

REMARKS BY COMMISSIONER JAMES H. QUELLO

AT THE FCBA DINNER HONORING

CHAIRMAN ALFRED C. SIKES

**(INCLUDES LIST OF PRIME ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF
SIKES' ADMINISTRATION)**

AT THE

WASHINGTON HILTON HOTEL, WASHINGTON, DC

DECEMBER 8, 1992

716

THANK YOU NEWT -- IT IS AN HONOR BEING INTRODUCED BY SUCH A DISTINGUISHED NAME IN FCC LORE. YOU MADE THE FCC ALLTIME "HALL OF FAME" WITH YOUR LEADERSHIP AND YOUR CLASSIC CHARACTERIZATION OF "TV IS A VAST WASTELAND."

A FEW YEARS AGO, I THOUGHT IF THAT KIND OF CHARACTERIZATION MADE YOU FAMOUS, IT MIGHT WORK FOR ME -- SO I PONTIFICATED IN A SPEECH, "WITH THE TV EXCESSES OF TODAY, INSTEAD OF HAVING PRIME TIME TV SERVING THE PUBLIC INTEREST, WE NOW HAVE SLIME TIME TV SERVING THE PUBIC INTEREST" -- BUT IT DIDN'T SELL IN MEDIA MARKETS. IN FACT, ONE OF MY FRIENDS SAID, WHAT ARE YOU DOING -- WARMING UP FOR A LURID PLAYBOY INTERVIEW? I GUESS IT ALL DEPENDS ON WHO DELIVERS THE MESSAGE AND HOW IT IS DELIVERED.

BUT, TONIGHT I HAVE THE HONOR OF INTRODUCING THE FCC CHAIRMAN. BUT TO PARAPHRASE A QUOTE FROM THE PAST OF THE GREAT MARK FOWLER -- NO, IT WAS ANOTHER GREAT, THOROUGHLY LIBERATED, FREE MARKETEEER, MARC ANTHONY, WHO SAID "TONIGHT WE ARE HERE NOT TO PRAISE CAESAR BUT TO VERBALLY BURY HIM."

OUR CAESAR, CHAIRMAN SIKES, IS KNOWN FOR PLAYING HIS CARDS VERY CLOSE TO HIS VEST WITH CONSIDERABLE INTROSPECTIVE INNER CHURN, BUT TONIGHT NO ONE CAN SAY HE ISN'T OUTGOING! AS WE AT THE FCC KNOW, HELL HAS NO FURY COMPARED TO CHAIRMAN AL BEING OUTVOTED ON AN ISSUE. HIS SINGLENESS OF PURPOSE, BUT EVEN MORE, HIS STEADFAST INDEPENDENCE OF ACTION IS MATCHED ONLY BY THOSE WHO SIGNED THE ORIGINAL DECLARATION. IN FACT, THEY THREW AWAY THE MOLD WHEN THEY MADE AL SIKES. BUT EVEN WITH ONLY ONE, SOME WAGS SAY THE SUPPLY EXCEEDS THE DEMAND -- (AL, I HAVE TO CONFESS I STOLE THAT LAST CRACK FROM THAT GLOWING TRIBUTE THEY PAID ME WHEN I LEFT STATION WJR IN DETROIT 20 YEARS AGO. I DIDN'T THINK IT WAS SO FUNNY THEN, BUT I THINK IT IS A RIOT TONIGHT. BY THE WAY, AT THAT TIME THEY ALSO DEDICATED THE OFFICE CHAIR IN MY HONOR WITH A SIGN ON THE CHAIR THAT WILL LIVE IN PERPETUITY THAT READS "JIM Q SLEPT HERE." HOWEVER, FOR US TO DEDICATE A SIMILAR CHAIR IN AL SIKES' HONOR, WOULD ONLY BE WISHFUL THINKING -- ESPECIALLY FOR THE OPPONENTS OF HIS PAST INITIATIVES.

BUT THINKING IT OVER -- WHETHER ONE IS CHARACTERIZED AS BULLHEADED OR AS HAVING THE COURAGE OF HIS CONVICTIONS IS A MATTER OF PERSONAL PERCEPTION.

IT IS REALLY DETERMINED BY WHETHER ONE OPPOSES OR SUPPORTS YOUR OWN PERSONAL CONVICTIONS.

SERIOUSLY, AL'S ADMINISTRATION WILL HAVE A DISTINGUISHED PLACE IN FCC HISTORY WITH MANY LANDMARK ACCOMPLISHMENTS. THERE ARE TOO MANY TO LIST BUT I BELIEVE HIS FIVE PRIME LEGACIES WILL BE:

FIRST, ENCOURAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ADVANCE EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES OF CELLULAR, PCS, FIBER OPTICS AND SATELLITE TRANSMISSION. AL WAS IN THE FOREFRONT OF THE GENERAL EXPANSION OF ADVANCE TECHNOLOGICAL SERVICES AT THE FCC.

SECOND, HIS STEADFAST LEADERSHIP IN ESTABLISHING VIDEO DIALTONE -- OFFERING THE PUBLIC MORE COMPETITIVE OPTIONS IN VIDEO. THE NAME OF CHAIRMAN SIKES AND VIDEO DIALTONE WILL GO HAND IN HAND IN FCC HISTORY.

THIRD, HIS ORIGINAL PROPOSAL THAT INITIATED HDTV WITH HIS UPFRONT LEADERSHIP IN APPOINTING A BOARD OF NATIONAL EXPERTS HEADED BY A NOTABLE COMPETITIVE TENNIS PLAYER, DICK WILEY; AND, IN ADDITION CHAIRMAN AL'S PROPOSED TIMETABLE TO EXPEDITE FINAL IMPLEMENTATION OF HDTV.

FOURTH, HIS PROPOSALS TO BOLSTER THE SAGGING NATIONAL RADIO INDUSTRY (58% OF RADIO STATIONS ARE LOSING MONEY TODAY!) WITH RELAXATION OF OWNERSHIP LIMITS AND CROSS-OWNERSHIP RULES. WE SHOULD ADD ALSO HIS APPRECIATED "MORE ISN'T BETTER" STATEMENT AT THE NAB CONVENTION.

FIFTH, HIS STRICT ENFORCEMENT OF FCC RULES-- PARTICULARLY TECHNICAL RULES, INDECENCY STANDARDS AND EEO RULES.

I'M ADDING A SELF-SERVING SIXTH MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENT -- HIS STEADFAST STAND IN THE LONGSTANDING CONTENTIOUS FINSYN ISSUE WHERE THE CHAIRMAN'S AND MY DISSENT SEEMED TO CARRY THE DAY WITH A 3-0 VOTE OF THE 7TH CIRCUIT COURT.

AND, HE IS WISELY LEAVING TO OTHERS (AN UNDERSTAFFED FCC), THE COMPLEX IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CABLE ACT.

IT WAS AND IS AN EXCITING, CHALLENGING TIME TO BE AT THE FCC -- AL PRESIDED OVER A PERIOD OF REVOLUTIONARY GROWTH, UNPRECEDENTED TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS AND CONTENTIOUS PROCEEDINGS.

SO, TONIGHT WE HAVE A CHAIRMAN WHO IS SOON LEAVING US WITH A "FCC HALL OF FAME" TYPE RECORD OF DISTINGUISHED ACCOMPLISHMENTS. IT IS A PLEASURE TO PRESENT MY FRIEND AND LEADER, "STONEWALL AL" SIKES, WHO DID ONE HELL OF A GREAT JOB IN GOVERNMENT AS SINATRA DID IN ENTERTAINMENT: DOING IT HIS WAY. (SONG OVER P.A. "MY WAY)

###