Remarks of Roy L. Reardon, Esq.

Good Evening to Everyone.

First let me say that I am proud and delight- ed to be here at the New York Historical Society. The William Nelson Cromwell Award. Mr. Cromwell was a person who distinguished himself in many ways, and in particular by his contributions to the community. Along the way he founded the distin- guished firm of Sullivan & Cromwell. There is a wonderful group of people here tonight, I have to thank you for this Award and let me get to it quickly before my time runs out.

First I want to thank Chief Judge Lippman for that extraordinary introduction. My moth- er would have enjoyed it immensely, my father would be somewhat skeptical and the sprinkling of my many grandchildren who are here tonight, were turning to their parents dur- ing the Judges remarks and stating “that man is not talking about our Pop-Pop is he?” That’s what they call me. Chief thank you for your kindness.

I am awed by the opportunity to be up here on the dais and able to lend my voice to Hailing to the Chiefs who have been assem- bled. They represent the heart of the machin- ery of justice that keeps us functioning under the rule of law, with both wisdom and com- passion. It is a system of justice admired throughout the world.

And what a joy it is to all of us to be here to see our great Justice Sonia Sotomayor present the Boris Kostelanetz President’s Medal to the Honorable Robert M. Morgenthau. Justice Sotomayor has already begun to put her imprint on the Supreme Court, and we can look forward to her continuing to do so over her great judicial career.

With respect to Bob Morgenthau, as some of you may know, Bob was the US Attorney in the Southern District when he hired my partner John Kenney and Rosalind Fink, both of whom are here tonight.

And I also mention Bob Haig, a former President and the Chair of this dinner who has become literally an impresario for evenings just like this and made them enjoyable and successful.

And I thank my partners who are here from our great law firm which has given me the opportunity to practice my profession for 50 years. What I have achieved they have achieved with me. Some years ago one of the oldest firms in our community – Lord, Day & Lord – went out of existence. At that time I wrote a letter to the NYLJ which said in part “I believe partners are joined together no less than brothers and sisters. When I fall they carry me. When I succeed, my success is theirs”. I believe that we are professionals, we are not a business.

And lastly, and by no means least, I want to thank my wife Patricia Hynes, a great partner, a wise counselor and an unselfish loving and giving person. With her tonight are all of my children and grandchildren. My daughters Abigail, (the lawyer in the family), Cordelia and Letitia together with my son Roy Jr. who all make me proud by being here.

And now if you would indulge me just a few more minutes, there is something I do want to get off my chest.

I have lived most of my life in Manhattan. I practiced law there – and put my life in danger and whether he has ever put his life in the hands of another man. Cruise responds that he has not. Nicholson then says that that is what the Marine bar- racks do at Guantanamo Bay every single day; they place their lives in danger and then in the line which is most pertinent and mem- orable to me he says to Cruise: “You want me on that wall. You need me on that wall.”

I relate that statement to the paradox I mentioned about lawyers and how we are perceived.

I am a movie buff. I love movies about lawyers.

But there’s one movie I wanted to mention this evening that I enjoy; it is entitled A Few Good Men. The stars are Tom Cruise, Jack Nicholson and Demi Moore; quite a cast.

Cruise conducts the cross-examination of Jack Nicholson playing Colonel Nathan Jessup the commander of the Marine Corps barracks at Guantnamo Bay.

Two marines are on trial for murdering another marine.

Their defense is that the homicide hap- pened accidentally in the course of their car- rying out a direct order from their superior under what was sort of a doctrine called “Code Red” where the marines are supposed to inflict some kind of really harsh phys- ical punishment upon a fellow Marine for what was deemed as unacceptable perfor- mance of one kind of another.

At the end of the cross-examination Cruise succeeds in goading Nicholson into scream- ing and blurtling out in response to his force- ful and antagonistic cross that Nicholson did in fact order the implementation of the “Code Red” which led to the death of a Marine and therefore propelling the defense of the marines on trial.

I love Cruise’s cross-examination. Curiously, however, its some of the respons- ibilities of Cruise’s cross Nicholson that comes before Nicholson’s confession that impressed me in terms of our issue of self-esteem. This part of the testimony came about because as Cruise proceeded with the cross Nicholson became more angry and in the course of that fires back at Cruise and asks him whether Cruise has ever stood on a wall and put his life in danger and whether he has ever put his life in the hands of another man. Cruise responds that he has not. Nicholson then says that that is what the Marine bar- racks do at Guantanamo Bay every single day; they place their lives in danger and then in the line which is most pertinent and mem- orable to me he says to Cruise: “You want me on that wall. You need me on that wall.”

And who is going to represent the little old lady in the Bronx project who is threatened with losing her apartment as the result of some technicality for which she should not be held responsible by a landlord trying to use it against her.

The answer is we are. They need us.

Sandy Weil, Jack Welch, Bill Gates, Carl Ichan, Henry Kravis, Steve Schwartzman and others – all hugely successful and brilli- ant people whom I admire. We can’t do it. We can.

As I tell my young associates every year when they come in the door to encourage their getting involved in pro bono work. I say to them that I am sure that they have either read or seen the movie “To Kill a Mockingbird.”

Then I tell them: “You too can be Atticus Finch.”

We are a great profession. Thank you for your time.

Roy L. Reardon

Society knows it needs us; they want us on that wall; society knows we the lawyers keep democracy in place. We are the guardians with the courts of the rule of law. We main- tain with the courts a stable society.

And who represents the kids in the New York City school who are denied a fair share of state money to get a decent education?

And who represents the innocent person on death row who needs help to get a fair hearing?

My future legal career will focus on intellectual property and entertainment law, which require a large number of contacts. NYCLA’s Entertainment, Media, Intellectual Property and Sports Law Section provides a local, accessi- ble network that allows me to find contacts and mentors.

Frank Poe
Juris Doctor (J.D.) Candidate 2011
New York Law School
NYCLA Member since September 2009

New-York Historical Society

Celebrates International Women’s Day

In recognition of International Women’s Day, which is celebrated on March 8, the New-York Historical Society, at 170 Central Park West and 77th Street, will host a program on Saturday, March 6 from 12:00 to 5:30 PM. The program includes lec- tures by Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Kristin Downey, author of Women Behind the New Deal: The Life of Frances Perkins, FDR’s Secretary of Labor and His Moral Conscience, and Kay Larson, author of Great Necessities: The Life, Times, and Writings of Anna Ella Carroll, 1815-1859. Ms. Carroll was a political advisor to President Lincoln and a military secret agent during the Civil War. In addition to the lectures, two documentary films will be shown. Susan B. Anthony and All the Presidents’ Wives: First Ladies Throughout American History. Docent-led gallery tours will be conducted and the program concludes with a con- cert featuring The Lance Hayward Singers performing popular and jazz songs, as well as spirituals.

NYCLA members receive a discount for membership to the New-York Historical Society; individual membership is $45 (regularly $55) and dual/family membership is $85 (regularly $100). Visit www.nyhistory.org for more information or to join the New-York Historical Society.

Tickets for the International Women’s Day program are $15 for members of the New-York Historical Society and $20 for nonmembers. To order tickets, contact SmartTix at 212-868-4444 or go to www.smarttix.com.