

CHERISH THE LAWYERS THAT PROTECT YOUR FREEDOM



12 ALICE OLIVER-PARROTT:

13 Hi, my name is Alice Oliver-Parrott.  
14 I have now a hyphenated name, and for someone  
15 from Waco, Texas, we're real proud of things  
16 like that. We think it, sort of, makes us  
17 sound aristocratic. So I'm going to use my  
18 hyphenated name today. I tell you all I'm very  
19 happy to be here. I am Chief Justice of the 1st  
20 Court of Appeals. Before I was coming over  
21 today, my secretary said something to me. We  
22 have kind of a Friday thing at the Courts, so I  
23 sort of dress real casually on Friday. My  
24 secretary said to me, "Gosh, aren't you going  
to, like, dress up, or put a skirt on or  
something like that?" I said, "No. For once in  
my 18 years of law practice, I'm going to a  
group that don't care how I dress."

I think that's true. And to you maybe  
I even look like the Chief Justice of the First  
Court of Appeals. That's sort of been a thing  
that's been in my career. I've not looked the  
way people thought I ought to look to obtain  
the things I wanted to obtain. Yet, I made a  
very conscious decision not to change the way I

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1 look, or change the way I like to dress, or to  
2 do the little things that give me pleasure and  
3 amuse me and to make those dry dusty law books  
4 a lot more palatable. I'm happy to be one  
5 place maybe I can go that they don't say, well,  
6 she's a really good speaker, but, gosh, did you  
7 see those earrings, or something like that.

8 You know Phyllis sent me a letter,  
9 actually, and she said, "Well we just need like  
10 20 minutes, or a little luncheon talk. Just  
11 kind of a -- I got the feeling it was like a  
12 little after-dinner deal. But she sent me this  
13 letter and said, "You might address these  
14 areas." She wrote Military Law, Employment Law,  
15 Insurance, Probate. I thought, yeah, little  
16 light-hearted luncheon conversation on why you  
17 have no benefits, and how you probably can't  
18 get any.

19 I paused at that and I did think that  
20 perhaps I'll talk to you a little bit about the  
21 way things do change, and the way you can bring  
22 about legitimate, reasonable, and necessary  
23 change. Because I'm as ignorant to what is  
24 needed as perhaps most of the legal community  
25 and the community in general. Ignorance, it's  
26 not crippling, but it's a little debilitating  
27 and for those of us that are ignorant, not  
28 through lack of desire, but just lack of  
29 exposure, the 1st thing you're going to need to  
30 do is educate us on where the needs are, where  
31 the issues are. Since it ties us a little to  
32 those things that are such major things in your  
33 lives, and are truthfully taken for granted in  
34 ours. Today I'm going to take to you a little  
35 bit on, perhaps, how to do that.

36 But, Phyllis wants me to tell you  
37 about our first meeting, because she gets a  
38 real kick out of this story. I'm going to tell  
39 you because there was some humor in it -- later  
40 -- at the time I was pretty taken aback.

41 I was a lawyer at a firm called  
42 Fulbright and Jaworski, which is one of the  
43 biggest law firms in the country. They got 300  
44 people here in Houston and several hundred

1 scattered about the United States and the  
2 world. We came down to the University of  
3 Houston to interview for summer clerks.  
4 Actually, it's one of those law firms that is  
5 so snitty that they probably didn't intend to  
6 hire anybody from the University of Houston. I  
7 mean, they're just doing it because it's  
8 local. Everybody has their nose out of joint.  
9 The only reason I was even sent, was at the  
10 time they had a woefully inadequate number of  
11 women. They woke up to the fact that Law  
12 Schools were filled with women. So I went, it  
13 seemed, on every interview. I went to Harvard.  
14 I went to Yale. They just sent me -- like the  
15 storefront girl. On one of these trips I was  
16 sent down to show how liberal we were, and to  
17 interview at the University of Houston. The  
18 fellow they sent me with-- a great guy, a  
19 friend of mine, also a graduate at Texas A&M  
20 -- which is a real reason to discriminate  
21 against Phyllis, but I'll talk to you about  
22 that later -- he and I were sent down. He is  
23 my superior. That's the way we do it. It's  
24 very military in these big firms. I was like  
25 the private, and he was the big guy. He had  
26 these resumes, and we're flipping through the  
27 resumes before the folks come in. We see this  
28 resume of Phyllis Frye. I'm kind of interested  
29 because of the engineering stuff is on there.  
30 I'm talking to this fellow and I'm saying,  
31 "Well, you know, this is sort of interesting.  
32 She's got a lot of engineering background." A  
33 lot of law firms are in those specialized  
34 areas. I said, "Hey." I said, "Do you know  
35 what? She went to Texas A&M the same time you  
36 did."

19  
20 He sort of tightened up. Of course, I  
21 had no idea what I was even talking about. I'm  
22 just reading the thing and always out of touch,  
23 and manage to offend everybody around me  
24 because I really don't care what they think.  
25 So I'm just talking on and on. I said, "Gosh,  
26 dog, she had this scholarship and had a very  
27 impressive resume from the college." Somehow on  
28 the resume it either said you wore the "Senior  
29 Boots" or something -- I don't remember what it  
30 was. But apparently it's something only guys

1 do. See, I didn't even know that. I'm saying  
and this and that, and the fellow goes, "Well,  
2 no, What's the name again?" And I said, "It's  
Phyllis Frye, Phyllis Randolph Frye."  
3

4 He's thinking -- you know -- so  
Phyllis comes in to interview. And this was  
still early on, and things are changing. When  
5 she walked in, of course -- even from Waco I  
snapped. I figured, God, I'm thinking slow,  
6 but now I get it. She walked in and sat down,  
and she had on this big old Texas A&M ring.  
7 Do you still wear that thing? Yeah. Big old  
giant senior ring from Texas A&M. Kind of a  
8 guy's ring. So I just smiled -- I mean I  
cannot stop. I am so excited because I know  
9 she's about to kill this guy sitting next to me  
-- which she sort of proceeds to do. He of  
10 course, he won't ask her any questions. He is  
just ruffling through his papers and making  
11 notes and circling stuff.

12 I don't even know if Phyllis remembers  
this part -- I was so excited to be with  
13 someone that maybe I'll find some stuff out. I  
just started asking her questions and upon  
14 reflection were probably pretty forward  
questions. She responded with such grace and  
15 such openness and really sort of educated me on  
what the deal was, where she was  
16 professionally, what she was doing.

17 Luckily, I had enough sense to not ask  
why you do this. I had enough sense not to do  
18 that, but we really had a very sort of fun  
discussion on something that was really new to  
19 me. Something I needed to learn about, and I  
benefited greatly from the interview.  
20

21 This fellow sitting next to me, I  
don't remember him saying a word through the  
entire thing. He just was so horrified, you  
22 see. He could not function.

23 I'd like to say we've come a long way  
since then. Because it's just like everything  
24 else in life. Sometimes it takes a little  
exposure to others. It takes them getting to

1 know you. Your frustrations sometimes are  
2 rewarded. Your patience is sometimes  
3 rewarded. Not everytime, and sometimes your  
4 woefully disappointed. But I think Phyllis is  
5 an example of where there have been rewards.

6 Like that little rock that you skim,  
7 we did as kids, we skimmed them. That ripple,  
8 and your ripple, has really expanded. Not just  
9 through the legal community but through our  
10 community in general, here, in this city. I  
11 think there are a lot more of us that are not  
12 so understanding. We probably still don't  
13 understand everything but are open and  
14 sensitive and are grasping at least the issues  
15 enough that we can be, not enemies, but  
16 friends. Not obstacles, but facilitators to  
17 those changes that are reasonable and necessary  
18 and just in our community.

19 You know, you have to bear with us. I  
20 mean, just keep in mind, I'm not the only one  
21 that grew up in places like Waco, Texas. There  
22 are a lot of people that culturally are just  
23 not exposed to things. Now, in my 40's I'm a  
24 lot more aware than I was when I thought I was  
25 so aware in my 20's. So, stay with us. Stay  
26 beside us. Keep talking to us, and try not to  
27 be offended if we say the wrong thing. Just try  
28 to understand and educate us on how to say the  
29 right thing.

30 You know, I can remember people saying  
31 to me when I started at this big firm, there  
32 are 300 guys in Houston, and two women. They  
33 would say things to me like, "Well, your the  
34 best woman lawyer I ever met," you know. And I  
35 would say, "Gee, great. That means there's one  
36 other person I'm beating out and there are 299  
37 folks that are better." They were trying to  
38 complement me, right. And yet their  
39 compliments were sort of offensive.

40 This job I have now, it's a big job,  
41 it's neat. I am a Chief Justice of an  
42 Appellate Court. It's 200 years of history in  
43 Texas, and they've never had a woman be the  
44 Chief Justice. Not there that there weren't

1 women that were qualified. Tons of them,  
2 probably more qualified than I, but their work,  
3 their frustrations, their patience, brought  
4 about enough change that I could have this  
5 job.

6 That's kind of where you are, you  
7 know, you're at the birth of something. Your  
8 patience, your frustrations are going to reap  
9 many wonderful harvest. Maybe not for you,  
10 maybe not, but that's not the purpose of hard  
11 work. The purpose is to have a vision, to work  
12 toward a realistic and good goal, to benefit  
13 everybody, and just to realize that sometimes  
14 those who benefit, may be the next generation.

15 Now, you know we have a thing going on  
16 now that I'm real concerned about. How long do  
17 you want, ten minutes or something? Okay. I'm  
18 real concerned about it, and I want to talk to  
19 you about it because I want to get your help.  
20 You may be hearing a little of this -- some of  
21 you are from out of state -- it's been on the  
22 radio recently, here, but it's everywhere.

23 The public enemy number one now is the  
24 lawyer. Have you noticed this? I mean,  
25 everytime I turn on the radio I hear somebody  
26 telling --, it's called trial lawyers. I mean  
27 just as if that wasn't an offensive term, for  
28 which we're supposed to start denying that  
29 that's what we do for a living. It's become a  
30 sort of sheik kind of chi-chi thing to do is to  
31 bash lawyers and trial lawyers. You know --  
32 the whole thing that's wrong with the America  
33 economy is all these lawyers. Have you heard  
34 that? That makes perfect since, you goofballs.

35 This is something that is so  
36 simplistic. What is frightening about it--  
37 it's also absurd -- but what is frightening  
38 about it, it is an example of picking an enemy  
39 and isolating thoughts and comments to that  
40 person, or group of persons, to take emphasis  
41 away what needs to be done in our country. The  
42 shame about picking the lawyer as the enemy is  
43 lawyers are the very guardians of a free  
44 society. If we do not have lawyers, we do not

1 have a free society. If we do not have  
2 lawyers, there is no system to change because  
3 there is no voice for you to make your changes  
4 known. It's just that simple.

5 Watch the films of the Los Angeles  
6 riots. I started watching films when I watched  
7 the videotape beating of Rodney King. I was  
8 like one of these unwilling people. I was  
9 bound to the TV everytime that came on. The  
10 riots. The terrible beating of this truck  
11 driver, Reginold -- I forget his last name  
12 now. I found myself watching it although  
13 horrified. Why I was so horrified was not just  
14 the pure brutality by all of those things.  
15 What horrified me the most was, what I perceive  
16 to be, an entire generation of young people who  
17 had given up on their system of law. They  
18 don't believe in us. They don't believe we can  
19 help them. They no longer trust their  
20 government. They no longer trust their courts.  
21 They do not trust law enforcement, and they  
22 don't trust any lawyer to speak out and fight  
23 for them and get their cause heard and resolved  
24 within the system.

25 They are disillusioned and  
26 disfranchised. Then what became even more  
27 horrifying -- I realized it was not just  
28 limited to black males between the ages of 18  
29 to 25 -- I realized this cynicism is deep and  
30 abiding in our country. They don't believe.  
31 And when I say "they" I may even be including  
32 some of you.

33 It is imperative that we not only  
34 start believing in a system of laws, but that  
35 we learn to fight within it, and if we cannot  
36 fight within it, we change the law. We don't go  
37 about changing people before we change the  
38 rules.

39 I'm not as articulate as Archibold  
40 Cox. Some of you people are old enough to  
41 remember Archibold Cox, some of you aren't. He  
42 is sort of a hero of mine. For those who are  
43 too young, maybe sitting over here, Archibold  
44 Cox was a special prosecutor in Watergate that

1 basically irritated the President because he  
2 wanted to investigate President Nixon. So, no  
3 problem there. He was out of trial work in  
4 about an hour, and run off, basically, from the  
5 Washington establishment for a while. But  
6 Archibold Cox was a very erudite fellow, and I  
7 think a very honorable fellow. He has a quote  
8 that I'm going to mess up a little bit, but I  
9 think you'll get the message. He said, "What  
10 are we, we lawyers-- and I include those who  
11 were sitting with us at the table-- well, what  
12 are we?" And he said, "What we are are a  
13 result of centuries of tradition-- good  
14 traditions, dignity, and honor, and those  
15 things that must continue to renew and dedicate  
16 ourselves to our basic mission." Then his exact  
17 words, I just paraphrased a couple of  
18 paragraphs were "And our mission is, to bring  
19 about the resolution of dispute, with the  
20 minimum of force, and the maximum of reason."  
21 That is, of course, what we're supposed to do.  
22 We are supposed to use our voices, our  
23 intellects, our powers of persuasion, to use  
24 reason, to make change, and to minimize the use  
25 and necessity of force.

26 We are servants to the Constitution of  
27 the United States in this country. We are not  
28 kings and rulers. You know, it's interesting.  
29 Our profession dates back really only to about  
30 2nd century BC. We're not, I'm sorry to say,  
31 the oldest profession. That would be fun to  
32 be, but we're not. They predate us by many  
33 many centuries. But about the 2nd century BC  
34 there was born a type of person almost exactly  
35 like today's lawyer. They call that person the  
36 advocate. We think, now, advocate, talk and  
37 all that, huh-uh.

38 Advocate is translated from Latin,  
39 "Summoned to one side." Then a century later  
40 in a Roman republic the Greeks kind of had it  
41 too -- they had a class of people,  
42 professionals, called the Causadeese. And they  
43 were, translated, "The speaker of cases."

44 And so to me that is our role. We are  
45 summoned to the side, and we are the voice for



1 the voiceless. Sometimes the voiceless is a  
2 major corporation. They don't have access to  
3 the system any easier that than anyone else.  
4 They need that voice to go forward and speak  
5 their cause. That is done with reason.

6 We sense that our people have lost  
7 faith, and it is easy to loose faith.  
8 Sometimes we get tired; sometimes you've gotten  
9 tired. It is then our job to rededicate  
10 ourselves; to renew our vows to our dedication  
11 of reason; and in certain circumstances, to  
12 brush ourselves off -- as Phyllis sort of did  
13 -- all that debris of negative on us, and go  
14 forward within the system and make those  
15 changes that will make our system better.  
16 Protect a free society and not let our system  
17 fall, because if it falls, of course, it  
18 becomes a terrible thing.

19 What is happening in our country you  
20 see now on the news in Germany? Are you  
21 watching this? Have you seen on the news now  
22 that in Germany now they're having these  
23 nighttime raids where groups of people,  
24 Germans, are bombing, fire bombing, refugee  
25 centers in Germany.

26 They are then, at random, shooting  
27 people that come out of these centers. Most of  
28 these refugees are Romanians. Some are these  
29 poor Yugoslavians or Serfs and Croats. All  
30 this craziness that's going on over there.  
31 What their shouting is -- I mean, I wish they'd  
32 shout a four-letter word, we could stand it  
33 better -- because what they shout is that  
34 Germany is for Germans.

35 What's even worse is the community is  
36 not backing up law enforcement in this regard.  
37 They're going "Well, yeah, they're causing a  
38 lot of employment problems. We don't need any  
39 more people on our welfare rolls." What is  
40 frightening about that, not only does it  
41 hearken back to the Third Reich, but what is  
42 frightening is I hear the same sort of thing  
43 here.

1 My husband and I got in a little  
2 quarrel about it today, and I said, "Well,  
3 great. We can send everybody back to countries  
4 in which they are indigenous. The problem is I  
5 don't have any place to go."

6 American Indians are indigenous here.  
7 I don't know what I am. I suppose I'll just be  
8 set adrift somewhere because there's no place  
9 for me. I'm an immigrant, and I'm a  
10 combination of immigrants. And he said, "But,  
11 that's the point, they don't care about these  
12 people -- if they have a place to go or not."

13 So, that being in Germany, a modern  
14 society, or this thing in our country, with  
15 riots and race and bigotry -- it is our job,  
16 you and I, to stop it. What we can do is real  
17 simple. We can glorify the Constitution. We  
18 can be proud of those people who stand guard  
19 and serve it. We will cut off the critic who  
20 says the problem in this country is lawyers.  
21 Because, of course, that also sounds like an  
22 Adolph Hitler quote. It translated: I will  
23 not rest until every German knows it is a  
24 shameful thing to be a lawyer.

That's how he started out. Because he  
didn't want anybody messing with him when he  
was just going to take the documents of his  
country and tear it up and throw it away and  
have a rule of the elitist white, Aryan Third  
Reich, who judge people -- on how they dressed,  
on what they did in their private lives, or  
their orientation, or their cultural  
background.

So, I'm asking you. I think it is  
pertinent to your group, this is pertinent to  
me -- you know -- I stand before you, the  
mother of five, with one on the way. I want  
the Constitution to be as strong in their  
generation as it is in our generation and  
strengthened by just statutes that are  
inclusive of our society, that include everyone  
in a just, fair, and reasonable way.

You can do that. Educate us. Make us

1 more sensitive. Those of us who are too  
2 ignorant, or too stupid, or bigoted to get  
3 educated, ignore us and step over the body to  
4 the next guy because don't allow us to  
5 frustrate a good mission.

6 I think this is a very interesting  
7 conference. I, of course, know very little  
8 about it, like most people. But by doing this  
9 you start a mission of change of legislation,  
10 if necessary, and of education that will make  
11 not only your life better, but will enrich all  
12 of us. Thanks for your time.

13 PHYLLIS FRYE:

14 I'm glad I don't have to follow that.  
15 That was terrific. Probably what we'll do,  
16 Alice, is send a couple of order blanks to your  
17 Court, and have your Court buy our proceedings  
18 and that way every one of your Judges will have  
19 our proceedings.

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