

Attorney General Tom Corbett's Inauguration Remarks

January 18, 2005

Thank you for coming this afternoon and sharing this special day with me, my family, and the Office of Attorney General.

I stand here today humbled by the support of so many people who played a role in helping me become Attorney General of Pennsylvania. Over the next four years I promise to take every possible step to protect Pennsylvania families and to serve the people of Pennsylvania.

I will vigorously fight the scourge of drugs, expand our efforts to investigate child sexual predators, provide additional protection to the Commonwealth's seniors, strengthen the defense of consumers against fraud and scams and investigate those who seek to damage or pollute our environment.

Thank you all for giving me this opportunity. This day belongs to all of you. You are the ones whose hard work made it possible. You are the ones who believed in our vision. And you are the ones who kept the faith. Even on Election night, when the media reported that we would not be here today, you kept the faith, and for that, I'm grateful.

This ceremony is a celebration as well as an opportunity for me to give thanks and to share my vision for the Office of Attorney General. Nine years ago, the last time I was Attorney General, I didn't have a ceremony like this one. I was nominated to be Attorney General by then-Governor Ridge and confirmed by the state senate. We had a quick swearing-in ceremony in the Governor's reception room, so quick that my children weren't there and I didn't even give a speech. Today, the circumstances in which I'm taking office are much different and I'm so pleased that you are a part of it.

I want to take a few moments and thank some very special people. First, and foremost, I want to thank the woman who has been my inspiration and biggest supporter since we were college sweethearts together at Lebanon Valley - my wife Sue.

Tom and Kate, my wonderful children, your faith and support kept me going through all the long days on the campaign trail. I'm so proud of both of you. You are the best children a father could ever hope for.

Thanks as well to my sister Frances, her husband Ron, and the entire Plesco family, along with my in-laws, Lewis and Mildred Manbeck, and my sisters-in-law and their families.

I'm especially thankful for the inspiration of my parents, who I know are smiling down from heaven. My mother taught me to be kind and fair to people. And my father, who was a Deputy Attorney General, taught me to be a man and gave me an appreciation and respect for the law.

Thank you Senator Santorum, Senator Jubelirer and Speaker Prezel for your support throughout the campaign and for your kind and generous remarks today. I look forward to working with each of you.

Thank you Secretary Ridge for your kind words. I know you are continuing to serve our nation and have a tremendous responsibility for another inauguration in just two days. Your presence and participation means a great deal to me. Tom, I also want to thank you for your friendship and having the confidence to nominate me for this terrific job nine years ago. I look forward to working with you in whatever endeavor you next pursue.

Just as Secretary Ridge gave me the opportunity to serve as Attorney General nine years ago, I also want to thank two gentlemen who also gave me the opportunity to serve the people of Pennsylvania. First, former Allegheny County District Attorney, and now Judge Robert Colville, who hired me right out of law school to be an Assistant District Attorney. From the first day on the job as a prosecutor, I was hooked. I had the best job in the world. The pay wasn't much, but there was nothing more rewarding than the satisfaction of knowing that I was part of a criminal justice system that protected people.

I also want to thank former United States Attorney and former federal judge Robert Cindrich, who hired me to be an Assistant United States Attorney. He gave me the encouragement and confidence to later become the United States Attorney for the Western District of Pennsylvania.

I also need to thank some other people whose special efforts and commitment played a key role in allowing us to be here today. Bob Asher, David Girard-diCarlo and Jim Roddey, thank you all for your support, your friendship and your wise counsel. I'd like to also thank my dedicated campaign staff for all the long hours and hard work they put into securing our victory. It was a long and sometimes bumpy road, but through it all, you were outstanding.

I also want to thank the members of my transition team, led by Jack Barbour. Thank you all for volunteering your time and expertise to help me evaluate ways to improve the Attorney General's Office.

Let me say a word of thanks to Judge Mike Fisher and Attorney General Jerry Pappert for their stewardship of the Attorney General's Office over the past eight years. They have turned over a tremendous office filled with hard-working and dedicated professionals.

I also want to thank the many men and women in law enforcement who supported me. They risk their lives everyday for the people of Pennsylvania and their support means a great deal to me.

As I look around this hall, I see supporters from various associations and coalitions that -- some might say -- would rarely be seen in the same room together. And I see Democrats as well as Republicans and Independents. I want to thank you for your support, and as I said during the campaign, my door will always be open and I look forward to working with you. As in any relationship, we may not always agree. But I promise to always give you my best effort and judgment.

Although I was voted into office as the nominee of the Republican Party, I want each of you to know that as Attorney General, I'm dedicated to protecting all Pennsylvanians.

As a career prosecutor, I understand and appreciate the tremendous power that the people of Pennsylvania place in prosecutors and law enforcement. Your security and your liberty depend on the wise and judicious use of that power.

Throughout my career as a prosecutor, the words of former United States Supreme Court Justice George Sutherland have guided me. Justice Sutherland described the prosecutor's role as two-fold, "That guilt shall not escape, or innocence suffer." In writing about prosecutors, he stated, "While he may strike hard blows, he is not at liberty to strike foul ones."

I pledge to you and the people of Pennsylvania that Justice Sutherland's words will guide me as I make the tough decisions that an Attorney General must make. I also

know that once you have made a difficult decision, you have to show the courage and leadership to see it through to the end.

President Ronald Reagan said it best when he said, “A leader, once convinced that a particular course of action is the right one, must be undaunted when the going gets tough.” Having previously served as Attorney General, I understand the tremendous good that the office can do for people. I have a vision and a plan of where to take the office during the next four years.

Fighting drugs in our communities will be my number one priority. The presence of drugs in our communities endangers our safety, our health, and quality of life, and I want you to know that we won’t concede one inch to the drug dealers.

We’re going to work to keep our kids safe in school, and we’re going to protect our children from online and sexual predators by creating a Child Predator Unit.

We’re going to protect our senior citizens from con artists and those who prey upon them by directing the office in a new and focused initiative to fight the exploitation of our seniors, by creating the Elder Abuse Unit.

We are going to protect our environment and work with the Legislature to strengthen our laws so that we continue to have clean air to breathe and fresh water to drink.

We’re also going to strengthen the Attorney General’s Public Protection Division, which helps consumers with everything from fraud and scams to multi-million dollar antitrust and utility cases. I want the Attorney General’s Office to be the first place consumers go for guidance.

In our Civil Law Division, we will be an aggressive advocate for our client, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and its agencies.

I’m proud to once again serve you as Pennsylvania Attorney General. I pledge to use the power and responsibility you have entrusted in me to make our Commonwealth a safer place to live, work and raise a family.

God bless you, God bless America, and God bless the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.