

Eastern District of Wisconsin Bar Association Annual Luncheon

Milwaukee Athletic Club

April 30, 2009

Remarks of Michael M. O'Hear

It is a great honor to receive the Judge Robert Warren Public Service Award. Having moved to Milwaukee in 2000, I regret that I never had an opportunity to meet Judge Warren. After my arrival, I soon began to hear about him, and I have come to appreciate the extraordinary esteem in which he is held. I am humbled and grateful to have my name associated with his today through this award.

I am also grateful that my wife Jennifer, Dean Kearney, and several of my Marquette Law School colleagues are here to share this moment. This is emblematic of the constant support I have received from them over the years—in counsel, encouragement, and friendship.

Nathan has generously described some of my activities. As I reflect on my efforts over the past few years, two themes stand out for me. Both could be placed under the heading of “building bridges.”

First, I have become quite interested in how a law school – and the members of a law faculty – may serve as a bridge between, on the one hand, the world of legal practice, judging, and lawmaking, and, on the other hand, the world of rich and diverse learning

contained in the modern university. The law school has a foot in both worlds, and its faculty members can thus play a vital role in facilitating conversation between lawyers and those with academic expertise in the sciences and humanities. Thus, in the journal I edit, the *Federal Sentencing Reporter*, articles by law professors appear side-by-side with articles by lawyers, judges, sociologists, psychologists, and others. We attempt to bring similar diversity of expertise to our conferences at Marquette.

A second theme involves bridging the local and the national. For instance, through our conferences and lectures at Marquette, we regularly bring to Milwaukee great thinkers and leaders of national renown. But the local-national bridge can be a two-way street. When a law faculty is engaged with its local community, it can become a source of information about local experiences that are of national significance. For example, in a forthcoming article in the *Stanford Law and Policy Review* I discuss the innovative restorative justice program at the Milwaukee County D.A.'s Office as a model for other communities.

Again, I am so very grateful for the collaboration and support of my colleagues in these endeavors, and I am deeply honored to receive the Public Service Award. Thank you.