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In Celebration of the Life of Vincent L. Broderick

Honorable Ruth Bader Ginsburg*

I write in celebration of the life of a grand and brave colleague, the Honorable Vincent L. Broderick, a man who served our Nation and City with extraordinary distinction. Judge Broderick was appreciated for his talent as a lawyer, and for his spirit and caring as a human, by all who knew him, including the fine Judge for whom I clerked, the Honorable Edmund L. Palmieri. Through Judge Palmieri, I had the good fortune to become acquainted with Vin Broderick during his early days as the Southern District's Chief Assistant United States Attorney, a commission he accepted in 1961.

Judge Broderick is perhaps best known for his contributions to criminal justice, as a prosecutor, Police Commissioner, and later, head of the United States Judicial Conference Committee on Criminal Law. In each of these posts, he set a model others strive to follow - a model of wisdom, patience, and dedication. I recall the gentle persuasion Judge Broderick used, when the Sentencing Reform Act of 1984 and the Sentencing Guidelines were new, to convince appellate judges to return to school, to gain the knowledge they needed in order to perform competently their recently assigned, but then unfamiliar, role in the sentencing process. Schools in this instance were the Sentencing Institutes he organized and chaired for the benefit of Circuit Judges across the country. He wanted appellate judges to comprehend the scope of discretion District Judges still have under the Guidelines, as he put it, "the[ir] dynamic role . . . in the development of a common law of sentencing." He worked tirelessly, and traveled far in this endeavor, never relaxing his efforts despite the health problems that confronted him. One measure of his success is the 1994 federal legislation permitting

* Associate Justice, Supreme Court of the United States. These Remarks were adapted from a tribute Justice Ginsburg prepared for presentation at the memorial ceremony for Judge Broderick held in the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York on June 19, 1995.

departures from mandatory minimum sentences if certain criteria are met.

On the civil litigation side, he was able to coax the best from counsel, by creating an atmosphere that fostered cooperation and interaction - the will to solve problems rather than to compound them. A true gentleman, he listened to and respected others, earning their respect and confidence in return.

Judge Broderick thrived in the constant pursuit of justice. And he experienced the inexhaustible joy gained from doing the hard job of judging, day in and day out, wisely, fairly, and effectively. I know, from his family's letters to me soon after his death, that he maintained his sharp mind and sense of dignity, his humor and human touch to the end. May all who follow in his way carry on at work and in life as he would have wished.