



**REMARKS OF STEWART D. AARON, PAST PRESIDENT, NEW YORK COUNTY
LAWYERS ASSOCIATION AT ANNUAL DINNER OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE
FEDERAL COURTS**

Battery Gardens
1 Battery Place
New York, New York
June 13, 2016

Good evening.

I am honored to receive the Eleventh Annual David Y. Hinshaw Award for Conspicuous and Outstanding Service to the Committee on the Federal Courts.

Some of you may recognize me from the front page coverage I recently received in the *New York Law Journal* for my role in “Dewey: The Musical,” where I performed a rap to Will Smith’s “Fresh Prince of Bel-Air.” (For those of you who missed it, yes, I’m serious.) However, I want you to know at the outset that I’ve turned down the challenge presented to me by Lin-Manuel Miranda, and I will not be delivering these remarks in rap.

I want to welcome my youngest daughter, Elizabeth, who is joining me here this evening. Just last month, she graduated from Skidmore College, and I’m so proud of all she has accomplished and of the fine young woman she has become. I also want to welcome NYCLA’s President, Carol Sigmond; NYCLA’s President-Elect, Michael McNamara, who also is a past Chair of this Committee; the other past Chairs of this Committee who are in attendance, including Elliot Wales, Richard Williamson, Scott Berman, and Vince Chang; the current co-Chairs of the Committee, Judge Kevin McKay and Arthur Aufses; NYCLA’s Executive Director, Sophia Gianacoplos; the Committee members who are present; the NYCLA members who are present; and our friends and guests.

I first joined the Federal Courts Committee back in 1988. I was introduced to the Committee by a talented and kind senior trial partner named Richard Bond -- he went by the name of Dick. I had started to work out of law school for a small litigation boutique firm known as Bond and

Camhi, which Dick had formed after he turned out the lights at what had been a successful, rather large law firm named Marshall Bratter Greene Allison & Tucker. Only some of you in this room knew him, but I was fortunate enough to learn under Dick's wing. He passed away at the cusp of his retirement from the practice of law and I miss him to this day.

When I joined the Federal Courts Committee, Eliot Wales was the Chair. Elliot was larger than life (and he still is). He almost single-handedly reinvigorated what had become a moribund committee, and to a significant extent is responsible for the Committee as it exists today.

This Committee has played a very significant role in the success of my career. I had the opportunity to meet and work with many sitting judges and to learn from some of this City's best lawyers.

Another person who I met through this Committee was Steve Hoffman. Steve succeeded Elliot as Chair of the Committee, and as I mentioned, Steve later became President of the Association. Steve has always been supportive of me and my career and was instrumental in me becoming part of the leadership at the Association, and for that I'll be eternally grateful.

This Committee, before, during, and after my tenure as Chair, has done and continues to do exceptional work. It truly is one of the gems of the Association. Its reports and programs are consistently of the highest caliber. I want to thank all of you who are members for all your hard work and for all that you do for the Association.

One of the reasons I am so honored to receive this award is because of the person after whom it is named, David Hinshaw. Remember all those past Chairs of the Committee who I named, who served the Committee so ably? Well, they all could not have done it without David. David was the rock -- the constant -- through more than a decade of the life of the Committee. David served for a ten-year period from 1993 through 2003 without missing a meeting. (I should note that even after 2003 he continued to serve, but his attendance became more sporadic due to personal circumstances.) David was omnipresent. He was smart, witty, thorough and a real mensch. David, thank you on behalf of the Committee and the Association. It is such a great tradition that our Committee gathers each year to issue an award in your name, and I am thrilled to be the recipient this year.

I'd like to leave you all with a call to action using some words that I used when I was inducted as President of this Association back in 2011 in St. Paul's Chapel. One of my heroes is the singer-songwriter Harry Chapin. I don't know how many of you remember him. He wrote and performed songs like "Taxi" and "Cats in the Cradle." But what he was most known for was his charitable work. Harry devoted his life and career to trying to address World Hunger. He died at the age of 38 in an accident on the Long Island Expressway on the way to perform at a benefit concert. Harry famously said "when in doubt, do something."

And those words hearkened me back to my days of playing high school football as a tight end. The offensive line coach had some very complex blocking schemes, so our players often didn't know what to do -- should they block the defensive lineman across from them? Double-team the lineman to the left? Go out to block the linebacker? [For those of you with a quizzical look on your face, football is a metaphor for life. So, back to my football-life analogy.]

Sometimes the offensive linemen literally just froze on the line, not knowing who to block. Freezing on the line is a bad thing because the tail back or the full back who is carrying the ball can run into your back, or the defensive lineman in front of you can run over you, which is a very bad thing. So what the coach taught the lineman was "when in doubt, fire out." Stop thinking. Just go out and block somebody. In this way, you're helping, and not hindering, the offensive effort. Harry Chapin's saying is similar, "when in doubt, do something." Don't get in the way of yourself; don't be frozen by inertia, but do something.

So, for those of you who are in doubt of what to do with your life or your legal career, or simply are looking for things to do, NYCLA has so many opportunities available to you. You can become more active than you already are in your work on the Federal Courts Committee, or one of NYCLA's many other committees and sections. NYCLA has wonderful pro bono projects to help those in need of legal services who cannot afford them. For example, we have a counseling clinic to provide legal advice to clients in areas of family law, landlord/tenant law and other areas. NYCLA will provide you with training so that you are equipped to provide this advice. We have wonderful mentoring programs; maybe you want to mentor someone.

Or maybe you want to speak out on important issues of the day. Now is a particularly important time in our City and our country to speak out on legal and policy issues. To be sure, we must be ever vigilant against the type of terrorist attack that took place in Orlando over the weekend. My

heart goes out to the victims and their families. But, in addressing these terrorist attacks, we must not sacrifice the Constitution and the values that we hold dear. Some of the rhetoric being espoused in the wake of the recent tragedy is reminiscent of the efforts to stop the construction of a mosque in vicinity of NYCLA's Home of the Law, near Ground Zero. Back then, while I was President-Elect of the Association, NYCLA spoke out, saying: "The anti-downtown mosque position, adopted by some for political expediency but undoubtedly tied up with difficult emotions stemming from September 11th for others, seems deeply inconsistent with core constitutional and democratic values -- values for which NYCLA has always stood."

We must defend against the verbal assaults being made in mainstream politics against our values, our system of justice and the rule of law. Politicians with large social media followings should not be permitted to make baseless allegations against members of our judiciary. I'm very proud that, just last week, NYCLA stepped up and issued a written statement with the following title line: "The New York County Lawyers emphatically rejects baseless, unseemly, inappropriate and un-American attacks on Judge Curiel's integrity and on the integrity of the judicial system." Kudos to Carol Sigmond for her leadership on that issue.

Especially now, NYCLA needs and our profession needs for all of you to speak out on the important issues of the day. Let's all go out, and like Harry Chapin admonished, "do something."

In closing, I put together a song in honor of David Hinshaw. I've asked the talented Peter Dizozza to accompany me on his guitar, and my good friend, and Arnold & Porter's Director of Administration for the New York office, Kelli Cooney, to sing back up (another life lesson for all of you out there -- always have someone at your back -- you'll never know when you'll need them, or they'll need you). You've heard of Peter, Paul and Mary, well this trio is Peter, Stew and Kelli. This is to the tune of "Mrs. Robinson," by Simon & Garfunkel. Here we go:

MUSICAL TRIBUTE TO DAVID HINSHAW

Peter, Kelli & Stew

De, de de-de de-de, de-de de-de, de de-de

Do, do do-do do-do, do-do do

De-de de-de de de de-de de de de-de de

And here's to you

David Hin-shaw,

NYCLA loves you more than you will know,

Woah woah woah,

Listen to us please

David Hin-shaw,

Heaven holds a place for those like you,

Ou, Ou, Ou, Ou, Ou, Ou

Stew

Let me tell you a little bit about me — my profile,

I'd like to help you learn about myself,

I've been bound to NYCLA since the '80s erstwhile

Became Prez-dent and it always feels like home

Peter, Kelli & Stew

And here's to you

David Hin-shaw,

NYCLA loves you more than you will know,

Woah woah woah,

Listen to us please

David Hin-shaw,

Heaven holds a place for those like you,

Ou, Ou, Ou, Ou, Ou, Ou

Stew

Serve on a committee where the judges come and go,
Issue timely reports just like always,
It's a well-kept secret it's NYCLA's little gem,
Most of all we salute he who was always there; yes that's you

Peter, Kelli & Stew

David Hin-shaw
NYCLA loves you more than you will know,
Woah woah woah
God bless you please
David Hin-shaw
Heaven holds a place for those like you,
Ou, Ou, Ou, Ou, Ou, Ou

Stew

Sitting on a chair at Battery Gardens
Listen to ex-Presidents debate
Laugh about it shout about when you got to choose
Any way you look at it's cool

Peter, Kelli & Stew

Where have you gone Elliot Wales
Committee turns its lonely eyes to you
Woo woo woo,
What's that you say David Hinshaw?
Your outsize spirit is here to stay
Hey hey hey.

Thank you.