

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS
MEDIA INSTITUTE LUNCHEON
MARCH 18, 1998

I'M PLEASED TO AGAIN PLAY A ROLE IN A MEDIA INSTITUTE PROGRAM – AN ORGANIZATION THAT IS A LEADING CHAMPION OF FIRST AMENDMENT RIGHTS AND FREE ENTERPRISE COMPETITIVE COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS.

I ALSO WANT TO ACKNOWLEDGE MY BENEFACTOR AND THRIVING COMMUNICATIONS LEADER, DICK WILEY, WHO MANY CLAIM WAS THE FCC'S GREATEST CHAIRMAN – OF COURSE WITH ONE POSSIBLE EXCEPTION – MAYBE A ONE YEAR INTERIM EXCEPTION?

BUT I'M ESPECIALLY PLEASED TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY OF INTRODUCING THE RANKING ^{democratic} DEMOCRATIC COMMUNICATIONS LEADER AND THE STRONGEST VOICE IN HOUSE COMMUNICATIONS. YOU SEE, NOW THAT I AM NO LONGER SUBJECT TO CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT INQUISITION^S, I CAN EXPRESS MY TRUE FEELINGS AND TELL EVEN IMPORTANT PEOPLE WHAT I REALLY THINK OF THEM!

SO HERE GOES – “BIG JOHN, YOU THE MAN!” FORTUNATELY FOR ME, MY MAN, MOST OF THE TIME.

YOUR STAUNCH FRIENDSHIP AND SUPPORT THROUGH THE YEARS WERE NOT ONLY APPRECIATED, BUT OFTEN ESSENTIAL FOR MY CONGRESSIONAL AND REGULATORY WELL BEING.

YOUR LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY PROPOSALS ARE ALWAYS OF PRIME BENEFIT TO YOUR CONSTITUENTS AND CONSUMERS – BUT YOU WERE

ALSO SENSITIVE TO THE PRACTICAL NEEDS OF THE INDUSTRIES THAT GAINFULLY EMPLOY MILLIONS OF THOSE CONSUMERS.

I COULD FILL A BOOK, LET ALONE GIVE A COMPLETE SPEECH, ABOUT THE DRAMATIC, SOMETIMES HECTIC MOMENTS IN MY LONG-STANDING FRIENDSHIP WITH BIG JOHN. I EVEN CALLED ON HIS DAD WAY BACK IN 1949. HIS DAD'S NATIONALLY QUOTED LINE COMES TO MIND. HE SAID "BEER IS THE CHAMPAGNE OF THE WORKING MAN. THERE WILL BE NO NEW TAXES ON BEER." HIS SON, CHRIS, WAS VOTED THE OUTSTANDING STATE LEGISLATOR IN MICHIGAN A FEW YEARS AGO -- SO THE PROUD DINGELL HERITAGE ~~WILL~~ ^{seems destined to} LIVE ON SOME TIME IN THE FUTURE.

THIS CERTAINLY IS NOT THE FORUM FOR A BIOGRAPHICAL HISTORY, BUT I HAVE TO MENTION THAT WHEN I FIRST BECAME A CANDIDATE FOR THE FCC, JOHN WARNED "WHY DO YOU WANT THE DAMN JOB -- YOU ARE GOING TO BE BEAT UP BY CONGRESS AND OVERRULED BY THE COURTS" -- OF COURSE, IT BECAME TRUE AND, IN SOME CASES, CHAIRMAN OR RANKING MEMBER DINGELL MADE IT A SELF-FULFILLING PROPHECY. HOWEVER, EVEN WITHSTANDING ALL THE SLINGS AND ARROWS, IT WASN'T ALL BAD BEING A "KISSEE" INSTEAD OF A "KISSOR" FOR 23-½ YEARS - AND THE FCC YEARS WERE THE MOST IMPORTANT, GRATIFYING, YEARS OF MY LIFETIME CAREER. I SERVED IN A PERIOD OF HISTORICAL INNOVATIVE CHANGES.

PERMIT ME JUST ONE MORE STORY IN CONCLUSION -- BILL RICHARDSON, NOW THE AMBASSADOR TO THE U.N. WAS A RATHER BELLIGERENT CONGRESSIONAL MEMBER OF THE HOUSE COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE. HE WOULD RAISE HELL ABOUT THE FCC'S INADEQUATE POLICIES RELATING TO MINORITIES WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON HISPANICS AND INDIANS.

I SAT NEXT TO THE CONGRESSMAN AT A LUNCH AND USED THE PERMISSIVE LATITUDE ACCORDED TO VERY SENIOR CITIZENS TO ASK A RATHER BOLD QUESTION. I SAID "WITH AN ANGLO-SAXON MONIKER LIKE BILL RICHARDSON, SOMEONE COULD THINK THAT YOUR GREAT GREAT GRANDFATHER CAME OVER ON THE MAYFLOWER – WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO TAKE SUCH AN AGGRESSIVE ROLE IN AFFIRMATIVE ACTION?" HE SAID HIS MOTHER WAS HISPANIC, HIS WIFE IS HISPANIC AND HIS GRANDFATHER WAS PART INDIAN. I SAID, "WELL, I'M GLAD YOU DIDN'T GO ON THE WARPATH AGAINST ME!"

CONGRESSMAN RICHARDSON SAID IN YOUR CASE IT WASN'T NECESSARY, BESIDES MOST OF US CONSIDERED YOU JOHN DINGELL'S MAN ON THE COMMISSION." I REPLIED "THANKS FOR MAKING MY DAY. I HOPE I'M WORTHY OF THAT DISTINCTION AND HONOR."

SO, IT IS A PLEASURE TO PRESENT MY GOOD FRIEND OF OVER FORTY YEARS, SOMEONE I OFTEN REFER TO AS MY CONGRESSIONAL GODFATHER, A FORCEFUL PRESENCE AND GREAT COMMUNICATIONS LEADER – JOHN DINGELL.

Speech copy

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