

Our New Bar Center:

Excerpts from Remarks Delivered at the Dedication Ceremonies, September 24th, 1971

The overwhelming need for a permanent Bar Center to fulfill the present and future needs of an active Association with a growing membership of more than 22,000 lawyers was recognized nearly seven years ago.

Today, through the generosity of approximately 2,000 donors, including law firms, individual lawyers and judges as well as special non-lawyer friends, the New York State Bar Center is a reality.

Ceremonies on September 24th brought together city and State dignitaries with Association members from across the State to dedicate the new structure as a living affirmation of the high goals and aspirations of our legal system.

Stuart N. Scott, immediate past president, introduced opening day speakers who included Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller, Chief Judge Stanley H. Fuld, Albany Traffic Court Judge John E. Holt-Harris, Jr. (representing Albany Mayor Erastus Corning), president Hugh R. Jones and the Rt. Rev. Allen W. Brown, Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of Albany.

Each speaker's remarks gave special meaning to the occasion: (below)

Remarks of HUGH R. JONES, President, on the occasion of the dedication of the New York State Bar Center, Albany, New York, September 24, 1971

Bishop Brown, Governor Rockefeller, Chief Judge Fuld, Mayor Corning, President Scott, members of the New York State Bar Association and friends:

It is my happy privilege on behalf of the members of the Foundation and of all the members of our State Bar Association, to salute those persons responsible for this exciting new building. I do so by sets.

We are grateful to the leaders of our Association whose foresight and careful planning a few years ago anticipated the need for a new building and wisely saw to the development of plans for site selection, design and construction.

We are deeply indebted to our sponsors of the past, perhaps best symbolized by William Cromwell, whose beneficence made possible the first House of the Association at 99 Washington Avenue, the proceeds of the sale of which happily for us can be traced into our new building.

More currently our appreciation goes to those whose generosity has assured the financial competence to build this building. I refer, of course, to the A. Lindsay and Olive B. O'Connor Foundation which gave the funds for the Great Hall in memory of Judge A. Lindsay O'Connor and Charles Robert O'Connor; to George L. Hinman who gave the Hinman Library in memory of his father and mother, Harvey D. and Phebe Brown Hinman; to Jackson A. Dykman for most generous contributions in memory of his father, William Nelson Dykman, both now and eighteen years ago; to those responsible for gifts honoring former Chief Judge and Mrs. Edmund H. Lewis and Senator George R. Fearon; and then to the many law firms, individual lawyers and judges, across our great State, and to our select non-lawyer friends, who have responded most generously to our appeals for support.

You would wish me, too, to recognize but without individual identification because both we and they know them, the leaders of our Association who more recently have so magnificently accepted the responsibilities of sturdy, wise leadership in planning, fund-raising, and later in supervision of construction and financing. And all the members of our staff, both permanent and additional, who have given cheerful, unstinting support to a sometimes troublesome transition.

You must agree that a most felicitous choice was made in the selection of our architect, James Stewart Polshek of New York City; his freshness of concept, grace and incisiveness of design and integrity of execution have combined to give us a truly magnificent work of urban art—"a conscious accommodation of the best of both worlds"—new and old.

McManus, Longe and Brockwehl, Inc., of Albany are responsible for the construction of this building. Their high quality of workmanship has been a major contribution to the realization of this unique concept.

One could wish for the appropriate occasion to honor by individual name and associated salutation each of the literally hundreds of persons whose share in the provision of this New Bar Center has been so very real. I suspect, however, that more significant than any public recital, on this or any other occasion, of his individual name, will be the keen awareness each must have of the joy and privilege of having participated, each in his own special, important way in the exciting process which has brought us this Bar Center.

To each and all I say a joyous Thank You, as well as to each of you, and particularly to you, Governor Rockefeller and Chief Judge Fuld, who have come to join with us in these Dedication Ceremonies today.

Remarks of

CHIEF JUDGE STANLEY H. FULD

Usually my audiences must stand for what I have to say while seated. This is the first time a group has had to stand for what I have to say while standing. Such a procedure, though somewhat novel, has the distinct virtue of encouraging one to be brief.

It was in 1877, almost a hundred years ago, that this Association was founded. Although "a convenient room" in the New State Capitol was designated for its use two years later, the Association did not obtain a place of its own until 1928, when headquarters were established at 112 State Street, here in Albany, in a small three-room suite, and it was not until May, 1953, that it acquired a house of its own. Today we dedicate this Bar Center as the Association's new home, a home dedicated, in turn, to our profession and to the high goals and aspirations of our legal system. As one who has taken part in this Association's activities for many years—initially as practicing lawyer and for the last 25 years as judge—I am particularly delighted to join with you in these ceremonies. In congratulating the Association on achieving this milestone in its growth and development, I bring you warm greetings and best wishes from your neighbors across the street, my associates on the Court of Appeals.

It is interesting, I think, to note that, in constructing this edifice, those who planned and built it followed the tradition of our calling. Though preserving an ancient landmark—consisting, as you know, of three early 19th century houses—though building upon foundations of the past, they kept in mind both the needs of the present and the aims and goals of the future. This is the very approach which characterizes our judicial process, which calls upon us to utilize and follow the learning and decisions of our forebears but never at the cost of perpetuating what is out of tune with the life about us, at variance with current

needs or with concepts of justice and fair dealing.

We are, I previously had occasion to observe, in a time of great social ferment and unrest, and our institutions, as well as our system of law, are being subjected to repeated attacks and demands for change. New ideas, new approaches and courageous experimentation are an absolute necessity if workable solutions are to be found. The problems confronting us pose a tremendous challenge to the ingenuity and creativity of the law, and bar associations such as this have an opportunity to play a meaningful role in meeting that challenge.

Our meeting, therefore, has more meaning and greater significance than simply the dedication of a building. What we do here today is symbolic, epitomizing our common resolve that there be justice for all—fairly, impartially and promptly administered—and that the structure of justice be preserved and strengthened as time and events dictate. As Daniel Webster puts it, justice is “the ligament which holds civilized beings * * * together * * *, [the necessary] foundation for social security [and] general happiness.” Assuredly, it is the very cornerstone of our democracy, the standard by which we, as a people, have chosen to be governed and by which we measure our own rights and obligations to others. By working, as we must, to strengthen the fabric of justice in New York—for instance, by assuring that the Constitution’s guarantee of a speedy trial becomes a living reality—we help preserve it in our nation and, hopefully, throughout the world.

Critics have said that, as lawyers, “[w]e stand 100% for progress and 100% against change.” The time-honored activities and ceaseless efforts of this Bar Association, however, furnish evidence aplenty to refute this charge. The Association has always been in the vanguard of those pressing for changes designed to instill a

renewed vigor and vitality in the law and promote the administration of justice. Its numerous contributions need no elaboration here. I cannot, however, refrain from mentioning its dedicated work (1) in striving to achieve greater unification of our statewide court system; (2) in cooperating with the Judicial Conference by proposing procedural reforms in the civil and criminal law; and (3) in successfully sponsoring New York’s Fair Trial-Free Press Conference, aimed at effectuating these two constitutional guarantees. The Association’s past record assures future achievements.

In dedicating this structure, therefore, let us reaffirm our commitment to the ideals of justice which this magnificent Center symbolizes. If we live up to those ideals and, indeed, proclaim new and loftier ideals as justice and the needs of society require, then, in the years to come, those who follow in our place can say of us—as we say of those who contributed their time, their imagination and their energies to the construction of this beautiful new home—they built well!

Remarks of

GOVERNOR NELSON A.
ROCKEFELLER

Bishop Brown, Chief Judge Fuld, Attorney General Louis Lefkowitz, President tinguished members of the Judiciary, the Scott, President Jones, Judge Haris, dis-Bar and State and local government and ladies and gentlemen:

Believe me, I want to congratulate President Scott and President Jones and all of the officers of the Bar Association for this superbly beautiful and functional structure here in the State’s capital. I think the fact that this was made possible by the generosity of so many of your members and friends is a great tribute to their devotion and your basic objectives.

I would particularly like to mention the gift, as we are here in the library, of my dear friend and colleague, George Hinman in memory of his beloved father, Mr. Harvey D. Hinman. It symbolizes this devotion to the fundamental values of our country. And I think that your great architect, who has made possible the preservation of the heritage as seen from this beautiful square on the front, and yet the advantages of all the modern beauty of and functionalism of architecture today is outstanding in its success.

I would also like to mention the role of your members in the community life of our great State, their contributions too long to list in all of the fields and walks of community life, and we are deeply grateful to all of you for that participation. May I say, in line with Chief Justice Fuld's remarks, that it is especially appropriate at this time of tragedy that we meet to dedicate this Bar Association Center to the cause of law and justice. For all of us the tragedy at Attica is another symptom of the deep-seated illness of our society, a warning that we can no longer hesitate to diagnose and heal the truly fundamental problems.

There is no escape from facing the sad fact that these problems stem as much from the failures of our society and government in terms of the individual as from the actions of those small groups which would exploit legitimate grievances not because they want to correct them but because they try to use them for the overthrow of our society.

This criticism of our society is not brought on by the tragic event at Attica

alone. Rather this event dramatizes the urgent need for change, for changing the fundamental nature of our thinking and action in dealing with the individual human being in a mechanistic society. It dramatizes the need for firmness in dealing with the dangers from those who have given up hope of improving our civilization by peaceful means and are bent on changing it by force and destruction. Nor can we accept the concept of those who would save our civilization by force alone without change. One of the most crucial and difficult areas demanding change lies right here within your province.

We can no longer delay in making the radical reforms in our whole system of criminal justice from the problem of protecting the rights and dignity of innocent citizens on the streets and in their homes through effective crime prevention and a breaking of the log jam in the courts to protecting alike the rights and dignity of both prison inmates and correction officers—measures that can prevent the repetition of such tragic events as the deaths at Attica require not only substantial sums of money but also fundamental changes in the attitudes and human relations in our institutions and in each of us as individuals.

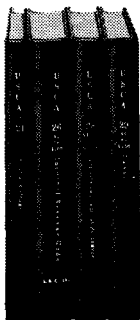
The reason I speak to you on this matter today is because your help, as members of the Bench and Bar of this State is needed in a common dedication to healing the illness of our time. It will not be easy but there never was a moment when the American people were more tragically aware of and receptive to this necessity than they are today.



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