

Remarks of Judge Patrick L. Carroll III

New Britain Bar Association

Thursday, March 20, 2014

It is such a pleasure to be here tonight, and I want to congratulate the honorees. The practice of law is still a noble profession, and you epitomize that truism.

It is also important to note that bench/bar meetings such as the one tonight are very important. We all share the common goal of serving those individuals who seek assistance from us, and we are often working together on issues that can be quite challenging. So, this type of discussion and collaboration is absolutely necessary if we are to reach our common goal.

I should add that Chief Justice Rogers is very supportive of these gatherings and, in fact, has attended many of them herself. She has made it a mission of her administration to reach out to the bar and to solicit your input on how we can enhance the court system.

I can tell you that this feedback has been invaluable and, in some cases, eye-opening. Because let's face it: you are the ones out there in the trenches, working to earn a living, while at the same time representing your clients to the best of your ability.

And as we all know, being a lawyer in this day and age is no easy task. Rapid changes in technology have contributed to a significant increase in self-represented parties. The Internet has evolved into a vast repository of information that is readily accessible by doing a "Google" or "Bing" search and research that used to take days can now be obtained within minutes through a home computer.

The impact on both the courts and the practice of law has been huge. We have a large number of people in court who represent themselves. Meanwhile, many law firms are struggling to stay afloat because their client base has shrunk. But, you've stayed in the race, and you are to be commended for your tenacity and your commitment to the practice of law. The court is evolving to handle self-represented parties, but I can tell you that when a judge

sees an attorney coming into the courtroom, he or she often breathes a sigh of relief.

And as the Branch re-engineers itself to meet the needs of the 21st century, it is absolutely critical that we hear about your real life experiences and get your feedback. I am proud to say that the Judicial Branch has devoted considerable time to collect your input as part of the strategic plan process implemented by the Chief Justice seven years ago.

In fact, collaboration was one of five outcome goals identified in the strategic plan. A very effective tool of achieving this goal has been hundreds of Branch-sponsored focus groups, many of which have included attorneys. And I can assure you that we will continue to reach out to the bar as we move into the second phase of the plan.

With that, I look forward to working with you and again want to thank you for inviting me tonight. It has been an honor.