

SPEECH BY ROBERT MORGAN
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF NORTH CAROLINA
ELIZABETH CITY, NORTH CAROLINA
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DINNER HONORING WALTER W. COHOON ON HIS RETIREMENT AS SUPERIOR
COURT JUDGE

DURING THE LAST FEW MONTHS, I HAVE HAD SEVERAL OPPORTUNITIES TO VISIT HERE IN THIS SECTION OF OUR STATE AND RENEW OLD FRIENDSHIPS AND HOPFULLY MAKE SOME NEW ONES. I ENJOY DOING THIS BECAUSE, AS I'VE PROBABLY TOLD YOU BEFORE, I FEEL LIKE I'M AT HOME WHEN I'M DOWN HERE.

THOUGH MY HOME COUNTY OF HARNETT IS A LONG WAY FROM HERE, WE SHARE MUCH OF THE SAME COMMON HERITAGE FOR WE ARE NATIVES OF EASTERN NORTH CAROLINA, WHERE THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS GREAT STATE BEGAN. IT WAS HERE THAT THE FIRST PATRIOTS LIVED AND DIED AND HERE THAT THE FIRST CHAPTERS IN THE HISTORY OF NORTH CAROLINA WERE WRITTEN.

AS EASTERN NORTH CAROLINIANS WE ARE PROUD OF THIS HERITAGE AND PARTICULARLY CONSCIOUS OF IT AS WE LOOK FORWARD TO THE BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION AND THE RELIVING OF MANY OF THE HISTORIC EVENTS WHICH SHAPED THE COURSE OF OUR STATE AND, IN FACT, OUR NATION.

BUT I THINK THAT TONIGHT WE SHOULD BE AWARE OF THE FACT THAT WE ARE NOT "RELIVING" HISTORY BUT ARE IN A VERY REAL WAY "MAKING HISTORY". FOR WE ARE GATHERED TO HONOR ONE OF THE ALBEMARLE REGION'S GREAT FIGURES, A MAN WHO CERTAINLY HAS CARVED HIS NICHE AND MADE HIS PLACE IN THE HISTORY OF THIS STATE AND AREA.

REMEMBER WITH ME, IF YOU WILL, THE SERVICE, DEDICATION, AND PATRIOTISM OF SUCH GREAT NORTH CAROLINIANS AS FORMER GOVERNOR J. C. B. EHRINHAUS, WILLIE JONES (PRONOUNCED WILEY), JAMES IREDELL, CHESTER MORRIS, AND CONGRESSMAN LINDSEY WARREN.

REMEMBER WITH ME, IF YOU WILL, THE LIVES AND DEEDS OF THESE MEN OF THE ALBEMARLE AND THEN TAKE NOTE THAT FUTURE GENERATIONS WILL RECALL WITH EQUAL EASE THE NAME WALTER W. COHOON, WHOM WE HONOR TONIGHT - WALTER W. COHOON, ATTORNEY, COUNTY SOLICITOR, DISTRICT SOLICITOR, CHURCHMAN, CIVIC LEADER, FATHER, HUSBAND AND JURIST EXTRAORDINARY.

ONE WRITER, YEARS AGO, STATED THAT THERE ARE FOUR THINGS THAT A JUDGE SHOULD DO:

HEAR COURTEOUSLY
ANSWER WISELY
CONSIDER SOBERLY
RULE IMPARTIALLY.

I AM SURE THAT JUDGE WALTER CAHOON MUST HAVE RUN ACROSS THIS INSTRUCTION EARLY IN HIS JUDICIAL CAREER BECAUSE I DON'T BELIEVE THERE HAS EVER BEEN A JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THIS STATE WHO HAS FOLLOWED IT MORE CLOSELY.

ON THESE FOUR PILLOWS - COURTESY, WISDOM, IMPARTIALITY AND SOBRIETY - HE BUILT A REPUTATION AS A JUDGE THAT MADE HIM ONE OF THE STATE'S MOST RESPECTED JURISTS AND IN TURN HE HAS BROUGHT HONOR TO THIS ALBEMARLE REGION AND YOU, HIS FRIENDS, ASSEMBLED HERE TONIGHT. IT IS VERY FITTING, THEN, THAT YOU HONOR HIM ON THIS OCCASION AND WISH HIM HAPPINESS AND GOOD HEALTH IN HIS RETIREMENT, AS WE ALL DO.

I SINCERELY WISH THAT EVERY NORTH CAROLINIAN, ESPECIALLY EVERY YOUNG NORTH CAROLINIAN, COULD BE HERE TONIGHT TO HEAR THE TRIBUTES SPOKEN AND SHARE IN THIS RECOGNITION OF A GOOD MAN AND AN HONEST AND DEDICATED PUBLIC SERVANT. JUDGE COHOON HAS SET AN EXAMPLE WORTH FOLLOWING, AND SUCH EXAMPLES ARE BADLY NEEDED IN OUR DAY.

DURING THE LAST MANY MONTHS, OUR NATION HAS BEEN THROUGH A SERIES OF CRISES WHICH HAVE SHAKEN THE CONFIDENCE OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE IN THE ABILITY OF THEIR GOVERNMENT TO BOTH ANTICIPATE PROBLEMS AND TO COPE WITH THEM WHEN THEY ARISE. BUT IN MY OPINION, THERE IS NO MORE TRAGIC BY-PRODUCT OF THE MONTHS OF DOUBT AND TURMOIL, THAN THE PUBLIC'S LOSS OF CREDIBILITY IN GOVERNMENT IN GENERAL, AND PUBLIC OFFICE HOLDERS FROM THE COURTHOUSE TO THE WHITE HOUSE.

IN THE MINDS OF MANY, ALL HAVE BEEN TARRED WITH THE SAME BRUSH. THERE ARE MANY WHO BELIEVE THAT PUBLIC OFFICIALS LONG AGO ABANDONED HONESTY AND INTEGRITY AS BEACON LIGHTS

AND SUBSTITUTED FOR THEM EXPEDIENCY AND PERSONAL REWARD,
I WISH THOSE PEOPLE COULD BE HERE TONIGHT, EVEN BETTER,
I WISH THOSE PEOPLE COULD KNOW PERSONALLY WALTER W. COHOON,
THEIR FAITH WOULD BE RESTORED; THEIR SKEPTICISM WOULD
DISAPPEAR.

THOSE OF YOU WHOSE ROOTS ARE DEEP IN THIS EASTERN
NORTH CAROLINA SOIL HAVE EVERY RIGHT TO BE PROUD OF A MAN
WHOSE LIFE IS SUCH A TESTIMONY, I COMMEND YOU FOR FINDING
SUCH A MEANINGFUL WAY TO EXPRESS YOUR ADMIRATION AND
APPRECIATION.

JUDGE COHOON RICHLY DESERVES THIS RECOGNITION, THE
GOOD PEOPLE OF THIS AREA WHO HONOR HIM TONIGHT AND SHARE
HIS LOVE FOR THIS STATE AND REGION, DESERVE TO HAVE A MAN
LIKE WALTER W. COHOON LIVE AMONG THEM.