

REMARKS BY
CHIEF JUSTICE CHASE T. ROGERS
REDEDICATION OF NEW LONDON COURTHOUSE
MAY 29, 2013

Good morning everyone. I want to thank you for inviting me to speak today. It's really nice to be here at the rededication of the New London courthouse -- certainly the most pleasant task of my week.

In so many ways, this courthouse is more than just a building. It represents our democracy and the grit and energy of this great nation, city and judicial district. It is a symbol of community and an ordered society, where the citizenry puts its trust and confidence into a judicial system that is driven by the rule of the law and the Constitution rather than a king, a dictator or an army.

And when you think of how important this must have been in the late 1700s, it really does make you stop and think. A fledgling country, just wrapping up a revolution and creating a government unlike any other in the world ... this courthouse must have served as a beacon and source of hope and strength for the colonists. For here was where people could go and live the new nation's proposition that all men are created equal.

We owe a lot to these men -- and women -- because the truth is we wouldn't be here today without their perseverance. However, we need to also remember that while the past is a vital part of our heritage, the *heart* of a building encompasses the people who inhabit it today. In other words, without all of you, we would have a lovely old building in our midst. But it would be nothing more than that.

Instead, we have a building that has served as home base for some of Connecticut's finest judges – several of whom are here today. These judges are dedicated to ensuring that every single person who walks through the court doors is assured of equal access and a fair hearing. Across the board, they have handled extremely difficult cases. And at times, they have weathered harsh criticism for upholding the rule of law and ensuring the survival of democracy. These are some of the people who make the New London courthouse what it is today.

Having said that, our judges don't work in a vacuum. The best judges are aided by talented, front-line staff, and without all of you, we could not do our jobs. These are our clerks, court officers, judicial marshals, court reporters and monitors, magistrates, victim advocates, secretaries, law librarians, caseload coordinators, jury clerks, maintenance, support enforcement, probation, bail, interpreters, court service officers and family services staff. Through all of your efforts, the New London courthouse day in and day out exemplifies what public service is all about. And of course, there are the prosecutors, the public defenders and the New London bar, who all work hard to ensure that their client has their day in court.

All of you -- and those who preceded you -- are the soul of this building, whether we are talking colonial times or modern society. So as we celebrate and rededicate this grand courthouse today, let us also celebrate the individuals who have made it what it is. For it is you, every single one of you, who help uphold our end of the bargain: that our courts will protect the rights of *all* individuals who come into contact with the justice system.

Thank you again for the honor of addressing you and having the opportunity to share in this joyful day.

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