

Broadcasting & Cable

Donald West
Senior Vice President and Editor

Dear Jim —

It was an honor to deliver
this tribute. As it is to
work with you in the
same vineyard.

Best

DM



REMARKS TO THE MEDIA INSTITUTE

By Donald West, Editor

Broadcasting & Cable Magazine

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Chairman Quello, Mary, President Maines, ladies and gentlemen.

I rise to salute Jim Quello.

Having begun by asking myself, how will history remember him?

For reregulating cable?

For putting an end to financial interest?

For getting must carry past muster?

For putting PCS into orbit?

For moving more items in eight months than most chairmen move in a term?

Regrettably, Jim, I think not. For the truth is, you have eclipsed your own accomplishments. In the long run, history will remember you best just for being Jim Quello.

For bringing to the FCC a sense of decency and respect that permeates all floors and all bureaus, and has transformed an action before that agency into a nonthreatening occasion.

For your great common sense, that cuts through ideology and factions and gets to the heart of the matter.

For your passionate devotion to getting things done.

Coupled with a true sense of collegiality that has enabled you to work with—never against—the other chairmen and commissioners with whom you've served for 20 years on the FCC.

You've amazed us all.

Certainly, you've amazed the then editors of Broadcasting & Cable magazine, who were less than enthusiastic about your first run for the FCC in 1973. Not only did you overcome our opposition, you survived a record eight days of congressional hearings before getting the job—a handhold you've never relinquished. Two decades later, there isn't a President who would oppose you, and surely no one in the Fifth Estate.

If you're curious to know what your colleagues say about you, here's a sampling:

“What you see is what you get.”

“He doesn't have a hidden agenda.”

“Jim's an amazing physical and mental specimen” (that from one you regularly vanquish at tennis, and one who has witnessed your cerebral agility on the eighth floor).

“He is a pragmatist in the finest sense of the word. He's been here long enough to have voted against everyone in town.”

This from a current colleague with a gift for the apt: “Jim Quello is one of those rare people in public life who has raised affability to an art form. He generates good will and promotes common effort. His personality has become a tool for getting things done.”

And from another current colleague: "He's a steadying force."

Or, as another puts it: "He has an internal gyroscope that ends up giving balance to the industry."

"He has sharpened debate, he has clarified policy, he has humanized the FCC."

"He gives a damn."

"He's the oldest among us, but the most forward looking."

In that last regard, let me read from the chairman's own regulatory philosophy toward the public interest standard: "I believe the [Communications] Act directs the FCC to gauge the public interest by looking to the future, not the past. It simply is impossible to define the public interest merely by examining what it may have meant in 1929, or even 1969."

My kind of chairman. And now, Jim, can we talk about Howard Stern?

"He never holds grudges." Not even toward Broadcasting & Cable magazine, which has counted him as a friend as well as a source all these years. Thank God they didn't listen to us, Jim. The six Presidents under whom you've served, the five chairmen who've profited from your counsel and support, the 14 commissioners who have voted with you or against you during these two decades, have all been made better by your being there. Perhaps more to the point, the Fifth Estate we all serve has been made better by you."

Indeed, these several months of your chairmanship are an object lesson in how the FCC should behave. Yours has not been a caretaking chairmanship. It has not shrunk from controversy or from the hard calls. I've always been struck by the parallels between you and Pope John XXIII, who also was Italian, who served in the army, who abhorred indecency and was elected to the papacy at 77 as an interim pope—and who then proceeded to turn the church upside down. Lord knows what would happen if you had a few more months on the job.

You have indicated no reluctance in yielding the gavel. Frankly, no one here wants that to happen; having stumbled upon a treasure,

we want to keep you around. Yet when the day comes that we must let go, it will be to the roar of rising applause, from both sides of the aisle, and from all corners of the Fifth Estate. It is my honor to lead it tonight. *applause - standing ovation!*

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And now it's my pleasure to present the chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, the Honorable James H. Quello.