**FAREWELL SPEECH**

**FOR**

**DAN BORNSTEIN**

Hello everyone... as most of you know, today we bid farewell to a man whose lengthy list of talents and accomplishments is only surpassed by the endless list of people that respect, admire, and truly love him. Mike Williams is the kind of person one can only hope and pray to meet in life... let alone to have the privilege of working side by side with someone of his outstanding character. Those of you that know Mike as I do, know that he is an exemplary human being... smart, patient, kind, humble, fair, and he has set the bar high as an extraordinarily hard worker ... these adjectives and attributes just **begin** to describe his character profile.... and **NO**. These comments are totally unsolicited... **NO ONE** told me to lay it on this thick... and besides, I can **barely** read his handwriting. (**Wait for the laugh**).

There’s much to be said for a man that has demonstrated such a high level of integrity, ethics, and, well... let’s call it what it **probably** is... **sleep deprivation** (**Wait for the laugh**). If anyone in this room even has a fleeting thought that you can out perform... out-outlast... out-hard work this man...**HA**!! **Skip it**. While most people try to get to the office before their boss, because we all know it doesn’t really look that great the other way around, that feat was almost impossible with someone like Mike, in fact I have a clear recollection of arriving **ONE TIME** before him. That’s **ONE TIME** in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ years. I had a brief due that day and I got in at about 5.00 in the morning because I knew I had to complete the work... and it had to be right. Although I was pretty sure I’d be alone in a nice quiet environment for several hours, at around 5.30, I began to hear **SOUNDS**.... guess from **WHERE**??? Yes.... Mike’s office. He had to leave early that day and he wanted to make **SURE** he put in a full, productive day of work on behalf of the State. It is because Mike Williams operates on that level of uncompromising integrity and accountability that we are all so fortunate to have worked with him and for him. His respect for his duties, his colleagues, and the state of New Jersey are unparalleled.

In a world in which ethics and principles seem to be losing their value and are fading, Mike Williams is a beacon. To Mike, this level of accountability is not just a code of conduct... it’s a **WAY OF LIFE**. One day, when Mike was working in the Appellate Bureau and Major League Baseball was dealing with the steroid scandal, a bunch of us appellate attorneys asked ourselves: If there was such a thing as appellate steroids -- some kind of magical drug that would turn us into superhuman appellate attorneys -- would we partake? Well, I'm not nearly as ethical as Mike, so I said, "Yeah, I'd take them." But Mike's ethics are unshakeable. He immediately said, "No." ... So I upped the ante by drawing some analogies. I said, "Mike, what if they paid huge amounts of money to the best appellate lawyers. What if taking appellate steroids could result in you making $30 million a year? What if **everyone else started** taking appellate steroids, and you knew that if you didn't take them, everyone else would pass you, and you'd probably get fired? What if you knew, for a fact, that no one was **ever** going to test for appellate steroids, in fact, you knew that the State, the judiciary, and the criminal justice system looked the other way when it came to this practice?" ... It didn't matter how many parameters I added. There was just no way that Mike was going to take appellate steroids. He was willing to pass on the $30 million salary, and he was going to risk getting fired. And it didn't matter whether anyone would test for appellate steroids because, he said, **he** would know that he was violating the law, and **he just couldn't live with himself** if that were the case. To this day, I think of that story.

Mike’s character, goodness, and integrity are not just superficial. He is good to the core.... **EXCEPT**... I gave him **ONE** directive... You know... like the expression “You had **ONE JOB**???” (**Wait for the laugh**).... I suppose even masterworks have their tiny flaws. For many years I made it clear to Mike that he **COULD NOT** leave the Division of Criminal Justice until **AFTER** I retired. ...Well, there goes **THAT ONE**!! (**Wait for the laugh**). Mike.... I want you to know that I’ve forgiven you... reluctantly. You’ve paid your dues, you’ve done exceptional work, and I **KNOW** you’ll be a phenomenal First Assistant Prosecutor for the Hunterdon County Prosecutor's Office. Although I will never be able to fill your shoes... we both know I’ve learned so much from you.... but **your email account may not be so lucky**. (**Wait for the laugh**). Keep checking that inbox...again...**and again...and...**

There’s an expression that teaches us, “I am part of all that I have met.” Mike, although I will never be able to fill your shoes, it has been a privilege to work with you and to observe your genuine goodness and devotion to your family, your passions, and your unwavering commitment to justice. Your good character permeates this office and we are all better for it. To your wonderful wife Leslie and your great children Jared and Caitlyn, we know you will continue to love and support Mike and that encouragement is the greatest reward for living a dedicated life. Mike, may your Buffalo Bills triumph... may the prey you hunt... in all aspects of the word... fall swiftly and deftly... may you find joy in losing yourself in a compelling Cormac McCarthy novel... and most of all, may you continue to live an exemplary life... one of service and conviction.... one that inspires and encourages every single life you encounter. This world will be a **MUCH** better place. Thank you all!!