

Opening Statement of Yvonne M. Williams
Nominee, Associate Judge, District of Columbia Superior Court
June 15, 2011

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 of 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 quickly, and treating me with the utmost courtesy and respect during this process.

I would like to introduce my family members who are here with me today: my son, Kendall Weaver; my mother, Julia Burgess, who flew from Massachusetts to be with me today; my stepfather, Roy Singham, who took the train from New York City this morning to support me today; and my brother, Kevin Williams. I want to thank my family not only for being here, but for a lifetime of support, encouragement, and guidance that has truly shaped the person I have become today. I would also like to thank my dad, John Williams, and my sisters, Tanya Williams, Jackie Kramer, and Dandridge Floyd, who all reside in Detroit, Michigan and could not be here today. Finally, many of my fabulous friends, colleagues, and mentors are here with me today, and I would like to thank them for inspiring, challenging, and supporting me throughout my career.

As a teenager growing up Chicago, Illinois, to an undergraduate at the University of California at Berkeley, and then a law student at Northeastern University School of Law, I have always been committed to doing what I can to help improve and enrich the lives of others. At Northeastern, I was trained to become a lawyer imbued with a commitment to principled advocacy and to the notion that, because injustice can exist anywhere, it is our responsibility as lawyers to use the law to advance and improve the lives of those whom we serve. I have strived to do that for every client I have been fortunate enough to represent. As a D.C. Superior Court judge, I will continue that commitment to making a positive difference in people's lives.

In my fourteen years as a practicing attorney, I have fiercely advocated on behalf of my clients to protect and advance their rights and legal positions. During the first half of my career, I worked exclusively on behalf of low-income African American workers before federal courts throughout the country and indigent criminal defendants at both the trial and appellate level in D.C. Superior Court. In the second half of my career to date, I have represented individuals and multi-national corporations in civil and criminal matters, defending their interests against various legal claims before federal courts and administrative agencies. In each of these matters, I was dedicated to improving the circumstances of my clients and to working with them to seek and obtain just solutions to their problems.

I am moved and humbled to be considered for a judgeship on D.C. Superior Court -- the court where I grew up as an attorney, where I learned how to be a lawyer, and where, everyday, I was reminded of the strength, perseverance, and compassion of the citizens of the District of

Columbia. I am so proud to serve this great city in this capacity and I thank you again for considering my nomination.