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**ADDRESS AT THE ANNUAL SCHOOL OF LAW DEAN'S CLUB DINNER:
INTEGRITY**

by

STEPHEN L. CARTER*

I would like to begin by saying how very pleased I am to be here for the Dean's Club Dinner, especially celebrating the 75th anniversary of the University of Akron School of Law. Someone is speculating today that this school may have a higher proportion of its graduates sitting on various courts than I suspect any law school in the country. That's a marvelous achievement and suggests that something very important is going on in the classrooms here. Students are learning the law; not simply being instilled with the love of learning, but are also learning a kind of moral thoughtfulness; a particular attitude toward law, toward people, and toward the world. That is the kind of attitude we hope that we would see in a judge.

I mention all of this because the subject this evening is going to be integrity; a vital attribute for a judge to have. I'm going to actually talk about integrity and politics, given this recently concluded election season. I thought it would be a good topic. The dean was kind enough to mention that I was a law clerk for the late Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, not only a great judge, but a great human being—and one of the great after dinner speakers of all time. Judge Marshall could keep a crowd enthralled by simply telling his stories and jokes for half an hour or forty-five minutes. I'm not such a good storyteller and I don't tell jokes well; all my jokes in any case are lawyer jokes and this may not be the right audience to share them with. Besides, you have probably already heard them before. Instead I'm talking about integrity and politics, why we have as little of it as we do, and what we can do to get more.

I want to begin in this electoral season with a story from my own experience. Although I am a law professor—and as a law professor it's hard for me to believe this is my fifteenth year of teaching law—in an early incarnation I was actually a politician. I ran for office, successfully I might add, when I was elected Secretary of the student council of Alice Deal Junior High School in Washington, D.C. This election was held in April of 1968—you can look it up. I mention that because in this election, something very interesting occurred. You see, to run for office at Alice Deal, you first had to sign-up. Once you signed up there was an assembly. The whole school would get together (actually, this being a typical Washington public school, you couldn't fit all the students in the auditor-

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ium so you had two assemblies). First, you had the seventh and eighth grade, then I think the ninth grade. In any case, each candidate for office was called upon to address the student body. We gave our campaign speech only once. Well, twice. Once to each group, and then they voted. What makes this interesting to me is that the speeches were censored before you could give your campaign speech. It had to be approved by Mrs. Tiptree—I'm going to call her Mrs. Tiptree—who taught Algebra. She was the terror of Alice Deal Junior High School. She was a wonderful teacher. She was wonderful in part because you knew what might happen to you, or at least you heard rumors of what might happen to you, if you did poorly in her classroom. She was the kind of teacher we all need more of.

So you would take your speech to Mrs. Tiptree and she would read it or ask you to deliver it and then she would correct your grammar and spelling. Why you should correct spelling in a speech that was going to be delivered orally, I didn't know, but she would do that, and then she would correct the substance of your speech. She would take out any comments about the principal or any teacher, and she would take out all references of any kind whatsoever to your opponent. You could only talk about yourself and what you wanted to do. You couldn't attack anybody, or criticize the school.

Now, you might think that this makes for very bland and coldless elections, but in fact it forced the candidates to come up with clever schemes to make their speeches memorable. My own opponent came up with a scheme which terrified me. I thought surely I'd lost the election, because she began her speech by saying "Will all of you please move forward in your seat three inches." "Thank you. Would all of you please move back three inches, thank you." She said, "My campaign slogan is 'let's work together,' and I've just shown you how working together we've just cleaned five hundred seats in the auditorium." She said that and everyone was on their feet. They loved it, and I was chagrined. It was terrible.

Worse still, even though we weren't allowed to do personal attacks, her boyfriend started a vicious whispering campaign against me. It was the Alice Deal Junior High School version of negative campaigning. He said I shouldn't be elected Secretary because I was a boy. I was a boy and it was a girl's job. He said this to me, in fact, in an effort to persuade me to withdraw from the election. It was also whispered around the junior high school as well, and that was about as vicious as it got.

When you look at Paul Estaff, you feel a little bit nostalgic for those days. It's not so much that I believe in censorship, but it was kind of nice to have a campaign where nobody made any personal attacks. Now, it's true that we weren't

allowed to make personal attacks, and it's true that they would be deleted from our speeches. But actually, we were just told that such references would be deleted from our speeches. I don't think anybody actually tried to make any in the first place. We were the kind of kids who would simply follow the rules. If the rule was "no comments about your opponent," we didn't try to slip any in.

When then, you look at politics today, you say "Gee, there is all this negativity, all these attack ads." As many of you no doubt are aware, in New Jersey it became so big that the three major newspapers this year declined to endorse either candidate. When I look back on those vanished days at Alice Deal Junior High School thirty years ago, I find myself very often wishing that there were some entity out there that had the authority to make politicians stop yelling at each other and start talking instead about what they plan to do.

Then I realized that there is of course an entity with the power to censor political speeches, an entity from whose verdict there is no appeal. That entity is us, the voters. You see, we complain very often about the lack of integrity in politics on a variety of levels. But in a democracy, we get pretty much the government we earn. We can't reasonably expect, although we may hope, that the people we elect to represent us are going to have stronger moral scruples than we are able to demonstrate in our own lives. We look at the political world and we see people who we think will do anything to win. We see people we think will slash and burn, or will lie and cheat, or whatever the case may be. We are only looking in the mirror.

Don't misunderstand me. I'm not suggesting that we as voters are bad people, only that we're all human. We have human weaknesses that we sometimes indulge, and when those weaknesses show up larger than life through the politicians we see on television, the weaknesses themselves are also exaggerated until they fill the screen.

And therein lies the tale. You see, America, in my judgment, is in a crisis of integrity. A crisis in the sense that we as adults insufficiently model in our own behavior the kinds of moral lives we want our children to live. I don't hold myself out as the exemplar of integrity. I'm as much to blame as anyone else. But I think it's a crisis because I worry that too many of our children are growing up looking at an adult world in which winning seems to be the most important thing. At the risk of sounding a little bit too mundane, as adults we behave as though winning is not only the most important thing, but that rules themselves are remotely unimportant obstacles to be overcome, rather than guidelines for our lives.

Let me illustrate with a very simple story. I am a sports fan. In particu-

lar, I'm a big football fan. This is an enormous puzzle to my children. They don't understand what it is that I do on the sofa all afternoon on Sundays. You see, it's a very nice system we have. I go to church, come home from church, change my clothes and turn on the television. From 1:00 to 4:00 there is a football game, and from 4:00 to 7:00 there is a football game. There's a dinner break from 7:00 to 8:00, and from 8:00 to 11:00 there is another football game. It's really a very nice system they have worked out for Sundays and I enjoy it immensely. My children think this is bizarre. But I try to be a good father to them. I think they should be introduced gradually to the mysteries of the adult world.

So one day a couple of years ago, I said to my children "All right, I'm going to explain to you what it is that daddy does every Sunday," and I sat them on the sofa with me to watch the football game. I felt I was really passing on the family legacy to my children. They sat there dutifully and tried to watch. One of the things I've discovered—and if you have children you know what I mean—is that you don't really understand anything clearly until you try to explain it to a child. That's when you learn whether you understand it or not.

So I'm explaining to them how a football game works, and I see something that I have seen in every football game I've ever seen in my life. I've seen a lot of them, but I never thought about its significance until I was sitting there with my children. For those of you who are not football fans I'll try to translate this into ordinary English. What happened was very simple. The quarterback, that's the fellow who throws the ball, threw the ball down the field to a receiver whose job, I should explain, is to catch the ball. Well, the receiver didn't catch the ball; the receiver dropped the ball. Now, the receiver knew he dropped the ball, the other team knew he dropped the ball, and I knew he dropped the ball—along with other millions of Americans who saw the slow motion instant replay. The announcer knew he dropped the ball because he pointed it out. The only person who didn't know he dropped the ball was the referee, and when the receiver saw that the referee couldn't tell whether he dropped the ball or not he, leaped up and celebrated as though he made a great catch, and indeed the referee ruled it a completed pass. As the receiver jogged back to the huddle in triumph, the announcer commented, for the benefit of the folks at home, "what a heads up play," meaning what a great job he'd done by intentionally fooling the referee.

I was nodding and saying "Yeah, it was a heads up play," and my children turned to me and said "But daddy, isn't he cheating?" I said, "What do mean cheating?" They said "Well, he dropped the ball and then pretended that he caught it." I said, "Well, no its not cheating exactly. You've got to understand the way the game works." I tried to explain that and you know, children are the most natural cross examiners in the whole world. My other child looked at me and said

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"But daddy, he's lying." I said, "He's not lying exactly, it's he's just sort of pretending something happened that naturally happened."

I finally had to confess to my children, that yes indeed, he was lying and cheating. Not only was he lying and cheating but he was getting credit for it from the announcers who were commenting about such a good heads up play. He was a good team player who had done what he was expected to do. He was taking credit for an achievement he had not earned because that would help the team to win. That's what he was doing, and indeed in the ethic of the game, it might be unreasonable to expect that he would do anything else.

Imagine that after the referee ruled incorrectly that it was a completed pass, he had turned and he said, "Ah sir, I know you think I caught the ball but . . ." and gone on and told the story. Well, he wouldn't have made any friends that way. The referee would have been angry at being showed up publicly. His teammates would have been furious, the coach would have sent him to the end of the bench, and he probably would have been traded the next day. Most likely to the New York Jets. You see, the point is that he was only doing the right thing as long as he was willing to cut any corners, seizing the opportunity to prevail.

While I don't think that sports is a metaphor for American society, I do think it's a mirror in which we can often see ourselves. People cheer when football players cheat to win, and that's actually a pretty scary thing. Scary, but not as strange as we might think. In one national survey a couple of years ago, 70% of college students admitted to having cheated on an exam at least once. What's scary about that is not simply the sheer size of 70%, but that the students would admit it. When I was a college student, if I'd cheated on an exam (I've done a lot of things wrong, but not that particular one) I would have felt a little bit guilty about it. If a stranger called on my dorm room and said "I'm taking a survey. Have you ever cheated on an exam?" I think I might be tempted to deny it. I'm not sure that I would admit it. Evidently, these survey respondents found nothing shameful about it.

Just last year, the winner of the Ms. Virginia Beauty Pageant lost her title after it was discovered that she falsified the educational credentials on her résumé. Goodness knows that scarcely a month goes by that we don't read of some hapless Wall Streeter desperately trying to make the second ten million, going to jail for violating a variety of laws. Why? Because the rules are significantly less important than getting ahead. This is a vision that seems to permeate much of American society. And while there is nothing wrong with winning, I know, as a big believer in competition, that it does make it very difficult to teach children about the rules.

Just think of the way we drive. Driving is a behavior that most of us engage in that has been studied relentlessly. In driving, people tend to treat the rules as suggestions. I don't know if you ever saw the movie *Star Man* with Jeff Bridges. It's about this fellow who's come down to Earth and he's learning about Earth's customs. A woman is teaching him to drive, and as they're driving down the street, they come to a yellow light and he goes zipping through it. She says "What are you doing, didn't you watch me?" He said "Of course I watched. I did exactly what you did. I figured it out. Red means stop, green means go, and yellow means go very fast." And that's the way we behave. All studies agree that we willingly and even gleefully exceed the speed limit, often honking furiously at those in front of us who refuse to go more than ten or fifteen miles above the speed limit. You know it's easy to do, you're in a hurry, you've got to get somewhere, you're running late, so of course you speed. It's only a kind of "recommended" speed, you see—a suggestion.

It's really kind of bizarre behavior if you think about it. How can we run a society this way? On one end, of course, we all agree with the agile proposition of criminal law that it would be intolerable to live in a society in which law is enforced perfectly. But is it really tolerable to live instead in a society in which the rules are more often taken as obstacles in our path that keep us from getting what we want?

This leads us back to politics. I mentioned that people complain about negative advertising. I can't stand the negativity of these campaigns, but the curious thing is that although we complain about it, we don't actually do anything about it. What I mean is this: You have two candidates in the campaign, and one of them is 100% with you on the issues, while the other is very much the other way. The one which is very much the other way runs a cleaner campaign, and the one that is very much with you on the issues runs a dirty campaign. It's really hard to say "Well, gee, I hate this negative campaigning so I'm going to vote against someone who agrees with me on the issues." But when you say "I'm going to vote for the person who agrees with me on the issues in spite of the dirtiness of the campaign," you're doing the same thing as the football player. We're saying what really matters is winning. That's far more important than anything else. Maybe sometimes that's true. Maybe there are some issues that are so important. Lying, cheating and stealing, being vicious in order to prevail, are useful traits to have on rare occasion. I myself am persuaded there are few such issues, if any. But maybe there are some. Even if there are, it cannot possibly be the case for every issue, and yet it is very rare that a voter will say, "I will punish with my vote a candidate with whom I otherwise agree for the nastiness of the campaign."

Sometimes voters cop-out. "I'm going to stay home." "I'll show them, I'm not going to vote this year." Well, that doesn't affect anybody. That's just kind of pretentious. It effects no change. You punish with your vote not when you refuse to vote at all, but when you vote the other way. I confess that for me personally, it would be an enormously difficult thing to do—to vote against a candidate with whom I agreed on the issues, just to punish him or her. Yet, I have to find strength in myself occasionally to do that because if we voters won't, we're playing the same game; we're saying that what really matters is only that me and my issues prevail.

You might be asking by this time what has all this to do with integrity, besides from the fairly obvious surface point that I'm talking about lying and cheating. I think that one of the solutions to what I see as a crisis of integrity is for all of us to try to gain a richer understanding of integrity and look for occasions in our own lives—public and private—to put it in effect.

I want to talk for a minute about integrity as a concept and then go back to politics. If you look at the surveys, voters will tell you again and again the number one issue is character: we care about the integrity of the candidate. I think we believe it, I think we mean it, I think we're sincere about it; the only trouble is, what does integrity actually mean? If you turn to the dictionary, you'll find a phenomenally unhelpful definition. The dictionary will say something like this: "Integrity is living by a consistent set of principles, and inter and outer life that cohere," or something like that. I don't know what it means to have an inter and outer life cohere, and you'll find that in a lot of dictionaries. But I do know what it means to live by a set of principles, and that's not the same as integrity. Not by itself. A mass murderer who thinks mass murder is great is living according to a set of consistent principles, but when we say we want integrity in our politics, I don't think that's what were talking about. Integrity is a deeper concept.

What's interesting about trying to track integrity to its roots is that philosophy, for the last couple of hundred years, has largely ignored the subject. It pops up from time to time, but never sustains subject. The people who studied integrity to death are theologians. And theologians have studied integrity to try to resolve a particular problem. Because in theology both Christianity and Judaism, for example, integrity is defined and revered as living a life in accordance with God's will, whether you want to or not. Whether you feel like it or not, whether you get anything out of it or not, whether you want to make a sacrifice for it or not.

It seems to me that this has a useful secular translation. In secular terms, we should view integrity as if you take the theological view of God as perfect

goodness. In secular terms integrity means doing the right and good thing whether you want to or not, whether you get anything out of it, or even at personal risk. The trouble is how to know what the right thing is.

If you read your Plato you know that from time to time—but after surprising frequency once you start looking for it—Plato says of Socrates, “What is integrity?”, and at that point, Socrates stopped to think. Even Socrates didn’t have all the answers; you have this vision of a man in contemplation. Someone thinking things through. I think the abode is the desire to spend on the contemplation to really worry over difficult questions. While it is difficult to find the time to do so in today’s society, it’s crucial to any proper understanding of integrity.

People who are always sure they have the answers—people who are always sure they are right—are people not likely to be people of integrity. They have far more in common with the murderer than they do with Socrates, because they are following their first instinct or desire and calling it a principle.

That second aspect of integrity is also tremendously important. In the end, it’s not a matter of simply identifying the right thing or even of doing the right thing, but of being willing to do it even when there are risks involved. I think there is a reason that when we’re asked to name people of integrity in history, we select great martyrs. Few might say Martin Luther King had a lot of integrity, at least in his public ministry. In religious traditions people identify integrity with martyrs because these are the people who sacrificed all for the good and the true and the right. But we can sacrifice less than that, we can risk less and still be risking something. A person of integrity might be the person who says to the boss, “I can’t work late tonight because I promised my daughter I’d be at her school play.” That’s integrity and that’s risk. Integrity is involved in keeping your commitments, and the risk, you see, that you may get in trouble. People say to me “That’s a very harsh judgment to make,” because you know you could get fired, you could get punished by the boss. That’s true, and it’s hard to make those judgments. But before making promises to our children that we’re going to be at her play for sure, we need to take into account the likelihood that we won’t be able to keep them.

The integrity in that statement to the boss isn’t just keeping the commitment, it’s the reflection involved in making the commitment in the first place. You see this in a marriage situation. We have a scandalously high divorce rate in America. Of course, it’s dropped off a little, but currently the divorce rate is ranked very close to 50% of the marriage rate. A lot of people say that’s because divorce is too easy; we don’t put enough impediments to getting a divorce. I don’t think that is correct. I think the reason that the divorce rate is so high is that we don’t put enough impediments in the course of marriage. People too often marry

without taking sufficient account of the depths and the quality of the commitment that they are about to make. We insufficiently encourage them to contemplate whether they really believe that they can spend a lifetime doing what they are about to promise.

A preacher I much admire, Louis Smead, who teaches at Fuller Theological Seminary, has written that “a successful marriage involves the power to stick with what you’re stuck with.” It’s not as facetious as it first sounds. The point is that when we make commitments they should be commitments born of moral thoughtfulness. And when they are born of moral thoughtfulness, sometimes the commitment itself is enough to get us past time that might otherwise slow us down.

Sometimes people are in situations where they have to get a divorce. There is just no way out and no one else can make that judgment, which is why I worry about schemes to put impediments in the path of divorce. But sometimes for the sake of children, for the sake of each other, for the sake of the commitment itself, they could soldier on for a bit longer or maybe forever if they choose to make the sacrifice that that involves. Keeping commitments very often is a sacrifice. That’s where our most solemn commitments need to be preceded by our most solemn occasions.

So you have these two aspects of integrity, the moral thoughtfulness, the willingness to sacrifice. How does this bring us back to politics? Well, think about it for a minute. We say that we want politicians to be people of integrity, but we sometimes make it very hard for a politician to have integrity. Let me give you one very small example to illustrate what I mean.

When Bill Clinton first took office in January of 1993, you remember one of his very first acts was to issue an executive order that altered military policy on the service of gay and lesbian members in the armed services. He said he was going to do this during his campaign, and it was no surprise to anyone that he did it. But he took a lot of flack for it. People said he was out of touch with the American main stream. As we modified the policy, he stepped back a little bit from what he originally proposed, and then people said he was being wishy washy. It’s very interesting about the way we talk about politicians. We very rarely discuss politicians with any possibility of their main principle. We discuss instead the political advantages and disadvantages of their positions. The terrible trouble this puts us in is exactly the one that Bill Clinton found himself in January 1993. Namely, that if you do something that is popular you’re pandering; if you do something that is unpopular you’re out of touch; and having been told you’re out of touch, you decide to do what’s popular so you’re flip flopping and follow-

ing the opinion poll. It's a kind of lose-lose situation.

There is very little a politician can do that will cause anyone to stand up and say "look at this principled individual." And the terrible thing about all this is that although we say that we want politicians of integrity, which implies some notion of having the courage of their convictions, too often what we really want our politicians to have is our convictions. That is, politicians whose minds will change when ours do, which somehow we see as being principled. Politicians understand this. So that we may accuse somebody, we accuse most politicians at sometime or another of following the opinion polls, but politicians know they're not going to lose by doing that.

Political scientists who study behavior of members of legislatures say that the easiest way to predict how legislators will vote is by what will help them get re-elected. That makes sense—that's kind of why you have elections. It's not a very surprising finding. But once you recognize that this proposition is built into that idea of democracy, it's actually a little strange that we attack our politicians for doing what's popular. The very reason we have them stand for reelection is so that the public can pass verdict on what they've done.

There is a deep incompatibility between electing politicians and accusing them of wanting to do what will get them elected. Yet, when they do what will get them elected, we say they're being unprincipled. It's as though our desire, our ideal politician, is someone principled that is unable to be elected in the first place, or if elected, will be voted out of office at the first opportunity. Those are the sorts of things I mean when I say that we make it very hard for politicians to be people of integrity.

Don't misunderstand me. I'm not suggesting that anybody's integrity is off limits or not fair game for criticism. I'm only suggesting that our own behavior as voters and our own behavior as adults doesn't provide much reason for politicians—whom we accuse for lacking integrity—to behave very differently than they do. I want to suggest tonight a handful of fairly simple rules that if we as voters and citizens would begin to think about following in our political selves, might encourage politicians to be over the principle people that we all want to be and we ought to reward them for being.

Let me suggest five rules, recognizing that all of them are enormously difficult to follow. First rule: we ought to reward politicians for telling us the truth. You might say that they do tell us the truth. They try to. Some of them lie to us then tell us the truth, but sometimes they tell us the truth, and even when we know it's the truth, we punish them for it. The easiest example of this is the social

security system. Everybody knows the social security system is in trouble. In the long run, or for baby-boomers like me, actually in the short run, it's going to need one of two things: a greater infusion of money, or a reduction in the amount of money that goes out. When you're looking at the prospect of losing money, those are the only two ways to avoid it. An infusion of money means higher social security taxes, a reduction of outlays means lower benefits. There is no third possibility. There is nothing else that you can do to protect the system, but a politician that proposes either one of those things is committing political suicide. You can't talk about it, and in a way it's quite bizarre. The social security system, which is a wonderful innovation in American politics, is a system that needs to be protected and nurtured. Yet, it is run in a manner that we wouldn't allow a private investment to run, a manner in which money that is paid in current investments is used to repay past investors. That's a pansy scheme if you do it privately, and its against the law. But it's the only way we've been able to come up with to keep social security afloat and it's embarrassing. It's embarrassing that we can't actually have a conversation about it, but it's political suicide. The truth should be rewarded instead of punished.

The second thing along this line is that some things are more important than others. That may seem obvious, but my point is that . . . government has to set priorities. And that's a really hard thing to do. What priorities? Let's make it very basic. Suppose you had only enough money to fund either a school lunch program or the National Endowment for the Arts. The choices aren't always that stark, but they can be. These are both, in my judgment, enormously valuable programs, but it's inconceivable that we can seriously believe that they are equally valuable programs. You and I may disagree about which one is more valuable, but the notion that because they are both good, they are both equally good, is bizarre. Yet too often in politics, we behave exactly that way. Everything that is desirable is equally good. Sometimes you can do only some of the desirable things and not others. Politics is the art of compromise, not the art of perfection. We as voters come to understand that we give our politicians freedom to operate as though there is a real world that's affected by their decisions.

The third proposition—near and dear to my heart—is that people are ends, not means, just as we all studied in philosophy when we were undergraduates. What that means in politics is that sometimes the goal is not to persuade people to change their minds and support what you have in mind. Sometimes the goal has to be to listen to what others have to say. Democracy is not principally about voting. Most nations in the world have elections, but relatively few of them are nations we would recognize as democracies. I suggest what makes democracy work over an extended period of time is the fact that all of us, as citizens, afford each other the free and equal respect, which means we talk to each other, not just

to our friends or those who agree with us, but to those who disagree and with strangers. With strangers that can't be forgotten. We talk in an open conversation. Open conversation means sacrifice. Remember, integrity involves sacrifice and means putting something on the line. Freedom of conversation means that if you are going to give me a genuine opportunity to persuade you that I'm right, then surely I have to give you a genuine open opportunity to persuade me that you're right. This is something we often tend to forget. Too many of us, and I'm very guilty of this, indulge in the habit of listening with our mouths instead of with our ears when someone with whom we disagree with is talking. I do this all of the time. I sit there listening to their nonsense, waiting for the opportunity to rebut that last foolish comment they made, instead of listening with my ears to what it is that they are saying. When you don't listen to people they get alienated, and that's political disaster.

One of the problems in America, in my judgment, is that in the last thirty years many politicians and political activists have come to decide there are easier ways of getting the message across than listening to what people have to say, instead of listening to strangers and talking to them. Listen and I'll tell you a brief and embarrassing story.

I was at a conference in Miami, Florida about a couple of years ago. It was a conference about religion and politics. I was speaking about voting habits of politically liberal Christian evangelicals. What was interesting was how many people in my audience didn't believe there was such a thing as a politically liberal Christian evangelical, and what's even more interesting about that is that there were both liberals and conservatives that didn't believe that there was such a thing as a politically liberal Christian evangelical. But that's only part of the problem, or rather illustrates the problem. After my remarks were over, two young women that happen to be African American came up to me and told me that they were politically liberal Christian evangelicals, so they appreciated my remarks. Then they said, "But why did you have to go tearing down our leader that way in your remarks?" I said, "Your leader, I don't understand. The only person I criticized in my remarks was Pat Robertson," and they said "That's the point."

Now, as a law professor I'm not often at a loss for words, but I couldn't quite figure out how as politically liberal Christian evangelicals they came to view Pat Robertson as their leader. Then they told me a very sad story. They told me that they had, over the years, been involved in a lot of liberal political organizations, but over time it had become very hard because some people were skeptical or hostile toward them because of their very open evangelical faith. In the end, if they were forced to choose between a place that liked their politics and ridiculed their faith, or a place that liked their faith and ridiculed their politics, they would

go where their faith was accepted. I think a lot of people have to make those choices. As I have traveled America during the last few years, I have run into a lot of people who were Christian Coalition members or voters who are politically liberal on a variety of issues, but they don't feel they have another choice. They don't feel there is a home for liberal politics where they can discuss their religious faith without fear of people ridiculing them. If that's true, that's a very sad thing. Mind you, that's their perception, but it's a pretty wide-spread one and it's something people ought to be aware of. That's what I mean when I say people feel alienated—they go to the fringes when they feel that they aren't welcome in main stream politics.

At the fringes people are organized, and organized hard. It's very funny when I talk about religion and politics. I'm often asked "What about the Christian Coalition." I say, "What about the Christian Coalition?" They say "What can I do to stop them," and I say, "Well look, its really very simple. The Christian Coalition is a political organization that is responding to a vacuum in mass groups organizing in America. The Christian Coalition organizes on a local basis. Their stated goal is to have ten trained political organizers in every electoral district in America by the year 2000. There are one hundred seventy-five thousand electoral districts in America. That's 1.75 million trained political organizers. If you don't like that, then all you can do is go out and train eleven organizers in every district in America. If you're not willing to do that, you deserve to lose."

Politics is not about how many press conferences you're going to hold or how many television commercials you can run, or who you can sue; it's about getting out there and treating people seriously. When you sit in the living room with a stranger and talk to him or talk to her about issues, that's when people's eyes light up. They feel wanted and they decide how they're going to vote. The old adage of Tip O'Neil that all politics is local is still absolutely true. It's when we lose sight of that that people begin to feel treated like means rather than ends and they're lost to main street politics.

The fourth rule is that integrity demands sacrifice, something we tend to forget in a rush to make sure that our own programs win. In America, we have two great political parties, Democrats and Republicans, and what they have in common is that they are exactly the same in the following sense: neither one of them is very interested in calling us anything higher than ourselves. Neither one has any strong instinct nowadays to suggest that America involves shared sacrifice. Not just sharing of the goodies. They have different goodies to share. I know there are many Democrats and Republicans both present in the room tonight and I expect to offend all of you. But let me go ahead and say this anyway. Basically, Republicans nowadays run and say "We'll give you more money with tax cuts."

Democrats run and say “We’ll give you more constitutional rights, the right judges on the courts.” But it’s the same thing. It’s saying, “I will give you what you personally desire and I will not demand of you any sense of community or national responsibility in return for that which I promise. You can get what you want and give nothing back.” That’s how politics in America is played. All too often, that’s what our parties basically promise. Don’t misunderstand me—they have a lot of language in a lot of political speeches that have obligations to each other, and that’s wonderful language to hear. But when it comes down to it, all too often they just say “Let me tell you what I can give you, let me tell you what I’m going to give you.” No notion of sacrifice, no notion other than living together as a nation, as a people suggest some responsibility, some interdependence, suggest sometimes not getting what we want but giving it up for the sake of a larger community. More and more that notion has become foreign to American politics. As a result we have politics that, while often thoughtful and often smart, and often providing very good things, very rarely calls on us to think of ourselves as something larger than the sum of us and our families needs or wants.

The fifth principle, and the hardest one of all for me and maybe for you as well to implement, is also the simplest: Sometimes the other side wins. One of the things that’s interesting, being on a college campus of course, is that I hear all the time students and faculty members saying “The reason that our side lost the election is because the voters were manipulated” or “because of this campaign commercial” or “because of racism or sexism” or various other “isms” or “because the media had a liberal bias,” “because we had a conservative bias” and so on. I went looking for that after the politician was going to get up election night and say “You know, we lost! We ran a good fight and we lost. We got our message out there, I think I must have got it across, people did understand it, it wasn’t distorted. They looked at our message and they looked at the other sides’ message, and they liked the other one better. That happens sometimes. That’s the judgment of the people. God bless America.” It’s so hard for people to say that sometimes. It’s as though the only way we could possibly lose is because the other side cheated. The other side ran negative ads, the media was against us, the other side had too much money. There is always a reason other than the simple possibility that free and equal democratic systems looked at both sides and decided they liked one better; that the citizens who voted are just as smart as everybody else, as informed as everybody else, and as thoughtful as everybody else, just made the other decision.

Sometimes you have got to think of things this way. Sometimes you’ve got to imagine this possibility, because it liberates us. It liberates us from the awful condition of feeling unable to trust our fellow citizens. I think that’s what all of this notion of integrity and politics has in common. That at bottom, the prob-

lems we see in our politics are often problems that result from our simple inability to think that our free and equal citizens are as smart as we are, as thoughtful as we are, or as good as we are. So much of our politics is aimed at finding ways around people, rather than aimed at ways of helping people come into the dialogue that democracy demands.

Having said all this, I want to make very clear that I think politics is an honorable calling. I think the fact that so many lawyers are in politics shows the close and important connection. Let me give you two mutually honorable callings. I think that most people who go into public service, and I know a huge number of graduates of this law school do so, do so because they generally believe that this is the way to do something good, this is the way to help their community and the nation be a little bit better. That's a calling we ought to respect. Politics, at its best, can be one of the helping professions, the same way as medicine is. Frankly, I think law ought to be one of the helping professions. Politics, at its best, is a place where people of good will and people of integrity go to reason together with the support of their constituents about the best solutions and various problems that are facing us. I worry that too often, it's not something that our politics itself will tumble down hill, but that it's only reflecting a nation that's tumbling down hill. A nation where winning matters most, where morality is increasingly less important, and a nation I think, fundamentally, where we are ceasing to feel the interlocking responsibility that binds us together. A crucial part of that responsibility is the responsibility to model our behavior for our children. There used to be a model of how moral standards went from one generation to the next. The model was a three legged stool. The ideal was that there were three legs of the moral stool: the home, the school, and the place of worship. If all of these worked together, mutually reinforcing the message, the stool would be strong. But if anyone fell down on the job, the stool would topple, and the next generation would grow up without proper values. Now the rules are much more complicated. There are many more legs on the stool. The media is a leg, the professions are a leg, politics are a leg. Every adult is carrying a part of that stool. Everyone of us is carrying a part of the national obligation to model for our children the behavior that they as adults ought to have. That's a heavy burden to carry. Nobody can do it all of the time. Few people can do it, I think, most of the time. Those who can are largely saints. Most of us can do it more than we do. Most of us try hard to look for more occasions to be morally thoughtful and to sacrifice for the greater good, and the more of us who are willing to do that more often the greater integrity we'll have as individuals. The greater integrity our politics will have, and the greater our nation will have in the future. Thank you very much.