

**Marquette University Law School
National Sports Law Institute
Master of the Game Award
Alumni Memorial Union
October 23, 2009**

Remarks of Dean Joseph D. Kearney

Let me begin by acknowledging—and thanking—those entities that have joined us in sponsoring this conference: the law firms of Foley & Lardner and Greenberg & Hoeschen and the State Bar of Wisconsin’s Sports and Entertainment Law Section. I hope that all of them—and all of you—will be with us next year, when we hold this conference in Eckstein Hall, which is dramatically rising at the Marquette interchange (in case you haven’t noticed).

I am pleased to have a small role in the presentation of the “Master of the Game Award” to the Tierney family. Let me explain why. It is not because I knew the late Joe Tierney, Jr. By the time I became dean in 2003, Mr. Tierney had passed away. But I know a bit about him, and I can report that the occasional confusion between the *Tierney* and *Kearney* surname, as sometimes pronounced in Milwaukee, has been very helpful to me in getting my phone calls returned. More importantly, for sports-law purposes, I have always admired the way those involved in the creation of our sports-law program in the late 1980’s and thereafter were willing to make the bold claim that Marquette Law School would have *the National Sports Law Institute*. That name has been both a constant inspiration and a constant implicit challenge to us. I like challenges.

But my own connection to the Tierneys comes through the late Mrs. Bernice Tierney, who passed away earlier this year, and her and Joe Jr.’s children, including in particular Mary Alice Tierney and Joe Tierney, III (of Meissner Tierney Fisher & Nichols), and Joe’s wife, Kay.

Permit me two observations. The first is what an extraordinary woman Bernice Tierney was. We would annually have lunch, together with Professors Matt Mitten and Paul Anderson and the three or four students

who were benefiting in terms of scholarship support from Mrs. Tierney's annual gifts. This lunch—which began perhaps as something that it was suggested to me at the beginning of my deanship I ought to do—became, quickly, something that I *wanted* to do and, indeed, to which all year I would look forward. Mrs. Tierney's combination of intelligence, grace, conversational skills, and wit and good humor was quite remarkable. The students would leave each year knowing, even beyond the economic support, what a privilege it was for them to be associated with Mrs. Tierney and the Tierney family. So would I.

The second observation is that none of this good humor or gentleness on the Tierney family's part should be mistaken for lack of academic rigor. Anyone who knows Joe Tierney, III, who graduated first in our Class of 1966, will appreciate this. I have distinct recollections, Joe, of your grilling the students at lunch—in a nice way, to be sure—about their curricular choices, past and future. The accounting and other basic business-law courses that Joe would urge would make quite an impression. Such intelligence and commitment to academic rigor come through with other family members as well. This seems an important message for me in the context of sports law, perhaps not so much for those involved in its study (who are already aware of it) as for those who might inaccurately stereotype the field.

In short, on behalf of the Law School, it has been a privilege for me to be associated with the Tierneys, in the past, today, and, no doubt, in the future as well. Warm congratulations to all the Tierneys on this occasion of your receiving the Master of the Game Award.