has taught me that you always treat others the way you would want to be treated. All I hope is that I am my mother's daughter. I am forever indebted to her.

I attended Montclair State College. While there, I developed a strong work ethic and time management skills by balancing a full course load with work study, college clubs and a daily commitment to train and compete on the gymnastic team. These skills have remained with me.

I graduated with a teaching degree. I taught and coached for three years. During this time, I realized when working with a friend who practiced law that I thoroughly enjoyed not just the intellectual aspect of the law but working with people to effect positive results.

I attended Western New England School of Law and while there worked as a full time law librarian as a way to support myself and pay tuition. After graduation I was fortunate to earn a highly regarded clerkship in the county courts in New Jersey. This one-year clerkship was my opportunity to learn the operation of the court system, write numerous decisions for the judges and become comfortable with the courtroom.

During the course of my New Jersey clerkship, it became obvious that I was destined to marry my now husband of 25 years, Carl, and move here to Connecticut to redirect my career path. I worked in the Milford J.D. as a temporary assistant clerk. In this position I now had the opportunity to learn the intricacies of the Connecticut Court System.

My judicial clerkships gave me a wealth of knowledge of the courtroom that made an easy transition in 1983 to a position as a litigator with the City of Bridgeport.

I have been representing the taxpayers of Bridgeport for over 24 years. I thank the City for the wonderful opportunities I have been given to provide legal representation to the employees, officials and taxpayers. I believe that no other job absent a judicial appointment could give the breadth of experience and unparalleled opportunity to practice law in so many varied areas, including the operations of a city owned airport, park and zoo, or addressing antitrust law, civil rights actions, statutory interpretation, inverse condemnation, negligence actions, and administrative appeals for a number of land use boards. I aided in the re-write of zoning regulations and master plans, and negotiated agreements for the Barnum Museum, City ambulance services, the Beardsley Zoo, Bridgeport parks and the Harbor Yard Arena. I did this, in addition to a full case assignment.

During the last 8 years, I have tried approximately 25 cases with almost all being jury cases. However, trials are the last resort so I have prepared approximately 50 civil actions to obtain dismissals or summary judgments favorable to the City and employees avoiding the time and expense of trial. Additionally, any trial attorney is aware that in some instances settlements are best for all parties and I have successfully entered into settlement agreements in a number of cases. I have written briefs and argued at least eight cases to the Supreme Court of Connecticut and a number of cases at the Appellate level. I have also written briefs and argued approximately seven cases in the Federal Court before the Second Circuit Court of Appeals.

In 1989 I had the honor of being appointed City Attorney and accepted the supervision of the full and part time counsel and support staff, coordinated all legal opinions and legal representation for the City Boards, Commissions and Officials as well as continued all administrative duties of the office until 1992.

While City Attorney, God gave to my husband and myself the most beautiful gift in the world, our daughter Caci. As I tell her God gave us only one child because she is everything good in one little body. But working in the Office of the City Attorney has allowed me to remain an active part in my daughter's life to attend interests such as dance, theater productions, music recitals and sports events. As a mother you become well grounded and I have learned the importance of patience and family priorities to add the human factor as an element to the practice of law and the approach on the bench.

Beginning in 1985 and until today, I have served as an attorney trial referee and fact finder. This work permits me to analyze and utilize decision-making skills beyond the legal issues addressed in the Office of the City Attorney. I have served our legal community by participating as a member on the Federal Civil Justice Reform Act Committee, by serving as chairperson for the Land Use Committee and a member of the Board of Directors for the Bridgeport Bar Association. I have been a guest lecturer for the Practicing Law Institute in New York as well as the Connecticut Association of Municipal Attorneys. I am state certified for police instruction and teach on a regular basis. I serve in my town on the Police Commission and I am a member of the State Police Commissioners Association.

On a personal level, I volunteer for Swim Across the Sound to raise money to aide women and men who are affected by breast cancer as well as other forms of cancer and since 2004 I have been a co-chair to the Sacred Heart University Theater Renovation Committee to update and redesign the theater utilized by the community. I assisted in forming a new non-

profit organization to open a food pantry within the City of Bridgeport. I have been humbled by taking part in the "Read Aloud Program" with a first grade class in Bridgeport.

This nomination is the ultimate compliment for a person who has devoted her entire life to public service. If confirmed, I will welcome this change in public service and hope to bring my life experiences, my trial skills and my love of the law to the bench.