

SWEARING-IN SPEECH

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Thank you, Damon. You honor me with your presence today. Most of you have read or heard about the famous classical friendship of Greek mythology, Damon and Pythias --- Well what you see today is the classical friendship of Damon and Jim, of American reality rather than Greek mythology.

And a heartfelt thanks to all of you for being here today and making this the most memorable of my "swearings-in."

Incidentally, I think we are breaking some records today....I think I'm the first Commissioner sworn in to a full term to the relatively new 5 member Commission. And in this era of renewed ethnic appreciation, I think I'm the first Italo-American to serve on the Commission and surely the first Italo-American Commissioner to be sworn in to three different terms by the same distinguished Black federal judge. Also, I believe I'm the most "senior" -- that's a polite euphemism for "oldest" -- FCC Commissioner ever officially sworn in to a full term.

My longtime Detroit friend Chuck Adams, former president of a large thriving ad agency, and now head of the American Association of Advertising Agencies in Washington, sent me a

congratulatory wire urging "Hang In there until they name the building after you." I like his attitude, but that kind of honor has been pre-empted by Rosel Hyde or Bob Lee.

However, I look forward to achieving a dramatic first all my own in 1991, my last year on the Commission when I become the very first functioning wheel-chair FCC Commissioner!

There are some advantages to being old, but not so many that any of you should rush to get there.

The great German philosopher, Goethe, expressed a positive aspect of aging: "It is only necessary to grow old to become more charitable and even indulgent -- I see no fault committed by others that I have not committed myself." The saying certainly applies to me.

With a little maturity you realize that proponents of strong viewpoints different from your own aren't inherently enemies or unqualified oafs. And you smile to yourself as you realize it's just a matter of viewpoint whether you are perceived as having the courage of your convictions or being just damn stubborn. And you even get to the point of rejecting the popular Washington motto of "Don't get mad, get even." Except for squaring the record for gross inequities or distortions, getting even is petty and not worth the inner turmoil.

The past 10 years have been exciting and challenging times to be at the Commission with unprecedented advancements and new

services in communications -- in broadcasting, cable, telecommunications, satellites, DBS, MDS, ITFS, and cellular radio.

One of the more gratifying special assignments for me was the two years as Chairman of the Temporary Commission on Alternative Financing for Public Telecommunications -- better known as TCAF. Congress established TCAF in 1981 because of its concern with the critical financing problem facing public broadcasting. As most of you know, I've been identified with commercial broadcasting rather than public broadcasting in my former career. What many of you don't know is that I got my start in broadcasting in public radio as a newscaster on the 5000 watt Michigan State University station, WKAR. Since then, I felt I owed public broadcasting something -- not so much for what it did for me, but in reparation for what I did to it -- as I remember it, I was a fairly decent writer but I had a Brooklyn type accent and no voice modulation. Also, my news content was often abrasive, influenced at that time by the philosophy of our Journalism dean that you "comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable." Experience, time, and age have somewhat moderated this stance.

To sum it up, TCAF submitted two comprehensive reports to Congress and with FCC support played a significant role with the National Association of Public Television Stations, Corporation for Public Broadcasting, and the Public Broadcasting Service in creating a positive attitude toward public broadcasting for urgently needed and well deserved funding at Congress.

My general approach to communications policy is pro-competitive. (I do "unregulation," but I don't do anarchy.) I do believe government regulation is best conducted in a spirit of mutual cooperation with regulated industries. I believe progress can best be achieved with a constructive government attitude that provides incentives for innovation, growth and improvement in service and products for the public. We should reserve adversary proceedings for major disagreements or egregious violations. In return, we should expect that telecommunications companies, because of their great impact on the American way of life, maintain a strong sense of social consciousness.

Broadcast licensees, and for that matter all businesses and corporations, have inherent responsibilities to the public. In America, all corporations exist by the will of the people. It behooves all corporations, acting in their own self-interests, to conduct themselves with a keen sense of social purpose, not only economic purpose. I believe the free enterprise or corporate system works in America, but I keep reminding myself that it was not ordained by God . . . In a democracy, any economic or social system can be legally altered by the people at the polls. So, the people have a right to expect reasonable benefits, enlightened management, fair treatment and equitable distribution of wealth for the public good. The great majority of American telecommunications and broadcasting corporations have reasonably fulfilled most



expectations by providing the American people with the best communications services in the world and their employees with a high standard of living. One of our highest government priorities must be to preserve America's markets and our preeminent position in world communications to assure healthy, progressive industries with gainfully employed Americans.

There are still many difficult decisions ahead for the Commission and I believe my previous Commission experience will lend continuity to ongoing policy issues. I also believe my practical experience in communications, along with my ten years of observing the various entities in the telecommunications explosion, will be helpful as even more new services evolve and new needs are identified.

Overall, it's a challenging, fascinating time to be at the Federal Communications Commission. We must all work together to maintain and increase our communications leadership so that Americans remain the best informed and best served people in the world.

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