

SONS OF ITALY REMARKS

Thank you, Rich.

Rich is a distinguished member of the bar; respected for his high ethical standards and because he personifies professionalism.

(PAUSE)

How wonderful is it, on this glorious spring morning, to enjoy a homecoming for us - the Sons and Daughters of Italy. We have so much to celebrate, and remember...

For those in the spring of your years; we share a special kinship. When I sat among you at age 17, to receive my generous scholarship from the Sons of Italy...you were not yet born, not able to see the pride of my grandfather, Zopito Nobile, or of my parents, Theresa and John.

But our family's oldest living member, Marcella Vellotti, 96 years old, remembers the pride and joy shared both by our family, but by **all** sons and daughters of Italy. Uncle Louie – meet Marcella Vellotti. (E-Harmony has nothing on me.)

No parent here would be surprised to hear my mother saved that booklet from the 1970 program. It is in pristine condition 47 years later.

What does this old program mean to me? What does it say about our heritage?

It tells us that because of our predecessors, the sons and daughters of Italy have been able to contribute greatly to the growth and vitality of America.

Italian Americans **now** enjoy prominence in every aspect of American life.

BUT NOT ONE OF US has accomplished anything alone. We are, in many ways, the beneficiaries of our families' hard work and many sacrifices. The success of one **is the success of all of us.**

I remain ever thankful for the Sons of Italy's scholarship to me. **I am proud to be a Son of Italy.**

If my grandfather, Zopito Nobile, were here today he would share four brief and simple points:

First: **FAMILY IS EVERYTHING.**

I would be nowhere without the love and support of my life partner and wife of 35 years, Bonnie. **Would you please stand.** Bonnie's steadfast loyalty, love, support and deep friendship mean the world to me.

And with great pride and love, I thank my sons, John and Michael, my daughter in-law, Dr. Ufara Zuwasti Curran, and our **fifth** generation **son of Italy**, our new grandson, Story Curran.

And finally, on the Irish side of the family, my uncle Jim Curran is here today. My uncle was the Chief of the Homicide Investigative Unit of the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office for many

years. He is here to share in this happy occasion with his daughter, and my cousin, the Honorable Jean (Patrone) Curran, who was recently sworn in as a district court judge about a month ago. Jean, please stand and be recognized.

A second point: **BE IMPECCABLE WITH YOUR WORD.**

My Italian mother, Theresa, used to say: **Your reputation precedes you - and succeeds you.**

My third point: **NEVER FORGET YOUR ROOTS.**

Everything you accomplish is because someone helped you get there. Do not forget that loyalty or love. Let me give you an example.

To this day, no matter what professional success I've attained, many of my fondest memories are those from childhood: remembering the warmth and love of our home and that of our grandparents; as a little kid, getting to sleep over at my grandfather's house on a Friday night – what a treat that was - my grandfather made eggnog for our Saturday breakfast; and on Sunday, after mass, we would have lunch with my cousins, sisters, aunts and uncles. With the adults having coffee at the kitchen table, they seemed to talk and talk and talk (about what I don't know). My cousins and I would amuse ourselves by crawling under the table and pinching the shins of the adults. How we laughed and laughed. And all the while, a huge wooden radio played the Italian station in the living room.

And as I got older, I would work with my grandfather in his small garden, and eat beautifully ripe pears in his backyard that did not fall far from the tree.

Finally: **NEVER FORGET YOUR VALUES.**

As a new judge, I sought out Judge Domenic Russo, who gave me this advice: “Never stray from what you feel comfortable with...because in the final analysis, that decision is yours to live with.”

May the values of the Sons and Daughters of Italy’s continue to be honored. May God’s blessings hold us together and help us support future generations.

I also want to thank three other people: Angela DeNapoli, whose friendship with my mom spans half a century reaching back to that wonderful organization, the Sacred Heart Italian Society of Roslindale; Lenny Vadala, a family friend now deceased, who was very active in our organization and who wrote my letter of recommendation for admission to the bar; and finally, attorney Vincent DePalo, who started out as my judicial intern, and is now a trusted friend and respected trial attorney in Boston.

It is also a pleasure to share this honor today with Clerk Joe Faretra. Joe gave me my very first job. His leadership in the East Boston District Court Clerk’s office serves as a model for other courts.

No one comes to the counter of a Criminal Clerk's office in a great mood. But Joe's staff is dedicated, empathetic and patient. They are to be commended.

And it's wonderful to see my colleague, Judge John McDonald, a leader in the fight against the heroin surge.

I appreciate the Justinian Society members who joined us today.

Thank you President Sestito, Al DeNapoli, the Sons and Daughters of Italy, the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, the Commission for Social Justice, and the Chair, Donna Guiliano, and members of the Scholarship Committee **who started me on my professional journey.**

I appreciate this most profound honor.