

ADDRESS TO THE NEW ADMITTEES
MARYLAND COURT OF APPEALS
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June 11, 2007

May it please the Court:

- ? Chief Judge Bell
- ? Distinguished Judges of the Court
- ? Successful candidates to the Bar and their families and friends

It is my honor and privilege to stand before the Court today and move the admission of these candidates for admission to the Bar of Maryland

With the Court's permission, it is also a distinct honor to introduce the distinguished members of the Court of Appeals of Maryland to the candidates and their guests.

Ladies and gentlemen, from left to right, the judges of the Court of Appeals of Maryland are –

- ? The Honorable Clayton Greene of Anne Arundel County
- ? The Honorable Glenn T. Harrell, Jr. of Prince George's County
- ? The Honorable Irma S. Raker of Montgomery County
- ? The Chief Judge, the Honorable Robert M. Bell of Baltimore City
- ? The Honorable Dale R. Cathell of Worcester County
- ? The Honorable Lynne A. Battaglia of Howard County.

The chair on the end is vacant due to Judge Alan Wilner's recent retirement. The Governor of Maryland will appoint Judge Wilner's successor in the near future.

Congratulations. This is an exciting day. You have accomplished much and worked hard. Today is the culmination of the goal you set when you first applied to law school. I am honored to share in the joy of this day.

I extend my best wishes to you on the journey you are about to begin. I welcome you to the Maryland legal community. And I look forward to the fresh concepts, energy and new perspectives I'm certain you will bring to us.

Today, as you celebrate your success and realize the reward of your hard work, take time to remember those who helped and encouraged you to get where you are today. None of you did it alone.

In a few moments, you will take an oath and become a Maryland lawyer, privileged to practice law throughout this state. This is a tremendous achievement and an awesome responsibility. As lawyers, we not only advocate for our clients – we also help maintain and protect the system of jurisprudence upon which our society is based. We speak for our clients and our clients depend upon us. Our communities depend upon us, as well. As lawyers, we have a license that gives us opportunities to effect change in a positive way. In my experience, the lawyers who are the happiest are those who seize those opportunities and act upon them.

I would like to share with you nine tips to help you start your legal career.

1. **Be the best advocate you can be.** Learn everything you can about your practice area. Attend seminars. Seek advice from more experienced lawyers. Don't be shy about asking for advice --- lawyers like to be asked their opinions. Keep learning. Read advance sheets and bar bulletins. Pay attention to changes in the law and the court's rules.
2. **Be prepared.** The lawyer who achieves the best result for his or her client is not necessarily the smartest or the most experienced. Quite often, the lawyer who achieves the best results is the one who is the most prepared. When you are starting out, you may be concerned that the lawyer on the other side is more confident and has been practicing longer than you. That's ok – so long as you prepare. Prepare until you think you are fully prepared, and then prepare some more. If you are going to court, know the facts, know the evidence and know the law, like the back of your hand. That preparation will give you confidence. And it will gain you the respect of the judge, your opposing counsel and your client.
3. **Find a mentor.** This is one of the best steps you can take to ensure that you will find your niche and enjoy your practice. Ask someone you work with to be your mentor. Or ask someone you meet who practices in your area. Several of the bar associations have mentoring programs. Call and ask for a mentor.
4. **Embrace the unique collegiality of the Maryland bar.** Develop good relationships with other lawyers. It will take you far. As lawyers, we represent our clients zealously against each other. However, we are a collegial profession, and we maintain gracious and courteous relationships with other counsel. Take care to abide by the rules of civility.
5. **Develop a reputation for excellence, integrity and professionalism.** Care about your reputation. If you consistently do good work, you will become known for that. If you keep your word, you will become known for that as well. Keep your promises to your clients, your adversary, and the Court. Maintain professionalism, always. A lawyer's reputation is paramount. A positive reputation will lead to opportunities and growth; a less desirable reputation will thwart a career. Start now building a positive reputation for excellence, integrity and professionalism.

6. **Become active in bar associations.** Don't just attend dinner meetings, sign up for a committee. Many bar associations will send committee sign-up forms when you join the bar association – look for something that interests you. If you don't get a form, call one of the officers or send them an email and ask. Just say – "I'd like to get involved in a committee. What can I do?" The leaders of the bar associations want to hear from you. Get involved. You will develop leadership skills. You will have speaking opportunities. You will meet colleagues who will become lifetime friends. You will meet people whom you can call when a question comes up in your practice. You will expand your network.

7. **Have fun practicing law – Be Passionate and Enthusiastic.** This is good not only for your outlook and health, but also will make you a better lawyer. Work in an area that truly interests you. Try to find something that you love doing. That may be hard at first, and you may change your mind several times along the way. It is ok to change your mind. A world of opportunities is open to you. Find your passion.

8. **Define your own success** – Don't judge yourself by other people's definitions of success. Some may think that you're not successful unless you make a lot of money, but that may not be your definition of success. Some may think that you're not successful unless you have an enormous case load, but you may want to work part-time. You may have friends who define success solely in terms of being a partner in a law firm, but you may want to work in the public sector or do public interest law. That's fine – one of the great things about the legal profession is the sheer diversity of positions one can hold as a lawyer. Go after the opportunities that excite you.

9. **Always remember that practicing law is a privilege, and give back to the community.** As a lawyer, you have a unique ability and responsibility to help others. You really can change the world. Advocate for issues you care about. Testify before the legislature on a bill you care about. Help your community. Help others, who don't have your resources and skills, to advocate for the issues they care about. Do pro bono legal work. There are many individuals who are underrepresented – the poor, the frail, children in need of assistance, victims of abuse. And there are many organizations which need your skills and enthusiasm. You can contact them through the Maryland Pro Bono Resource Center. You'll be giving back to the community, and get valuable experience at the same time.

I wish you good luck and a wonderful future. I hope that each of you enjoy your careers as much as I have been enjoying mine.

Now, with the permission of the Court, I move for the Admission to the Bar of Maryland the Candidates seated here before you. I request, in accordance with your pre-assigned numerical order, starting with the candidate here in front of the podium, that the candidates please stand individually, announce your full name and then resume your seat.