

Opening Statement of Danya A. Dayson
Nominee to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia
November 8, 2011

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, it is an honor and a privilege to appear before you today as a nominee to the bench of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia. I want to thank the Judicial Nomination Commission, in particular its Chair, the Honorable Emmet G. Sullivan, for recommending me to the White House and President Barack Obama for nominating me. I would also like to thank the Committee members and staff for their courtesy and professionalism during this process.

I would like to introduce my family members who are with me today. My parents, Don and Claudia Dayson, and my husband, Michael Murphy, are here. Discretion being the better part of valor, my daughter Wallace is not joining us today. I am grateful to have had their example, inspiration and support throughout the years. Also here are my sister-in-law, Janine Morris, and my godson, Nicholas Pohlman, who has come from North Carolina to witness a real live Senate hearing. In addition, I would like to thank my boss, Jeffrey O'Toole, and my other friends, colleagues, and mentors who have attended today for their continued guidance, support and wisdom.

While I was growing up, my parents always stressed the importance of education, not only for its own sake, but so that one could be of service to others. Their example of service, through my father's work with low income patients and my mother's literacy and housing volunteer work, using their abilities to serve others in need, led me to my ultimate path during law school. I have been fortunate to have colleagues, bosses, and mentors who have exemplified the best of the ideals of service. In my legal career, through my work as a law clerk to the Honorable Judge Robert Morin in the District of Columbia Superior Court, or in private practice as a partner to Jenifer Wicks or an associate at O'Toole, Rothwell, Nassau & Steinbach, I have sought to be of use to others and to assist them in times of genuine crisis in their lives. If confirmed, I would be honored to work with another set of colleagues and mentors who will continue to challenge and inspire me to live out this commitment to service.

I have lived, attended school and worked in the District since 1994. In my time as an attorney, I have had the good fortune to work in organizations and environments that have allowed me to provide assistance to my clients in a variety of ways – I have been able to advocate in the criminal, abuse and neglect and domestic relations arenas, and advise my small business and non-profit clients. In each of these roles, I learned the importance of using diligence, creativity and pragmatism to address the needs of my clients. I came to fully appreciate the extent to which advocating for each client, in whatever role, is an important responsibility, as well as a privilege and an honor.

I started my professional life in DC Superior court and have learned so many valuable lessons from the bench and practitioners there. I am extraordinarily humbled and grateful to be considered for a judgeship in the Superior Court, and, if confirmed, hope to carry the values and lessons about the practice of law, justice and service to the bench. Thank you for considering my nomination and I look forward to answering your questions.