

Remarks by Commissioner James H. Quello
At Jim Coltharp's Going Away Party
The Palm - July 31, 1997

I was delighted that party chairman Marsha MacBride invited me to say a few words. Of course, by now I'm accustomed to accepting invitations and obeying orders from bright, dominant females in my office, in the tradition of Pete Belvin, Mo O'Connell, Kathy Abernathy and Ginger Clark.

This is a bitter sweet experience for me -- bitter because I'm losing a superbright, dedicated staff associate and a loyal friend. Sweet because Jim is going on to economically bigger and better things with a thriving, respected communications giant, Comcast. It is also a semi-sweet experience because it provides me the opportunity to toast or roast a popular government figure.

It is gratifying to see an accomplished great American like Jim reach new career heights because he came from the usual modest beginnings.

Jim, himself, or an old reliable source told me he was born in a log cabin he built with his own hands! Very few can make that claim.

As is customary in these circumstances, I did a little background check on Jim's early life and personal philosophies. Jim suffered a real early set-back -- In a custody fight over him, no one showed up! He father took him aside and left him there.

I was also told that in his young life, Jim was a loaner -- but not by choice. But now, with this job migration, no one can say he is not outgoing.

I personally observed that Jim was a stand-up guy, particularly at business or personal lunches. Yep, just before the check arrived, Jim would stand right up and go to the men's room. But, as an experienced old senior associate, I wouldn't let him in.

Jim does possess strong independence of thought and some unique philosophies of life.

A few years ago, I told him to be nice to people on the way up, because you will meet and need the same people on the way down. But Jim said, you actually don't meet the same people and to hell with them!

But, the important thing is that Jim is a solid, predictable friend. I know in an emergency, Jim will be right there when he needs me.

He also has some homely, personal philosophies that are entertaining but subject to debate.

For example, he told me an 80 year old man marrying a 30 year old woman was like giving an old squirrel a bag of nuts after he lost all his teeth.

When I asked him if he knew what a woman says after she has been totally fulfilled with exciting sex, Jim took the Fifth Amendment.

I tried to get him involved in opposing sex on TV and cable. He frankly said, "I'm not against sex, I'm here on earth as a result of it."

Jim is an accomplished, free market economist -- He said Karl Marx was a great rabble-rouser, but a lousy economist.

As an economist, Jim had a reputation for daring, humor and creativity -- I heard that was what the I.R.S. said when they audited his tax return.

Some of the homespun sound-bite philosophies, I like to ascribe to Jim:

Virtue is merely insufficient temptation.

A bachelor is a guy who is lucky in love.

If you can't avoid marriage, marry an orphan and avoid all the hassles with the in-laws.

Irony of life is that the young don't know what to do and the old can't do what they know.

Never admit you are a self-made man -- some wise guy will always say, "It sure saves God a lot of embarrassment."

The worst part of success is finding someone who is really happy for you.

We take exception to this last bit of homely philosophy.

Going from the ridiculous to the more sublime and realistic -- We are all here because of the respect and affection we all have for you.

I am personally proud to call you a real friend and a great personal asset (and to be able to get away with what I said today).

I want to retire your number 1 rating number, like the all-star you are, and induct you into a lifetime membership of the Quello Alumni Association -- which incidentally will continue to meet annually at the Army-Navy Country Club on the first Sunday morning in December. So, alumni, jot down the date -- as you know, it is not a mere invitation -- it is a directive to attend.

So, congratulations to you and especially to Comcast for acquiring such a dedicated, effective and personable associate.

The dictionary could appropriately list and define the word "Class" by simply stating "Class"- - what Jim Coltharp is!

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