

Opening Statement of Todd E. Edelman
Nominee, Associate Judge, D.C. Superior Court
April 20, 2010

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, I am grateful for and honored by the opportunity to appear before you today as a nominee to be an Associate Judge on the District of Columbia Superior Court. I would like to thank the District of Columbia Judicial Nomination Commission for recommending me to the White House, and President Barack Obama for nominating me. I would also like to thank the Committee for considering my nomination so expeditiously, and the Committee's staff for their hard work in preparing for this hearing and for the courtesy they have shown me during this process.

I want to begin by introducing the members of my family who are with me today: my wife, Marisa Nightingale; our children, Nora and Jacob; my mother and stepfather, Sybil and Lewis Mitchell; and my father-in-law and mother-in-law, Stuart and Elena Nightingale. While I have many people to thank today, I know that I am sitting before you primarily because of my family's support, encouragement, and patience. A number of my friends, colleagues, and students are also here in the gallery, and I would like to thank them not only for their support today, but for inspiring me, challenging me, and, at times, entertaining me over the past fifteen years.

I became a lawyer in order to pursue a career in public service, and I feel fortunate that I have had the opportunity to do so. I have dedicated my legal career to protecting the principles that access to justice should be equally available to everyone in our community, and that the quality of representation provided in court should not depend on income, wealth, or connections. At the Public Defender Service and the Georgetown University Law Center's Criminal Justice Clinic, I have represented indigent clients in D.C. Superior Court for over twelve years, work that has been both a daunting responsibility and a unique privilege. I have also spent much of my career training public defenders, legal services lawyers, and other attorneys and law students who represent low-income people here in Washington. As a clinical professor at Georgetown Law, I aim to instill in my students a passion for using their law degrees to work for those who are most in need of their help. The same commitment to public service and to the principle of equal justice under law that motivated me to go to law school and to pursue these positions at PDS and at Georgetown has also motivated me to seek appointment to the bench.

As I contemplate this next step in my career, I cannot help thinking back to the way I began my career, as a law clerk to Judge William B. Bryant on the United States District Court for the District of Columbia. Judge Bryant was a legendary trial lawyer, a respected and historic jurist, and, above all, the wisest, kindest man I have ever met. Judge Bryant may have taught me more in that one year than I have learned since, and set an example that I will seek to emulate should I be confirmed. Judge Bryant was intellectually curious, committed to applying the law impartially and fairly, and dedicated to showing equal respect to all parties. If I am confirmed, after my career on the bench is over, I hope to be remembered the way Judge Bryant is: as a judge who treated litigants with dignity and his role with humility.

I am quite moved to be considered for a judgeship on the D.C. Superior Court – the court where I grew up as an attorney, and where I learned much of what I know about the law, about

being a lawyer, about winning and losing, and about the joys and challenges of public service. I am humbled to be considered for this position, and thank you again for considering my nomination.