INSTALLATION OF NEW CHIEF JUDGE

SPEECH FOR

ROSEMARY LEDET

Hello everyone! It gives me great pride to be here to witness the installation of our new Chief Judge for the District Court of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ brings so much to the “party” as she adds her special touch to the court. Today I would like to congratulate Judge \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and share some thoughts of what service in this capacity means to me and how my tenure as chief judge informed my decisions and ultimately, my point of view regarding management, leadership and interpersonal and professional relationships.

Judge Oliver Wendell Holmes once said, “Beware how you take away hope from any human being.” I don’t think he was referring to the sartorial challenge of wearing the **LBR**- for those of you who may not be up on the latest trends in “JUDGE” Magazine, that stands for, “LITTLE BLACK ROBE.” (**Say this with exaggerating emphasis and wait for the laugh**). Of course we **CAN** apply that statement to the disenfranchised and victims involved in the cases we hear, but I think this statement goes deeper. We, as judges, are mandated to consider **everyone’s** thoughts hopes and dreams before we render decisions in any situations. As the chief judge, I learned compassion on a much deeper level and that has informed so many facets of my life and work.

(**Say this and wait for the laugh**) I’m sure we’ve heard the saying, “People who love sausage and respect the law should never watch either being made,” however, I prefer to look to the positive benefits of life in the judiciary and acknowledge the characteristics within me that have been discovered, reinforced and strengthened as a result of my service as chief judge.

As chief judge, I’ve learned that one must be an effective manager. Casey Stengel said, “The secret of successful managing is to keep the five guys who hate you away from the four guys who haven’t made up their minds.” Thanks Casey! Fortunately for all of us, our experience and intelligence allows us to maintain a professional demeanor…. most of the time. As a manager of such respected individuals as the judges who serve in our court system, I developed a deeper respect for how to create and hopefully maintain a framework of heightened efficiency, productivity and communication. That doesn’t mean that all of the cogs in the wheel were consistently and perpetually well oiled. It means that the more I focused on keeping all of those juggling balls in the air, the sooner I was able to identify and implement correction and resolution to the weaker aspects in that context. We have all seen how quickly our infrastructure can crumble and an effective manager works toward balancing all facets and procedures. No detail is too small, and as a manager, it’s never “someone else’s responsibility. **You** hold the context.

Throughout my tenure, I strove to identify the aspects essential in effective management of our judiciary team. Of course, as I think of Casey Stengel, some lyrics from the musical “Damn Yankees” come to mind. Quite simply, as the song goes, “Ya gotta have heart….” It also helps to have patience, the ability to mediate, and a really good sense of humor! Some synonyms for the word “patience” are stoicism, self-restraint, composure, understanding, imperturbability. Yes indeed!! A valuable manager definitely needs to possess all of those traits!! We are all naturally passionate about our knowledge, point of view, and determination to advocate for the justice we so fiercely define and defend. Sometimes we don’t all agree…. Sometimes it takes way too long to be able to gather all of the players in one room to even see if we agree or disagree. It all takes patience. Once all of the parties required are present…in some form or another, the fun begins!! As the fruits of our collective compassion and opinion are harvested, there is the possibility of dissension. Let me clarify that further…There’s a **PROBABILITY** of dissension!!! An effective chief judge as manager will have the opportunity to hone essential mediation skills, and I promise you, all involved will be the better for the experience. Of course a sense of humor really helps and if it that sense of humor isn’t appropriate while actually “in the trenches,” I learned as a chief judge to be more competent at testing the waters and expressing my thoughts effectively and consciously.

There’s one more trait that I really learned to value, and that is empathy. As lawyers, we advocate for our clients. As judges, we expand our trajectory and do our best to balance both sides of a story or case. As chief judge, one must hold a context of empathy for everyone-the judges, the lawyers, the clients, the defendants-the whole 9 yards! I invite each one of you to expand your empathy skills. Although technically we cannot “walk a mile” in someone else’s shoes, try to imagine how you would feel from your adversary’s or colleague’s point of view.

The key to being effective at anything one does-whether as an attorney, a judge or a chief judge, is to constantly peel away layers of inauthenticity in order to identify and reach the essence of a situation. It’s hard work, and like an onion, it can bring tears to your eyes, but by demonstrating patience, mediation skills, humor, empathy and common sense, everyone wins and learns. In reality, striving for validity and truth is what we do. When applied to the position of chief judge, it makes for a significant experience.

Once again, I want to extend sincere congratulations to Judge \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (**Turn to her and say**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, I wish you all the best for your term as our chief judge. You bring so much to this group and I want to acknowledge you for the natural leader you are already. We are inspired by your dedication, intelligence, compassion, faith and devotion to your family, friends and causes and I am eager to experience your contribution to our court in this new position.

Thank you!