

OPENING STATEMENT
DAVID M. SHERIDAN

Good afternoon, Chairman McDonald, Chairman Lawlor, and members of the Judiciary Committee. I am deeply honored by this nomination and I thank Governor Rell and this Committee for considering me for the post of Superior Court judge. Let me briefly describe my personal background and my relevant legal and community experience.

I am the middle child in a family of five children. We were a military family, and that has had a lasting influence on me. My father was a pilot, a career naval officer, and the strong center of our family. But my mother was the glue that held the family together. At one point my mother was home with five children all under the age of ten, and my dad was often deployed overseas for up to six months at a time. They made their marriage work, and it lasted until the end of their lives; and my brothers and sisters and I are all the better for it.

After he retired from military service, my father embarked on an equally extraordinary second career at Pratt & Whitney. Our family moved to Connecticut and settled in Manchester. After a nomadic military life, with homes in five different places in my first eleven years, Manchester became the place where my roots are, and the town where I eventually chose to live and raise my own family.

Here today with me is my wife of 31 years, Kathy. We have been blessed with three daughters. Our oldest daughter Shannon is a graduate of Stonehill College and Northeastern University, and works as a physician's assistant in the emergency room of a community hospital outside of Boston. Our middle daughter Kellie is a graduate of the University of Vermont, and is studying for a master's degree in psychology at Central Connecticut while she works with at-risk youth for the Manchester Youth Services Bureau. Our youngest daughter Taylor is a sophomore - and A student - at the Connecticut International Baccalaureate Academy in East Hartford. They are intelligent, hardworking, kind and generous young women who will make the world a better place - and we are forever proud of them.

My community involvement in Manchester has ranged from coaching youth sports, to helping starting a private girl's basketball league, to serving on Board of Education committees to rebuild our schools, to volunteering for local charities, to three terms of elected service on our Board of Directors, and most recently, serving as the Town Attorney. It has all been personally fulfilling and rewarding. There are programs, facilities, and services in Manchester that are the result - in some small part - of my efforts, and I do take some pride in that.

My career in the law began when I entered University of Connecticut Law School in 1981. I had a choice to go to the regular day program or enter the evening division - night law school. We chose night law school because I was paying my own way through law school and we had a three-month old daughter, and I needed to work. At the time, I recall a great deal of anxiety over that decision, feeling I would be disadvantaged. In fact, it provided me an unequalled opportunity. During law school, I

was able to work full-time during the day at a law firm, and I came into daily contact with the four partners of that firm, Bob Cohen, Jack Channin, Earl Phillips and Dennis Cavanaugh. I carried the bag for all of these lawyers – especially Jack Channin – and learned a lifetime of legal excellence from them. I sat at the counsel table for at least twelve trials to verdict before I graduated from law school. It was a modern day legal apprenticeship: they taught me, they mentored me, they demonstrated by example what went into becoming a good lawyer. Best of all, when I graduated from law school, they offered me a job. It means a great deal to me that today I can publicly thank them and acknowledge the great debt that I owe to them.

I was sworn into the bar in December, 1985. For the first five years of my career, I was a workhorse associate at Cohen & Channin – I did a lot of litigation, and a little bit of everything else – wills, divorces, real estate closings, leases, minor criminal matters, collections, and anything else that needed to be done. It gave me a broad base of familiarity with many areas of the law, and that has served me well over the years.

In 1990, I joined my current firm, Levy & Dronney, and since then I have concentrated my practice on civil trial work. During my time with Levy & Dronney I've litigated a wide range of civil matters, both as plaintiff and defendant, in the federal and state courts. I've tried cases involving medical malpractice, personal injury, wrongful death, product liability, contracts, franchises, patents, construction, real property, land use matters, and municipal law. I tried to think back and I can recall at least 25 jury trials that I have tried to a verdict and there are probably more that I have forgotten, and of course I have tried many, many non-jury matters. I've handled approximately fifteen cases on appeal in the Connecticut Appellate and Supreme Courts and two in the Second Circuit Court of Appeals. I've also done arbitrations, mediations, and some contested matters before administrative agencies. Over the years I've been involved in a variety of pro bono and bar association activities, including serving as a member of the Connecticut Bar Association's Ethics Committee for the past twelve years.

I believe I have acquired skills and abilities that are well-suited to a Superior Court judge. If I am appointed, I know I have a lot to learn. I am excited by that prospect, and eager to learn new aspects of the law and work in new areas within our system of justice. The work will be hard, but it will also be important, and meaningful, and personally fulfilling.

I want to assure you that if I am confirmed, I will serve the people of the State of Connecticut not only with all of my professional skill, but also with patience, humility and compassion. All who enter my courtroom or my chambers will be treated with dignity and respect. "Equal justice" will be more than a catch phrase – it will be my daily mission.

Once again, I thank you for the opportunity to appear before you, and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

Thank you.