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**IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF LYCOMING COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA**

IN RE: :  
: No. 18-00006  
MEMORIAL SERVICE OF :  
: :  
RONALD C. TRAVIS :  
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TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

BEFORE: HONORABLE Nancy L. Butts, President Judge  
HONORABLE Richard A. Gray, Judge  
HONORABLE Marc F. Lovecchio, Judge  
HONORABLE Eric R. Linhardt, Judge

DATE: May 11, 2018

PLACE: Lycoming County Courthouse  
Courtroom No. 1  
48 West Third Street  
Williamsport, Pennsylvania

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P R O C E E D I N G S

1  
2           **JUDGE BUTTS:** Good afternoon. We welcome  
3 everybody to this a special session of court. We  
4 specifically set it at 3:30 because we knew that an awful  
5 lot of people would want to participate. But,  
6 unfortunately, as the President Judge and often the bear of  
7 bad news, we have to break at 5:00 just because of  
8 commitments of some of the Judges here, including myself,  
9 but we wanted to offer enough time for everyone to say a few  
10 words especially recognizing the fact that there are members  
11 of Ron's family here.

12                       So this afternoon we have the privilege of holding  
13 a memorial service for a 46 year member of the Lycoming  
14 County Law Association, Ron Travis. We recognize an  
15 appreciate the attendance of everyone that's here, including  
16 the family members who have joined us here for the service.  
17 I'd like to acknowledge Pam, Ron's wife; Kelli Travis, his  
18 daughter; with grandchildren Zach, Kenna and Rory.

19                       On February 9th of this year I appointed a  
20 committee to prepare a report and resolution recognizing the  
21 life and accomplishments of Ron, and the chairman of the  
22 committee is John Humphrey. The members of the committee  
23 are Senior Judge Dudley Anderson; Toni Byrd, the Assistant  
24 Federal Public Defender; Geoff Ayers; E.J. Rymsza; and one  
25 of his partners, Cliff Rieders. I would now recognize Jack

1 Humphrey, the chair of the committee to present the report  
2 and resolution. Mr. Humphrey.

3 **ATTORNEY JOHN HUMPHREY:** May it please the Court,  
4 I will hand up a copy of the -- or the original report and  
5 resolution, a form of Order and I do have some extra copies  
6 if any of the other Judges would like one.

7 **JUDGE BUTTS:** I'll pass them out.

8 **ATTORNEY JOHN HUMPHREY:** May it please the Court,  
9 ladies and gentlemen, Pam, Kelli and family. The committee  
10 was asked to draft resolutions memorializing the life of  
11 Ronald C. Travis, Esquire and to submit them today at this  
12 service. The following resolution is submitted for  
13 consideration by the Court:

14 Ronald C. Travis, Esquire, a member of the Bar of  
15 this Court since 1971, died unexpectedly at his home in  
16 Williamsport, Pennsylvania on December 24, 2017. He was the  
17 husband of Pamela Lyon Travis with whom he shared 48 years  
18 of marriage.

19 In addition to his wife Pam, Ron was survived by  
20 his daughter, Kelli Lyon Travis, of Williamsport and three  
21 grandchildren; Zachary Travis, Rory Peters, and Kenna Peters  
22 who are here with us today. His daughter, Leigh Stearns  
23 Travis, died at age of 39 just two months prior to Ron's  
24 death.

25 Ron was born on June 11, 1944 in Punxsutawney,

1 Pennsylvania and was the son of John and Isabelle Anderson  
2 Travis. Ron and his brother, John, were raised by their  
3 mother with the family spending Ron's childhood years in the  
4 Salamanca, New York and Olean, New York. As a young boy Ron  
5 worked as a pinsetter at a bowling alley. Beginning at age  
6 12 he began working in a traveling carnival, a summer job he  
7 continued to hold through his years in college and law  
8 school. The Travis family moved to Williamsport in 1960.

9 Ron graduated from Williamsport High School in  
10 1962, from Lycoming College in 1967, and from the Dickinson  
11 School of Law in 1970. Following law school he served as a  
12 law clerk to the Chief Justice of the Pennsylvania Supreme  
13 Court, the Honorable John C. Bell, Jr., in Philadelphia.

14 Returning to Williamsport Pennsylvania in 1971 Ron  
15 began the private practice of law as an associate with the  
16 firm of Candor, Youngman, Gibson & Gault. After a few years  
17 he became a partner in that firm where he remained until he  
18 and fellow partner, Jack Humphrey, left and joined the firm  
19 of Stuart, Murphy, Smith, Mussina, Harris & Rieders in 1982.  
20 Following various personnel changes, the firm name was  
21 changed to Rieders, Travis, Mussina, Humphrey & Harris.  
22 Over the years various names were added or subtracted from  
23 the firm letterhead, but it was always known as the  
24 Rieders, Travis law firm. Ron remained a partner in the  
25 Rieders, Travis firm from 1982 until his death.

1           Ron Travis was a trial lawyer and throughout his  
2 46 years in private practice he handled a wide variety of  
3 civil and criminal cases. His civil caseload included  
4 insurance defense work while with the Candor, Youngman  
5 office, and thereafter with the Rieders, Travis firm  
6 included motor vehicle accident cases, product liability,  
7 medical malpractice, Federal Tort Claims Act cases, prisoner  
8 civil rights cases, and others. Additionally, he maintained  
9 a large caseload of criminal cases, both as a privately  
10 retained attorney and court appointed counsel. Ron's civil  
11 and criminal trial practice took him to state and federal  
12 courts throughout Pennsylvania and beyond.

13           He was admitted to and handled appeals in the  
14 Pennsylvania appellate court, as well as the United States  
15 Courts of Appeals for the Second, Third and Fourth Circuits,  
16 and the United States Supreme Court.

17           While he pursued cases in the Commons Plea Court  
18 of Lycoming County and numerous other counties, he was best  
19 known as a civil and criminal practitioner in the federal  
20 courts. In the United States District Court for the Middle  
21 District of Pennsylvania he had been appointed or retained  
22 as counsel in over 150 cases.

23           Beginning in the mid-1990s, with re-instatement of  
24 the federal death penalty in 1996 and the growing trend of  
25 prosecutors to pursue the death penalty in first degree

1 murder cases, Ron developed an acute interest in  
2 representing defendants charged with first degree murder and  
3 facing the possibility of a death sentence. He was a  
4 committed and outspoken opponent of the death penalty,  
5 unable to understand why the government should kill a person  
6 for the purpose of establishing that murder is wrong.

7 Ron developed a national reputation for his work  
8 in capital cases being appointed in eight such cases during  
9 the last 20 years of his practice and life. He was death  
10 penalty qualified in Pennsylvania pursuant to Pennsylvania  
11 Criminal Procedure Rule 801, was deemed "Learned Counsel" in  
12 federal death penalty cases, and was a graduate of the Santa  
13 Clara Death Penalty College and the Clarence Darrow Death  
14 Penalty College.

15 Perhaps his best known client and case was *United*  
16 *States v. David Hammer*, which involved a prison homicide at  
17 the Lewisburg Penitentiary. Ron and his co-counsel tried  
18 this case in 1998 before Judge Malcolm Muir, and the result  
19 was a guilty verdict and death sentence. Over the next many  
20 years numerous appeals were taken and the case became  
21 infamous among attorneys handling capital murder cases. Ron  
22 and his co-counsel never gave up their attempt to spare the  
23 life of their client, and in 2011 Mr. Hammer's death  
24 sentence was overturned. He was resentenced to life  
25 imprisonment in 2014 and remains alive today. Ron continued

1 to represent Mr. Hammer in other matters and was scheduled  
2 to travel to a federal correctional facility in Springfield,  
3 Missouri to see Mr. Hammer on December 26, 2017, two days  
4 after Ron died.

5 His a civil client's also benefited from Ron's  
6 legal talent and hard work. *Decarlo v United States of*  
7 *America* was a case brought under the Federal Tort Claims Act  
8 alleging negligence in the medical treatment of a federal  
9 prisoner. Following trial in 1992 the Court awarded Ron's  
10 client over \$800,000 in damages, at that time one of the  
11 nation's largest personal injury awards to an inmate in the  
12 federal corrections system.

13 Ron had a long history of service to the courts,  
14 fellow lawyers, and the organized bar. A member of the  
15 Pennsylvania Bar Association and Lycoming Law Association,  
16 he served as President of LLA in 1999. He made continuing  
17 legal education presentations for the Pennsylvania Bar  
18 Association, the Pennsylvania Criminal Defense Lawyers,  
19 United States Attorneys Office, the Federal Public Defender  
20 Office, and Life in the Balance. He was a member of the  
21 National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, the  
22 Pennsylvania Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, and  
23 the Pennsylvania Trial Lawyers Association. He was active  
24 in the Lycoming County Inns of Court. From 1972 until his  
25 death, he was a Criminal Justice Act Panel attorney and on

1 the Membership Committee from 1997 on.

2 Ron was universally respected as a criminal and  
3 civil trial lawyer. His unparalleled diligence and work  
4 habits made him a legend. He maintained a commitment to the  
5 law and to his clients second to none.

6 The law was not the only field in which Ron Travis  
7 excelled. Appropriately nicknamed "Lefty" for his left-hand  
8 prowess, he was known throughout Lycoming County and beyond  
9 as an outstanding athlete.

10 After his family moved to Williamsport in 1960, as  
11 a high school junior he unsuccessfully attempted to make the  
12 Williamsport High School Basketball team. Fortunately for  
13 him and many coaches and teammates thereafter, in the next  
14 year Ron grew six inches while playing basketball in the  
15 Men's League at the YMCA. He made the Williamsport High  
16 School Team and started his senior year and that 1961-62  
17 squad won 21 games and the district championship.

18 During his four years at Lycoming College "Lefty"  
19 started every basketball game for Coach Dutch Burch, and  
20 when he graduated in 1967 he was the leading rebounder in  
21 the history of the school and was second in total points  
22 scored. He earned first team All Middle Atlantic Conference  
23 accolades his last three years, was name MAC Northern  
24 Division Player of the Year as a junior, and in 2013 was  
25 named to the MAC Century Team. He was a member of the



1 inaugural Lycoming College Athletics Hall of Fame Class in  
2 1986.

3           Ron continued playing basketball throughout his  
4 law school days and thereafter, and was the captain of  
5 numerous semi-pro team which competed in leagues and  
6 tournaments throughout Pennsylvania and the surrounding  
7 states. His 1971 Lancaster YMCA team won the national YMCA  
8 championship. He was recognized as an outstanding shooter  
9 and rebounder and regularly scored 30 to 50 points in league  
10 and tournament games. In one game he scored 82 points  
11 against a team with numerous college basketball players and,  
12 in another tournament, he scored 54 and 63 points in  
13 back-to-back games against teams with several all-star  
14 college players and future basketball professionals.

15           During the early 1970s Ron's teams were traveling  
16 to basketball games every weekend from December through  
17 April throughout Pennsylvania and adjacent states. While a  
18 serious knee injury in 1976 slowed his basketball career  
19 somewhat, he continued to captain teams on the tournament  
20 circuit until 1990 and, thereafter, played locally in  
21 Williamsport at the Salvation Army and the Ohev Sholom  
22 Synagogue courts.

23           His knee injury also resulted in Ron's taking up  
24 tennis as part of his rehabilitation, and like all other  
25 things he attempted he excelled in that sport. Again, he

1 traveled to tournaments throughout Pennsylvania and beyond  
2 and regularly won doubles tournaments with his regular  
3 partner, Doug Kohler, and 35-and-over singles events.

4 Beginning in 1991 he began entering national  
5 events sanctioned by the United States Tennis Association,  
6 and at age 50 made it to the quarter finals in the national  
7 50-and-over clay court event. He played in local, regional,  
8 and national tennis tournaments until he had a hip  
9 replacement in 2005 and, thereafter, played locally where he  
10 was well-known as a fierce competitor with a wicked serve.

11 In recognition of his excellence as a basketball  
12 and tennis player, Ron was inducted in the West Branch  
13 Valley Sports Hall of Fame in 2000.

14 Ron Travis was a devoted husband, father and  
15 grandfather. For years he coached softball and basketball  
16 teams of his children and grandchildren and, honoring his  
17 many years working in the carnival, loved taking his kids to  
18 almost every carnival coming to the Williamsport area. He  
19 treasured the family's annual winter trips to Cayman Island.

20 Now, therefore, be it resolved, that we, the  
21 undersigned committee, joined in by the Lycoming County Bar  
22 and the Lycoming County Law Association, do hereby recognize  
23 and mourn the passing of Ronald C. Travis, Esquire, and  
24 recognize and remember him as an excellent civil and  
25 criminal trial lawyer who devoted his professional life to

1 protecting the Constitutional rights of the poor and  
2 underprivileged; as an attorney who represented and stood  
3 for the highest principles of the legal profession; as a  
4 colleague who served as an example to and mentor and teacher  
5 of young lawyers who were willing to represent indigent  
6 criminal defendants; as an athlete who extended his pursuit  
7 of excellence to every endeavor he undertook; and as a  
8 strong and quiet man who was loved, honored and respected by  
9 his family, his partners, his clients, and all those who  
10 were privileged to be a part of his life.

11           And be it resolved further, that these Resolutions  
12 and statements be spread at length upon the Minutes for the  
13 Court with copies to the family of Ronald C. Travis,  
14 Esquire, and be published in the Lycoming Reporter; and be  
15 it resolved finally, that this Court, the Lycoming County  
16 Bar and Lycoming County Law Association extend to Ronald C.  
17 Travis's wife, daughter and grandchildren our deep and  
18 heartfelt sympathy, and our great respect for Ronald C.  
19 Travis, Esquire.

20           **JUDGE BUTTS:** Thank you. Did you wish to say a  
21 few words?

22           **ATTORNEY JOHN HUMPHREY:** A few?

23           **THE COURT:** You're an attorney, a few -- a lot of  
24 people differ on what a few means.

25           **ATTORNEY JOHN HUMPHREY:** For certain. I had

1 considered wearing to court Ron's usual attire, which of  
2 course was flip flops, baggy polyester shorts and an  
3 oversized sleeveless basketball shirt, but I was reminded  
4 that I was coming to court so I thought better of that.

5 I was -- I worked with and was a partner of Ron's  
6 for over 40 years so I could really sit up here for much  
7 more than a few minutes, but I'll try to be as brief as I  
8 can because I know that there are a lot of people who's  
9 lives have been touched by Ron in various ways and who would  
10 probably like to say a few words also.

11 As the resolutions would lead everyone to  
12 understand, Ron excelled at virtually everything he did,  
13 everything he undertook in the various courts of his life;  
14 legal courts, the basketball courts, and tennis courts. I  
15 knew him as lawyer and I have to say I pretty much only knew  
16 him as a lawyer and so I can say that he -- well, one of the  
17 reasons I only know him as a lawyer is because Ron never  
18 talked about himself. He never bragged. I once got a  
19 trophy for a second place finish in some little event and I  
20 loved that trophy and I had it on my desk. I loved to talk  
21 about it, how I won it. I'm sure Ron had hundreds of  
22 trophies. Big ones, not little second place ones. Trophies  
23 for winning big things. I never saw one of those trophies.  
24 He just never talked about himself. He didn't talk about  
25 his athletics progress. He really didn't talk about all his

1 successes in court. I would hear about things, I would  
2 maybe experience them when I was with him. I would at times  
3 cross examine him and find out about some of these things,  
4 but that's about it. He didn't really talk about himself.  
5 I did know him, as I said, as a lawyer. And I think he was  
6 a great lawyer, a great civil and criminal lawyer, though  
7 his real love was in the criminal arena.

8           He had true empathy for the under privileged, the  
9 downtrodden, the unfortunate. He understood them. He  
10 always wanted give them another chance if he could. His  
11 talents were such that he had a total commitment to his  
12 clients and to the justice system, and an unparallel focus  
13 and ability to see what was important in a case and what to  
14 do to get the best result for his clients. All of this, of  
15 course, was seasoned with a tremendous amount of work. He  
16 was an extremely hard worker, worked most evenings and I  
17 never met any that were -- that was more prepared than Ron  
18 Travis was in trial.

19           I have seen a lot of trial lawyers. When I was a  
20 law clerk one of the benefits of the job was to sit in court  
21 and see cases, to see lawyers that work. Lawyers from  
22 Philadelphia and Pittsburgh and New York and D.C. and all  
23 over the place, and I've had trials against and with a  
24 number of lawyers. I don't know any that I -- that I would  
25 say were -- was better than Ron Travis particularly in the

1 criminal field. I have told many people that if they were  
2 ever unfortunately charged with a crime, whether it be a  
3 serious one or a simple one or if they were guilty or not  
4 guilty, whatever, they couldn't do better than having Ron  
5 Travis and I certainly think that that was the case.

6 I would say that I did get from time to time a few  
7 complaints about him. His wardrobe which I made some  
8 illusions to. He did -- except for maybe a few of his  
9 clients, he did not -- he did not suffer fools gladly. Um,  
10 he was sometimes gruff. Very gruff. But he certainly had a  
11 softer side. He had big heart. There would be -- I  
12 remember every Christmas he would be in his office wrapping  
13 gifts for his family that he -- that he -- that he loved  
14 very much and he would always write a letter to the family  
15 every Christmas and I would stop by his office late at night  
16 and he was typing this letter out every Christmas. He was a  
17 generous man. He would help almost anybody who needed help.  
18 I learned this the hard way. Ron had a client who he  
19 represented six or seven times for criminal matters or his  
20 little civil matters. I won't say his name. I'll just call  
21 him, say, Billy. And Billy would come and Ron would  
22 represent him often times, probably most of the time for  
23 nothing, and apparently would go to Ron and ask for money  
24 from time to time. One time Billy came into the office and  
25 Ron was not there. He was in trial so Billy was given to

1 me. And he had -- needed some legal help. He wanted -- he  
2 had a small matter of a tenant -- landlord tenant thing and  
3 I helped him. I didn't charge him because I was pretty sure  
4 Ron didn't and that was that. But two weeks later Billy  
5 came back and hit me up for some bucks. He said that his  
6 daughter just had a baby in New York and he needed to go see  
7 her and he needed \$125.00 and was there anyway I could help  
8 him. And, again -- oh, he said it would be a loan. And,  
9 again, for -- because Ron had apparently done such things,  
10 given him such loans I said, sure, and I loaned him the  
11 money. And then I went later to Ron and I said, So what's  
12 the chances of me getting his money back? And, he said,  
13 slim. He said -- he said, Billy is into me for \$1,800. But  
14 that was the kind of guy he did. And I think he did that  
15 for many other people also.

16 I'll wrap this up. I am, I believe, a better  
17 lawyer because of my experiences with Ron Travis. I hope  
18 I'm a better person because of my relationship with him. I  
19 think everybody would agree that he was a remarkable,  
20 interesting person with an impressive list of  
21 accomplishments in his life. He had a fire that burned  
22 inside -- a fire that burned inside him. I don't know  
23 where -- where that came from but I do know that it did  
24 ignite and illuminate just about everything he did.

25 I feel blessed to have shared so much of my

1 professional life with him. He died too young. But I'm  
2 certain, very certain that the world is a better place  
3 because of the time he spent here. So we'll miss you,  
4 "Lefty".

5 **JUDGE BUTTS:** Mr. Rieders.

6 **ATTORNEY CLIFFORD RIEDERS:** May it please the  
7 Court and family, and Jack, and Pam. When Jack pretended to  
8 retired one of the admonitions that he gave to me, he came  
9 to my office and he said, now, take care of Ron. What do  
10 you mean, take care of Ron? He doesn't need anybody to take  
11 care of him. And after time I came to realize what he  
12 meant.

13 Now, Ron's office has his own separate air  
14 handling system, which we put in so he could smoke there.  
15 Now, I opposed this when we were partners. It was one of  
16 the -- probably the only dispute I really remember having  
17 with Ron. I was anti-smoking and health nut and I didn't  
18 like it. Well, Ron came on a partner, we put in this air  
19 handling system for him. And there were people in the  
20 office -- their names won't be mentioned -- who would go  
21 back there and smoke with Ron, which I also opposed. And  
22 they would maybe talk sports with Ron back there. So when  
23 Jack left I realized that the obligation fell to me. I  
24 wasn't going to go back there and smoke with him. I was  
25 more the anti-sport guys. I didn't really know anything



1 about sports. Good Sally. Which, by the way, Ron learned  
2 something about me. He would talk to me about it. And so  
3 what was really my job? And what I found was a really  
4 remarkable thing. Those several -- last several years I  
5 really got to know Ron in a different way than I think maybe  
6 a lot of people knew him. Yes, I knew him as this great  
7 lawyer. I knew him as somebody who -- who had a tremendous  
8 attention for detail who I can go back to and talk to about  
9 any case, any kind of case. I had a copyright case, he  
10 didn't know anything about copyright. He can give me  
11 suggestions how that might be handled. So, yes, I knew all  
12 of that. What I got to know about Ron when I took that job  
13 of going back to his office and not smoking and not talking  
14 about sports was Ron as a person.

15           So what did he talk to me about? Well, we talked  
16 about cases, but he talked about -- he talked about family  
17 with me. He talked about his -- about his children and his  
18 grandchildren. And I sort gained this whole new  
19 prospective about Ron that I really didn't have before. And  
20 I could talk to him also in an intimate way about my family  
21 and about, you know, problems I might be having. So we  
22 developed and forged this really great relationship and I  
23 thought about, often about how different we were. I mean he  
24 was born in Punxsutawney, I was born in New York City on  
25 Second Avenue. He was raised, you know, in a more rural

1 environment, I was raised in a city and in Great Neck, New  
2 York. And there were so many differences on the surface, so  
3 many differences. He was a jock, I was the anti-jock. I  
4 was the guy in high school, who I'm proud to say had a pen  
5 protector and a big button that said helper and I was proud  
6 of it. And, in fact, I still have that button somewhere. I  
7 may wear it to the office some time just to aggravate  
8 people.

9           But the differences are not what was important.  
10 It was the similarities, and that's what I learned -- that's  
11 what I learned from Ron. That you can be very different  
12 from another person. You can have different backgrounds,  
13 different religious issues, you can have different family  
14 issues but you're bound together by caring about people and  
15 that's what it's really about and that's what I learned in  
16 those years with Ron. And he was, of course, a tour de  
17 force. He was a powerful guy and I know that when firm  
18 issues would come up people were afraid to talk to Ron. So  
19 when Jack was there Jack was that person that went back and  
20 talked to him and, of course, when Jack was gone people came  
21 to me and they said, Talk to Ron. What am I supposed to  
22 say? Well, just go back there and talk to him. So I'd go  
23 back there and always was successful. He was always very  
24 reasonable and many times more reasonable than I would have  
25 been about an issue and really a pussy cat to deal with on

1 -- on these matters. Something I, myself, had not fully  
2 appreciated earlier. And like all of us, I think -- like  
3 myself and all of us, he mellowed also as he saw the world  
4 evolve and develop and as his family grew up and he spent  
5 time with his family.

6           So I just want to take a moment and thank Pam and  
7 thank the family for giving Ron to us. He did spend a lot  
8 of time at it. He and I both worked a lot of crazy hours, a  
9 lot of nights. I even worked Saturday. I was there Sunday.  
10 He was there on Christmas, I was there on Christmas for  
11 different reasons. And I figured I had Jewish holidays off  
12 I better be there on Christmas and New Years Day and all  
13 those days. He was there too on those days as well, and so  
14 we did have quality time to talk about things. And I  
15 particularly remember the last week of his life talking to  
16 him about tragic loss of his daughter, Leigh, and -- and,  
17 you know, it's hard to say this, we cried together. First  
18 time I ever hugged Ron. He hugged me. And it was -- it was  
19 so painful to him. It was so physically painful and I felt  
20 that physical pain myself and it really did inform me about  
21 the importance of my own relationship with my own children.

22           So I want to thank the family, I want to thank the  
23 profession for giving us Ron Travis. He really was a  
24 remarkably deep and complex person who I got to know in a  
25 very personal way and it certainly bettered my life. Thank

1 you.

2           **JUDGE BUTTS:** Judge Anderson, did you wish to  
3 speak?

4           **SENIOR JUDGE ANDERSON:** Thank you. Hello,  
5 everyone. I -- for the first -- I, for the first time,  
6 walked into Williamsport, Pennsylvania in the late summer of  
7 1964 and that was to go to Lycoming College. I met Ron  
8 Travis in the early fall of 1964 when I went to what is  
9 called an optional basketball practice. And the way that it  
10 worked back then, and I think it still does, is that the  
11 NCAA prescribes when you can start basketball practice but  
12 in order to get a jump on the season they used to have the  
13 captains call these optional practices, which they ran the  
14 new guys through the various offenses and their defensive  
15 sets and that kind of thing and Ron was one of the captains.

16           And I mention this because if you have known Ron  
17 in the last 10 or 15 years you've seen a guy that has been  
18 hobbled by the ravages of athletic endeavor. You saw a guy  
19 kind of limping around perhaps a little bit slow, a little  
20 bit stooped. But let me tell you about my first experience.  
21 After we ran through all the sets they would have a  
22 scrimmage and we would scrimmage and this guy that I didn't  
23 know at the time -- it was Ron -- wore what is called a  
24 weight jacket. A weight jacket is a vest that has pockets  
25 all over it and you put lead bars in them. The idea back

1 then -- I don't know if this is still good science, but the  
2 idea back then is if you could jump with one of these weight  
3 jackets on, when you took the weight jacket off it enhanced  
4 you're -- you're ability to jump. And the very first game  
5 we were in he had this weight jacket on and remarkably he  
6 dunked the ball. But it wasn't the fact that he dunked the  
7 ball it was the way that he dunked the ball.

8           Now, I don't know how many people in here can dunk  
9 a basketball. I know Paul probably can. Maybe Marc --  
10 Judge Lovecchio. But the fact of the matter is it's not  
11 easy to do in competition. Not only did he do it, he did it  
12 with a weight jacket on. He did it backward over his head  
13 two handed. He was only about 6-feet 2-inches tall. When  
14 Jack says that this guy led the MAC conference in rebounds  
15 at 6'2" that is an unbelievable feat. I was at the time  
16 about 6'5", and I was by no means one of the bigger guys in  
17 the conference.

18           And so I -- I just suggest to you that the guy  
19 that you saw or seen for the last few years was not the same  
20 Ron Travis I remember as a young man who was so coordinated  
21 and who was so proficient at athletics it was really a thing  
22 of beauty.

23           My association with Ron continued in different  
24 ways through our careers from 1964 to just before he died  
25 when we used to go -- well, we'd go to breakfast with Kelli

1 and the grandchildren at Donnie Waltmans. And I will say to  
2 you and I'm not trying to be self-deprecating in any way,  
3 that he was a better student -- that wasn't very hard. He  
4 was a much better athlete than I was, but he was a better  
5 lawyer, and it's on this latter point that I'd like to just  
6 pass on a few thoughts.

7 I think during my career I -- I have been -- as a  
8 lawyer I was blessed at handling some really interesting  
9 cases. I was in -- when I first started I got involved  
10 early in what was called the landfill case with the Lycoming  
11 County Landfill, the gas explosion cases up on Sweeley  
12 Avenue, and my career as a lawyer culminated with like the  
13 Flight 800 case. But by far and away, the case I remember  
14 the clearest was one of which Ron and I were appointed as  
15 co-counsel. There was two Indians that were accused of  
16 murder in the Lewisburg Penitentiary, and one of them, Steve  
17 Laden, was our client. And I'd just like to pass on a  
18 couple of things about that. Ron was much more experienced  
19 than I was and I remember the very first meeting with Steve  
20 Laden. We went in, we introduced ourselves, we had the  
21 usual exchange of pleasantries and he turns to this young  
22 man that's accused of this murder and he said, There's a  
23 rule I want to establish. He said, You can tell me what  
24 defense we want to promote here and I'll do my best to  
25 promote it no matter how improbable, but I'm going to tell

1 you something. Pick your words with me carefully because I  
2 will not allow you to lie on the stand. There won't be any  
3 of that. I'll be out of here. So make sure that you think  
4 very carefully about everything you say because we're not  
5 going to go there if I have to -- if I have compromise my  
6 integrity as an attorney. I never heard anybody say that  
7 before and it was something that I used from there on in.

8 I had always approached cases up until that  
9 point -- this case probably taught me more about advocacy  
10 than any case that I -- or any course that I ever had. I  
11 always thought advocacy was really an art form. Ron treated  
12 it as a science. He went over every piece of evidence. He  
13 went over every document. He knew it inside and out. He  
14 knew the testimony of every witness. He knew what was going  
15 to happen before it happened.

16 In this particular case they sent up a couple hot  
17 shot U.S. attorneys to try the case, and I remember that  
18 there had been a plea offer which was no plea offer at all  
19 and we decided that it was going to go to trial. It was  
20 going to go before Judge Muir. The lead attorney for  
21 the government -- I'll never forget this. She said, What  
22 are you guys doing? Any defense that you can possibly put  
23 up is laughable. The jury is going to laugh at you. And  
24 the reason for that was that the victim of this, a guy named  
25 Willy Dixon, had been stabbed 26 times but he didn't die

1 immediately. He lived for three days. He identified his  
2 assailant to at least seven. That's how many witnesses they  
3 had that heard him say who did the murder. They had  
4 clothing that had been thrown out of the cell block that fit  
5 the defendant. They had blood on his boots. They had  
6 motive. They had an airtight case. I won't bore you with  
7 the detail of this, but after the smoke cleared Steve Laden  
8 and his co-conspirator Joe Robinson, who was represented by  
9 George Lepley walked out of that courtroom with a not guilty  
10 verdicts on every count and I credit the detailed work that  
11 Ron Travis did because he does it not as an art form. He  
12 does everything surgically and he did it in that case and  
13 I -- I will forever beholden to him for the great lesson  
14 that he provided me in how to try a case.

15 Kelli and Pam, I am so awfully sorry that he died  
16 before his time. I just -- I'll miss him greatly and I  
17 know -- I know how important he was to the family and to the  
18 grandkids because I -- well, I saw them just about every  
19 week together. Thank you.

20 **THE COURT:** Ms. Byrd.

21 **ATTORNEY TONI BYRD:** Thank you.

22 May it please the Court, ladies and gentlemen,  
23 Pam, Kelli, Zach and family. I want to talk about Ron as a  
24 mentor which is what he was to me and to so many others. I  
25 first met Ron in 1984 when I was a law student and a law



1 clerk in his office. And those were back in the days when  
2 you did legal research with books and we wrote things out in  
3 longhand or we dictated. You know, we didn't have all the  
4 electronic tools that we have today. But most of my  
5 assignment came from Jack Humphrey actually. I saw Ron in  
6 the office. I learned that he was the attorney who did  
7 criminal cases, and I mentioned to a few people in the  
8 office that, you know, I'd like to be assigned a project to  
9 work for Ron. To the consistent response by everyone of, oh  
10 no, Ron does all of his own work. So that was that.

11           Although Ron saw me -- you know, he saw me in the  
12 hall of the office -- I think you've gotten a taste of some  
13 of the personality -- he never said a word to me during that  
14 entire three month period. Not even hello, good morning or,  
15 like, who are you? Nothing.

16           Two years later in 1986 when I was a law clerk Ron  
17 did actually acknowledge me, but it wasn't much more than  
18 that. He knew that Judge Muir strictly prohibited ex parte  
19 communication between the law clerk so it was cordial, but  
20 that was it. And then finally in 1992 and 1993 I made my  
21 bone with Ron when we were co-counsel in a case that lasted  
22 a year and that ultimately went to trial and we were in  
23 trial for eight solid weeks. So then Ron was stuck working  
24 with me for a year and how fortunate I was to be able to  
25 work and learn from the master.

1           My client was a prisoner at the Federal  
2 Penitentiary at Lewisburg, and Ron client's, his wife, was a  
3 disbarred criminal defense attorney. They were quite the  
4 duo. They were charged with, among other things, conspiracy  
5 to kidnap the warden at Lewisburg or members of the warden's  
6 family to effectuate the escape of my client from prison.  
7 The discovery in that case included hundreds of taped  
8 telephone conversations between the defendants and others.  
9 I was a relatively new attorney and Ron was an experienced  
10 one.

11           During that year I learned that Ron had a  
12 brilliant mind for criminal defense work. He had an uncanny  
13 ability to think outside the box in all cases. I thought we  
14 were screwed in that case until he came up with a brilliant  
15 joint defense, not one that our clients wanted to advance.  
16 And I agree with Judge Anderson, with Ron no stone went  
17 unturned and he did everything with provision -- precision  
18 and sometimes to his detriment, actually. He worked  
19 tirelessly day, night and weekends, and I had to try to keep  
20 up because I was the newbie. He listened to each and every  
21 single one of those taped telephone conversations. He  
22 summarized each and every one of them, and he shared all of  
23 the summaries with me as well as other notes and I, of  
24 course, did too because I had to. He read books about  
25 prison life and wove what he learned from those books into

1 his crosses. He never joined in motions that I filed. He  
2 filed his own. He filed his own briefs, and I like to think  
3 that our briefs complimented each other. Certainly his did  
4 mine. He organized and reorganized. Although, for those of  
5 you who have been in his office, you know, that wasn't  
6 necessarily apparent there because to me it was kind of  
7 messy. He combed through discovery with a fine tooth and  
8 insist that we investigate even the minutiae. And it's  
9 plainly that minutiae which contributed to the not guilty  
10 verdict which was a very happy day.

11           Throughout the whole period of Ron treated me as a  
12 team member. I also learned that year and over the years  
13 that followed that although Ron did have at times a rough  
14 gruff, kind of tough exterior, he really had a soft interior  
15 and that soft part really first fully exposed itself to me  
16 when you, Zach, were born, his first grandson. Ron never  
17 drank alcohol, but loved his Mountain Dew. He also loved  
18 his cigarettes, as Cliff mentioned, and smoked incessantly  
19 in his closed door filtered office. I was among those who  
20 enjoyed a cigarette with him there every once in a while.

21           He was, as a couple people have said, highly  
22 principled and ethical. Nothing bothered him more than an  
23 unethical lawyer. I know of more than one case where Ron  
24 represented clients pro-bono because of how appalled he was  
25 at the representation the client had previously received,

1 whether it be in a criminal or civil case. He lectured many  
2 times about ineffective assistance of counsel in criminal  
3 cases. And firmly believed if a lawyer made a mistake it  
4 was his or her ethical duty to concede it and not try to  
5 cover it up or make endless excuses.

6 As Jack mentioned he was a member of the Criminal  
7 Justice Act Panel and gracefully took cases even when the  
8 hourly rate was a meager \$35.00 an hour. He was highly  
9 adept at handling the most difficult clients. His clients  
10 loved and respected him after they got over his, you know,  
11 casual sweats attire. Ron didn't wear suits unless he had  
12 to.

13 He was my teacher and my mentor until my death --  
14 until his death. He was always available to me for a  
15 question or for a brain storming session. He answered each  
16 and every email I ever sent him with sage comments. He was  
17 for me the father of the criminal defense bar. He was a  
18 lawyer's lawyer. He wasn't pretentious or arrogant or self  
19 centered. He was learned. He worked hard and long hours.  
20 He was successful, respectful, and helpful. He was my go to  
21 person when I was struggling with a case or an issue and he  
22 always had an idea or a suggestion.

23 Ron's sudden death last December was a shock and a  
24 tremendous loss for us all. I miss him every day. Thank  
25 you.

1           **JUDGE BUTTS:** Mr. Rymsza, did you want to say  
2 anything?

3           **ATTORNEY E.J. RYMSZA:** I'd be lying if I said I  
4 wasn't dreading this day, but I want to talk maybe about a  
5 few happy things. I had the great fortune of being friends  
6 with Ron that stemmed on two courts. Certainly one like  
7 this, but more importantly the tennis court. I first met  
8 Ron when I was 16 when my family lived here and I played in  
9 a local tennis tournament I think it was up in Jersey Shore,  
10 and I had the great misfortune of playing Ron in the first  
11 round of a tennis tournament. I was just this, you know,  
12 16-year-old punk kid thinking I was a pretty good tennis  
13 player, but little did I know about "Lefty". And I remember  
14 just this big booming serve that he had and his presence  
15 that -- that he was this giant and he still had this huge  
16 wingspan that he had even -- even later when we played. But  
17 he had a tremendous, tremendous tennis game. But more than  
18 that I remember was his attitude and his character that  
19 he had.

20           His sarcasm. He didn't use really any profanity  
21 but a lot of deprecating one-liners. Occasionally a thrown  
22 racquet. One of my favorite stories is -- Geoff's going to  
23 talk I'm sure, but we played a lot over at the clay courts  
24 in Williamsport and the Ayers family lived and still lives  
25 to this day right behind the tennis courts. And on one

1 particular occasion, I don't know if it was Geoff or his  
2 brother were cutting grass but Ron came back through the  
3 yard asking the person cutting the grass if they had seen a  
4 tennis racquet that made its way over the fence.

5           When I moved back here in the late 90s he and I  
6 started to have these weekly tennis matches and it's true he  
7 did lose a step or two because of his hip and because of his  
8 knee but he still hit a tremendous tennis ball, and he was  
9 still most of all the character that he was. You needed  
10 look any further than the fact of when I would pull up --  
11 usually always a couple minutes late -- his car would be  
12 there and he would be on the porch smoking a cigarette in a  
13 tank top and in, you know, his shorts. But he had to finish  
14 the cigarette. And there were a few times that he didn't  
15 finish that he would go out on the court and I'd start to  
16 hit balls to him and the cigarette would be dangling out of  
17 his mouth as he's hitting balls back and forth.

18           And I was so glad, Jack, that you mentioned about  
19 his roots in the carnival because, Kenna and Rory, he used  
20 to have to leave early to play tennis, and usually it would  
21 be tennis on a day like today, on a Friday afternoon that we  
22 would probably play. But he would want to leave early  
23 because he had to take you guys to one of the local  
24 carnivals.

25           And I know it's already been touched upon what

1 great lawyer Ron was, and there's certainly people in this  
2 room who practiced with him a lot longer than I did, but I  
3 had the pleasure of working with him as co-counsel in some  
4 cases and representing co-defendants in cases. And it's  
5 been said over and over again, but he really was a tenacious  
6 advocate. I think it was evidenced best in his unwavering  
7 opposition to capital punishment and his belief of just the  
8 insanity of -- of a government that chooses to kill its own  
9 citizens. But most of all I think that he uncompromisingly  
10 represented his clients. And I think the one thing I've  
11 always learned from him was how he viewed his clients, that  
12 he viewed them as human beings and he took the time to get  
13 to know them and try to understand them and to walk in their  
14 footsteps. Sorry.

15           But more than that I -- I just thoroughly enjoyed  
16 his company. When we were together, usually at tennis, I  
17 think most of all I looked forward to when we played tennis  
18 was just afterwards or beforehand sit down and catch up with  
19 each other during the week to talk about our cases, to talk  
20 about recent decisions that may have come down from the  
21 courts and also to talk about our families and to catch up.  
22 And I know that he often was -- he did come across as gruff  
23 and down right cantankerous. But I think it's true that he  
24 was really one of the -- one of most warmest and gentle  
25 human beings that I ever met. And over a period of time he

1 became very close with my family and my children, often  
2 going to their own sporting events. A few years ago when my  
3 daughter graduated from high school he wrote her the most  
4 beautiful card. It's a letter, actually, just in telling  
5 her how much he enjoyed watching her grow up over the years,  
6 and that she took that with her her freshman year and she's  
7 kept it with her ever since and every so often when she's  
8 feeling particularly down she'll read the letter from Mr.  
9 Travis.

10 He always had a particularly close relationship  
11 with my son, Noah, who shared his love of basketball and  
12 they would email each other often, including the night that  
13 he passed away. And Ron would send him emails about -- just  
14 giving encouragement about life lesson on and off the  
15 basketball court. And earlier this -- earlier in the month  
16 of December he sent me a beautiful card and thanked me for  
17 allowing him to be a small part of my family. So I'd like  
18 to say to Pam, and Kelli, and Zach, and Rory, and Kenna  
19 thank you for sharing him with me and thank you for sharing  
20 him with all of us and he's truly irreplaceable.

21 **JUDGE BUTTS:** Attorney Ayers, did you wish to  
22 speak?

23 **ATTORNEY GEOFFREY AYERS:** I do very much so.  
24 Thank you, your Honor.

25 May it please the Court and may it please



1 Mr. Travis. My apologies up front. I am doing this but  
2 there's no way I'll get through it.

3 The format of my observations today follow the  
4 format that Mr. Travis used when he wrote a letter of  
5 recommendation for me in 1991 in support of my application  
6 for a judicial clerkship here in town for Judge Muir.

7 In that letter Mr. Travis prefaced his remarks  
8 about me with an explanation of his connection and a  
9 relationship with me so that the reader would better  
10 understand the context of his remarks. I'm going to do that  
11 here in part out of respect to him and so that you may  
12 better understand why the things he did for me remain so  
13 important to me. And please bear with me as I start at a  
14 place which I feel is the most appropriate beginning to give  
15 you a context of the significance of Mr. Travis' role in my  
16 life.

17 The last preparatory comment I want to make is  
18 that I hope no one every hears me refer to Mr. Travis as  
19 Ron. My parents impressed upon me the importance of sir  
20 names as a sign of respect and while I was growing up it was  
21 always important to address those I respected as Mr. or Mrs.  
22 That's important to me because I want you all to know that I  
23 can never remember referring to Mr. Travis even once as Ron.  
24 In my teenage years when I was particularly rebellious he  
25 may have been Mr. T for a limited time, and in my mind he is

1 the one and only Mr. T. So let's take a few steps in my  
2 shoes to help me explain Mr. Travis' role in my life.

3 I was raised Roman Catholic and attended St. Ann's  
4 School from kindergarten to sixth grade. We had student  
5 church services every Friday morning on top of our typical  
6 Sunday obligation. Nuns routinely slapped knuckles with  
7 rulers for silly reasons. Do I really need to say anything  
8 more to a group of professionals trained to spot issues?  
9 Maybe not, but let me just say this: force feeding this  
10 immature and precocious mind a strict diet of dogma sowed  
11 the seeds that bloomed into a very health distrust of  
12 authority. I think Mr. Travis saw that in me. This  
13 distrust made me wonder what I needed to do to end the  
14 drought of common sense. I just couldn't accept so many  
15 ideas that seemed so patently unreasonable. And I need to  
16 confess that my skepticism was also fed by some back channel  
17 information I gained at my dinner table from my dad about  
18 the interworkings of the church's staff.

19 My dad was an interior decorator who got hired to  
20 update the rectory, and he explained to us all one night at  
21 dinner that the rectory is two residences. The two priests  
22 there at the time while I was in school disliked each other  
23 so much that they didn't even speak to each other. Since  
24 they both lived there consensus on ideas for where they  
25 lived seemed like unnecessary goal to my dad so he had to

1 relay messages from one to the other. So I learned very  
2 early the meaning of hypocrisy, and I think Mr. Travis saw  
3 that in me.

4           The only other relevant factor I want you to know  
5 from those Catholic years of education is this: While in  
6 kindergarten there the Honorable Clinton Smith came to my  
7 class and explained what lawyers do. My mom will never  
8 forget that I came home from school that day at the age of  
9 five and announced that I was going to be a lawyer. At the  
10 end of my sixth grade I won a scholarship to attend St. John  
11 Neumann. One of the primary reasons my parents let me to  
12 choose to attend Loyalsock Middle School instead was my  
13 passion for tennis, and I think Mr. Travis saw that in me.

14           Tennis for me wasn't just a sport it was an  
15 outlet, an opportunity to learn more about myself. It  
16 taught me how to win, how to lose, and how to try my best.  
17 I grew up at 2410 Sheridan Street, which EJ's already said,  
18 and the backyard of our house extended beyond a small stream  
19 to the tennis courts, and my childhood home included those  
20 tennis courts. Club members would routinely lose balls and  
21 racquets. Mr. Travis' racquet, that was my brother who gave  
22 it back. I pestered staff and that's where I met  
23 Mr. Travis. I was really young. I don't even think I was a  
24 teenager. Our kitchen window is open to the backyard that  
25 faced the tennis courts and since we had no air conditioning

1 we'd open them on warmer summer days. If I didn't hear him  
2 myself I would know when Mr. Travis was playing because my  
3 mom would utter under her breath while preparing dinner that  
4 big mouth is back. His appearances before those courts  
5 taught me not only how some choice four letter words could  
6 supplement my vocabulary, but also the appropriate volume  
7 and intensity with which to use them. He did swear. Let it  
8 be known that his preferred teaching style was through  
9 repetition. Volume, intensity, and repetition.

10           So the stage is set. We have an irreverend,  
11 energetic young man who is frustrated with the establishment  
12 yet determined to be a lawyer about to cross paths with an  
13 irreverand, energetic, experienced middle aged man who also  
14 happens to be an extremely successful attorney. When my mom  
15 heard and watch Mr. Travis play I feel she sensed primarily  
16 a lack of temper or self control. Not me. I sensed the  
17 pursuit of excellence and heroic efforts to secure a  
18 rational outcome. On a tennis or basketball court it never  
19 matters who you know or how much you make or where you went  
20 to school. It only matters if you can perform and I think  
21 Mr. Travis saw that.

22           Many times it simply boils down to hitting or  
23 missing. It's all in your shoulders. I think that  
24 Mr. Travis sought out and thrived in arenas where the  
25 results achieved are based strictly upon one's ability.

1 Nothing drove Mr. Travis more crazy on a tennis court than a  
2 led cord. It's when you hit the ball and it hits the top of  
3 the net and it dribbles over and your opponent has  
4 absolutely no choice in getting to it. That would send him  
5 through the roof. It was a vagary, it was chance, it was  
6 unfair and he hated all that. That may have been what drew  
7 me to him. He was a living breathing example of what -- of  
8 who someone with my view of the world could be and could do.  
9 He proved to me beyond a shadow of any doubt what others saw  
10 as my defects were in fact my strengths, passion,  
11 intolerance for irrational processes and unfair results, and  
12 an unwillingness to accept anything less than my best or the  
13 best of those around me.

14 I distinctly remember one thing about the first  
15 time I ever played him in tennis. I'm sure he won. It's  
16 not the score that matters. I was probably 10-years-old. I  
17 was probably five feet tall and I definitely was under 70  
18 pounds because, I'll tell you, I wrestled the 82 pound  
19 weight class when I was in ninth grade. So I was small. We  
20 didn't really shake hands. It's more accurately to describe  
21 him as enveloping and absorbing mine into his catchers mit.  
22 My hand just disappeared into this giant.

23 One of tennis' standard practice is known as a  
24 change over, when players switch sides of the court to  
25 eliminate any possible bias created by the elements. During

1 those change overs it's common to take a short break, maybe  
2 a cigarette or a Gatorade. Mr. Travis taught me a lot on  
3 those tennis courts, but much more importantly he gave me my  
4 career on those tennis courts.

5           At the risk of putting my punch line too early in  
6 this joke, let me summarize it this way. I owe him  
7 everything. The guidance and affirmation he started giving  
8 me then and which he continued to provide through our 40  
9 years of friendship allowed me to believe in myself. He  
10 allowed me to think that I could succeed just the way I was  
11 because maybe, maybe it was a lot like the way he was. I'm  
12 not sure I can convey the full impact that those revelations  
13 had upon me during those young ages.

14           After seven years of being told in parochial  
15 school that the only way to get through this world was to  
16 stay in line and wait your turn and follow this set of  
17 rules, which upon close inspection were internally  
18 inconsistent and really didn't make sense, Mr. Travis was a  
19 savior. To follow those instructions without regard for the  
20 unfairness of the rules or the misguided intentions of those  
21 applying them just didn't fit me and he told me that was  
22 okay.

23           During matches with Mr. Travis some much more than  
24 just the sides of the court were changed over. He opened my  
25 mind and showed me perhaps that there was another way. He

1 would probably not tell you it was a better way. He would  
2 probably make just enough of a case for you to conclude  
3 independently on our own that it was a better way.

4           When he learned of my interest in the law he paved  
5 the way for me to start working in his law firm when I was  
6 in high school. I was there for at least four summers doing  
7 everything from filing papers in the basement, running to  
8 the bank to make deposits and ultimately years later while I  
9 was in high school, drafting documents for a number of  
10 attorneys in the firm, but my recollection is the same as  
11 Toni's. I never did one piece of work for him because it  
12 never would be good enough. I respect him for that.

13           My two most vivid recollections of Mr. Travis'  
14 office are these: The fog of smoke that hung in the air and  
15 the importance of family as reflected by the photo of one of  
16 his infant daughters in his large tennis shoes on his desk.  
17 I'll go to my grave remembering that picture.

18           Two of the partners in that firm, Jack and Cliff,  
19 clerked for Judge Muir. In addition to Mr. Travis, they  
20 were also kind enough to write letters of recommendation to  
21 Judge Muir in support of my application. I'll never forget  
22 the day Judge Muir called and offered me the job, which I  
23 immediately accepted. I hung up the phone with Judge Muir  
24 and I immediately called Jack and Cliff to let them know the  
25 good news and to thank them for their help. I got through

1 to Jack first who answered my call with one word,  
2 congratulations. He knew before I did. Mr. Travis'  
3 guidance and affirmation led to all that.

4           Mr. Travis authored me for admission to the Bar of  
5 the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania and I'm so proud that his  
6 name is on my certificate. Mr. Travis sponsored me for  
7 admission to the Bar of the Middle District of Pennsylvania,  
8 and I'll never forget on the last day of my clerkship with  
9 Judge Muir, as fate would provide, the last scheduled matter  
10 on that day was one of which Mr. Travis represented a party.  
11 So we put together a makeshift sermon witnessed by no one  
12 else other than Judge Muir. When Judge Muir adjourned court  
13 that day I literally step down from the bench and took my  
14 place at Mr. Travis' side of the bar. Another change over.

15           I want to believe there's a league of justice and  
16 I want to believe Mr. Travis is in it. Around the table  
17 Thor has his hammer, Wonder Woman has her lasso, and Mr. T  
18 armed with nothing more than his intellect, his sense of  
19 justice, and a cigar or a cigarette which are all he ever  
20 really needed, and I truly pity the fool that crossed him.

21           A few more closing thoughts. We are told not to  
22 repeat the mistakes of the past. In Mr. Travis' memory and  
23 in a tribute to his inability to accept anything at face  
24 value I'd like to flip that on its head and suggest this:  
25 We strive to repeat the fortunate of events that may have



1 helped shape each of us for the better. In my case that  
2 means taking the time to mentor or teach or just take the  
3 time to let someone else know regardless of what countless  
4 naysayers may say to you maybe, just maybe your way is good  
5 enough and it's okay to be yourself because that's what he  
6 taught me. Thank you.

7 **JUDGE BUTTS:** The Court approves the report and  
8 resolution of the committee and enters the following order.

9 **(WHEREUPON, the Court issued an Order.)**

10 **JUDGE BUTTS:** I would now like to ask my  
11 colleagues if they have some words about Mr. Travis. Judge  
12 Gray?

13 **JUDGE GRAY:** I didn't have the personal  
14 relationship, obviously, that some of the speakers had, but  
15 I had a long view of Ron. Back in the 70s when he was with  
16 the Candor, Youngman firm I many times represented co-civil  
17 defendants with him. And throughout the 80s and early 90s  
18 after he had gone up the street a ways I was his opponent in  
19 a number of civil cases, and then obviously when I came over  
20 here I was privileged to observe him as a criminal defense  
21 lawyer. And I think what needs to be said is he is what a  
22 lawyer should be; thorough, prepared, he always was -- I  
23 never saw him disrespectful to any court, never  
24 disrespectful to me or any opponent that I observed, and was  
25 caring in being thoroughly prepared in his cases. So I feel

1 bad obviously for the family, for Pam and Kelli, but I feel  
2 sad for the younger lawyers yet to come along that haven't  
3 gotten to observe Ron Travis in action.

4 **JUDGE BUTTS:** Thank you. Judge Lovecchio.

5 **JUDGE LOVECCHIO:** I remain in shock to be honest  
6 with everybody. I was sitting up here saying I can't really  
7 believe we're here for Ron Travis' memorial service. I  
8 remember being in shock when I heard the news, and I'm still  
9 in shock.

10 I thought it was a wonderful tribute that the  
11 committee did for him. I know he would have loved it. It  
12 would have been self-deprecating about it, but he would have  
13 loved it. I think what was interesting about Ron is that  
14 everyone he had a relationship with it was a special  
15 relationship. And I really miss my special relationship  
16 with him. I really liked him. I miss him talking about  
17 David Hammer. I miss us conversing about the death penalty.  
18 I'm a judge so I can't let anybody know how I feel, but I  
19 miss our conversations about the death penalty. I miss our  
20 conversations about how mad he would get at the District  
21 Attorney's Office. I miss our conversations about  
22 basketball. I miss our conversations about a lot of things.  
23 I miss our conversations about his family and I feel the  
24 pain in my heart and I didn't even know him one tenth as  
25 well as everybody else, and I can't imagine the pain that

1 you feel and I am so sorry for that.

2 **JUDGE BUTTS:** Judge Linhardt.

3 **JUDGE LINHARDT:** Ron and I got to know each other  
4 very well when we were assigned to handle a death penalty  
5 defense case together in 2004 in Clinton County. And I -- I  
6 defended a death penalty case and I obtained a death penalty  
7 verdict as a prosecutor, and for those of you who have been  
8 involved in those types of cases, they change you forever.  
9 And I can say that Ron Travis had a commitment to his cases  
10 and a commitment to his clients no matter how small or  
11 important those cases were unlike any lawyer that I have  
12 ever met. All of us are fortunate to have maybe one or more  
13 people in our lives that make a permanent impact, and what's  
14 clear today is that Ron was not only that person for me, but  
15 it's obvious that he was that person for many people here.  
16 He was truly special and I'll miss him dearly.

17 **JUDGE BUTTS:** I was fortunate to know him in three  
18 different capacities as a fellow criminal defense attorney  
19 for the short period of time that I was in the Public  
20 Defender's Office, as an adversary in a matter of speaking,  
21 and when I was in the District Attorney's Office, and also  
22 as a litigant who appeared in front of me who accepted court  
23 appointments and worked harder than some people who are  
24 getting paid what I presumed an enormous amount of money to  
25 represent a client. But -- and I shared this with the

1 family when I wrote a letter to them. But it was during my  
2 campaign and running for this job that he made the most  
3 impact on me. When I hear people talk about his fairness,  
4 his concern for the little person, or that people were being  
5 taken advantage of, I just remember how many conversations I  
6 had with him at times during the campaign where it made it  
7 very difficult to go on that he just kept me hanging in  
8 there knowing that he was there and that there were people  
9 there that just keep putting one foot ahead of the other and  
10 you'll get through it, Nanc. I can hear it, and I -- just  
11 as Judge Lovecchio just said, I can't imagine having worked  
12 with him the way you all did to experience the loss,  
13 especially as a family and -- because of how he's effected  
14 me in the experience that I had with him.

15           And Judge Gray also said, I look around the room  
16 and I see the wide range of people that are here in terms of  
17 years of experience and how unfortunate it is that he's not  
18 able to be there for that next group of people to come in to  
19 be a mentor to them and to teach them by his example of  
20 exactly what the epitome of a lawyer should be. So, once  
21 again, I echo my sentiment to you that I shared with you,  
22 but what a great loss you feel and we feel it too.

23           I know Judge Brown and Judge Kieser are here. I  
24 didn't know if they wished to speak?

25           **SENIOR JUDGE BROWN:** I could just say a few words,

1 sure. One of my earliest memories when I was first hired as  
2 assistant public defender in 1974 and immediately I was  
3 assigned to a trial of a tough case, two older defendants  
4 were charged with molesting a 16-year-old kid, and one of  
5 the defendants hired Ron Travis. He was very smart to do  
6 that and the other Defendant couldn't afford counsel and I  
7 was appointed to represent him. I never tried a case in my  
8 life. So Ron Travis and I was walking into the courtroom  
9 and Judge Kieser -- I know he's here today --

10 **UNKNOWN PERSON:** He was here.

11 **SENIOR JUDGE BROWN:** Okay, well, he prosecuted the  
12 case. And, yeah, it would have been very difficult to get  
13 through without somebody like Ron but he treated me as  
14 equal. He was helpful. I felt like we were partners in the  
15 case. And Ron wasn't beyond a little bit of mischief.  
16 Judge Kieser had the tendency as a DA in discovery he'd give  
17 you these police reports but if he decided he didn't want  
18 you to see something he would black it out. So Judge Kieser  
19 would black out a lot of this information before we'd  
20 cross-examine a witness. Ron would call for a recess and we  
21 went into one of these conference rooms in the courtroom and  
22 Ron has a little light that he could put on the -- and he  
23 read everything Judge Kieser was trying to keep away from  
24 us. And I think it was enough. The case was a mistrial.

25 The funny thing about it is there was one juror

1 who we didn't want to seat on the jury and Ron questioned  
2 her trying to get her challenge for cause. She ended up  
3 staying on the jury. We found out the -- the vote of the  
4 jury was 11 to 1 for conviction, and the one not guilty was  
5 the lady we were trying to get off the jury. So it shows,  
6 you know, what we know about jury selection.

7           One other thing I'll mention, as a judge it was  
8 hard, Ron had so much integrity it was hard to see him  
9 before me because I knew he knew more than I knew. But I'll  
10 make a suggestion, if you go into the Rec Center at Lycoming  
11 College there's a wall. It's a very quiet area, a nice  
12 area. It's usually -- there aren't many people around.  
13 They have pictures of all the people inducted in the Hall of  
14 Fame of Lycoming College and you'll see a nice picture of  
15 young Ron Travis with all his achievements in basketball and  
16 it would be kinda nice, if you get a chance, just walk over  
17 and take a look at it. I think you'll enjoy it.

18           **JUDGE BUTTS:** Judge Brann or Arbuckle, would you  
19 like to say a few words? We know Ron practiced in Federal  
20 Court.

21           **JUDGE BRANN:** Well, I dealt with Mr. Travis really  
22 at the end of his career, Judge Brown at the beginning of  
23 his career. I came on the bench in 2013 and I knew his  
24 reputation. I had actually sent cases down to him  
25 periodically when I was at the bar up in Bradford County.

1 And there are two takes away that the family knows; number  
2 one, he was a very expert at his craft and I think that was  
3 appreciated by -- by me certainly and I think by my  
4 colleagues in Federal District Court. He was quite a  
5 companionate person and I think you understand that. And he  
6 was also -- and this word has been used repeatedly -- he was  
7 clearly a mentor to other lawyers, and I think a good  
8 mentor. Mr. Rymsza spoke about that, others -- Ms. Byrd  
9 spoke about that and that's absolutely true. So I think --  
10 my dealings with him were very pleasurable and I may be  
11 different. I know that he didn't know me very well. So  
12 I -- and others didn't know me coming on the bench here.  
13 And so I made an effort to try to draw the lawyers in. I  
14 don't tell them much about myself. My background isn't very  
15 good -- but I would draw them in afterwards. I'm interested  
16 in history and I'm interested in athletics, and he was a  
17 person that would tell you these tales so I would after a  
18 conference, you know, sit and talk to him and, you know,  
19 whoever the prosecutor was in the case. And he was a very  
20 interesting person to do -- he had a very interesting life  
21 experiences, but it was very clear his commitment to the  
22 bar, commitment to, as I say, his craft; particularly as a  
23 criminal defense attorney. I said to him once somewhat  
24 mischievously now, you know, had you ever considered, you  
25 know, crossing the aisle, becoming a prosecutor and he

1 almost exploded, No. He couldn't imagine something like. I  
2 knew that answer. So he was very well regarded I think by  
3 federal judges in this district. I know he was, and they  
4 actually asked me to convey that today. Judge Arbuckle may  
5 say the same thing as one of our magistrate judges. And,  
6 again, he was a person that you're sorry is missing from  
7 this room because he had an impact clearly on the community  
8 and he had clearly an impact, I think, before the federal  
9 court and you should know that. If you didn't I convey that  
10 to you today. So my condolences to you.

11 **MDJ ARBUCKLE:** May it please the Court, members of  
12 the family, ladies and gentleman. I heard these amazing  
13 stories about Ron that I didn't know. I didn't -- you know,  
14 I moved to this area in 1993 and I lived in State College.  
15 And I got on the CJA list and I've been a lawyer maybe about  
16 10, 12 years and I -- we were appointed together on a case.  
17 We had -- in the course of the time we were together, we had  
18 two murder cases that we were on together. The thing that  
19 I'm impressed with isn't that somebody who he grew up next  
20 to, or somebody that he played tennis with, or somebody he  
21 went to college with, or somebody that he worked with but  
22 I'm just some lawyer from State College and when I had a  
23 question I would call him and he would take the time to  
24 explaining what was going on. And I'll never forget, I was  
25 a part-time magistrate judge for eight years and just became



1 full-time this past summer. So last year before Ron died I  
2 was cleaning up old files and I was going through this case  
3 that we had. It was an Aryan brotherhood case and they had  
4 killed three men at Lewisburg. And the internet wasn't as  
5 available then, at least to me, as it is today. And I had  
6 found my notes where he sat me down and explained the lingo.  
7 I didn't know what "in the hat" meant. That's not a place  
8 you want to be. I just -- you know, it's warming to know  
9 that people that were close to him he was so helpful to, but  
10 I can tell you as a stranger he was just as helpful and just  
11 as willing to take time to help somebody. To the lawyers  
12 that are here today I charge you to try and be a little bit  
13 like Ron. Thank you.

14 **JUDGE BUTTS:** Now would be the time if anyone --  
15 any member of the bar, any member of the public would like  
16 to speak. Mr. Petcavage.

17 **ATTORNEY PAUL PETCAVAGE:** Thank you. Pam, Kelli,  
18 members of the Travis family, may it please the court. I  
19 first met Ron, "Lefty", Travis when I was an aspiring  
20 basketball star at St. John Neumann, then called Bishop  
21 Neumann High School in 1970,'71. At that time Bishop  
22 Neumann had two outdoor courts where the parking lot is now.  
23 If you didn't get there by 1:00 on a Sunday afternoon you  
24 didn't get a chance to play. That's how many players showed  
25 up to play. On one particular Sunday Ron "Lefty" Travis

1 showed up. I remember distinctly as he went up for a  
2 rebound and his elbow was above the rim, and I was looking  
3 at the bottom of his sneakers. I'm sure you've all heard  
4 the of words "I want be like Mike". Well, at that time I  
5 decided I wanted to be like "Lefty" on the basketball court.

6 After completing my high school and college  
7 basketball career in 1976 I began to ponder the next chapter  
8 of my life and "Lefty" helped me secure a local job as an  
9 administrative assistant with then Mayor Dan Kirby. Of  
10 course, "Lefty" was also recruiting me to play on his  
11 renowned traveling basketball team made up of former high  
12 school and college standouts. A brief side note here, I  
13 just found out about a year ago that George Lepley thought  
14 he was in line for the administrative assistant job, but  
15 with the help of Ron/"Lefty" I got it instead and my  
16 understanding is George had to haul shingles up a ladder  
17 everyday for a local roofing contractor. Sorry, George.  
18 Thank you, "Lefty".

19 Lefty's traveling basketball team each year played  
20 tournaments and leagues across the State of Pennsylvania and  
21 sometimes in New York, one year playing a 60 game schedule.  
22 One year every Saturday morning we would drive to  
23 Wilkes-Barre, play in a league under the team name, Yoggie's  
24 Hoagies then drive back in the afternoon and play in another  
25 league as John's Sports of Pennsylvania of Athletics. For

1 most of those road trips I made sure I rode with "Lefty" and  
2 it was during those trips he would talk to me about his  
3 legal cases and I thought one day I'd like to be an  
4 attorney. You guessed, be like "Lefty" only in another  
5 court.

6 Well, at 45-years-old I finally began my long  
7 commute to Widener Law School and had been able to make that  
8 dream happen. "Lefty" and I, although our basketball skills  
9 had diminished, would still talk periodically as he always  
10 made himself available to talk just about anything.

11 When it came time to take the bar exam I was a  
12 little down on my luck financially and could not afford the  
13 fee. After mentioning it to "Lefty" he reached inside his  
14 pocket and pulled out a wad of bills, as he's done for so  
15 many people, and took care of my problem.

16 When I become Assistant DA for the County he gave  
17 me this book: *Pistol, the Life of Pete Maravich*, something  
18 to commemorate my new job. He knew I was a huge Pistol Pete  
19 fan and my nickname in high school happened to be Pistol  
20 Paul. That he would take the time to do such a gesture was  
21 incredible to me, but what he wrote on the inside jacket  
22 speaks even more to the type of person "Lefty" was:

23 "Paul, when I read his book I recalled that you  
24 were No. 44 in high school. No doubt you've already read  
25 this. Nevertheless, I want to give you something to

1 commemorate your job. As I enjoyed your friendship over the  
2 past 30 years it has been my pleasure to watch you move  
3 through life. You have been a source of pride for me as I  
4 believe Shamrock, Johns, Pennsylvania Athletics and, yes,  
5 even Yoggie's Hoagies have helped shape your life. I have  
6 no doubt you'll be the MVP in the DA's office in short  
7 order." Well, we all know that that didn't happen.

8 Here's the important part, "Always remember that  
9 society always wins, whatever the verdict as long as the  
10 trial is fair. Making the system work has always been my  
11 goal and I hope you see the system in the same way. If the  
12 system does not work for the worst of the worst, the system  
13 is not worth anything. Just play as you did on the  
14 basketball court, hard but fair. Be well, stay strong.  
15 With great respect, Ron."

16 For as long as I have left as an attorney in this  
17 life, I'll always look to his example. Through his life  
18 "Lefty" gave to me and many others, be humble, fight for the  
19 underdog, play hard but fair and make the system work for  
20 everyone. In short, try to be like "Lefty". Thank you.

21 **JUDGE BUTTS:** Would anyone else like to speak?  
22 Mike -- Mr. Collins.

23 **ATTORNEY MICHAEL COLLINS:** I got to know Ron back  
24 when he and Jack came into -- when they were with Candor  
25 Youngman. I was law a clerk for a new judge, Judge Raup.

1 And so he said, keep an eye on these guys, that is Ron  
2 Travis and Humphrey. You see what they meant is they were  
3 just exceptional lawyers. And like Jack said, doing a lot  
4 of civil defense work which didn't last too many years, but  
5 were in that and they did that heck of a job. And then Ron,  
6 of course, was doing his criminal practice back then. That  
7 was back in the day when -- back in the mid '70s so there  
8 was quite a bit of drug trafficking going back and forth  
9 from New York City, State College, and some big players  
10 going on. And they'd bring in these lawyers from  
11 Philadelphia and from Pittsburgh and -- pizza connection  
12 lawyers. And you'd sit there as a law clerk and watch what  
13 was going on. And you'd watch Ron Travis and you'd go, why  
14 in the heck are these people hiring lawyers from these big  
15 cities when we have somebody as good as Ron.

16 And I heard talk about the, um -- about his death  
17 penalty cases. How complicated they were, how he really  
18 paid attention to the minutiae as somebody said. And I had  
19 a family member who had a little trouble and so I went to  
20 Ron -- excuse me. He -- the way he handled that case and  
21 the attention he gave to him you would have thought it was a  
22 death penalty case. And I'll never -- we both -- will never  
23 forget that, including my youngest son, who was fortunate to  
24 have Ron as a lawyer. The way he treated him -- he was just  
25 incredible, the way he treated him.

1           And then just quickly on tennis and on the  
2 basketball court. I got to be on the other side of both of  
3 those courts against him, which always wasn't too pleasant.  
4 He was so good. Judge Anderson mentioned him with the  
5 weights and what he could jump, through the roof. But  
6 really I think "Lefty" had a lot to do with he had an  
7 unbelievable touch. If he had 15 or 17 footer he was going  
8 to be in it, if you left him open. He was just so smooth on  
9 the court.

10           And I want to add too a thought, I'm sure he's  
11 thinking about this. He owns a share of the Boston Celtics.  
12 We had that connection too. I'm sure the way they're doing  
13 in the playoffs, he's quite happy.

14           The talk about him being a family man. Kenna, who  
15 is on the eighth grade basketball team here at Williams and  
16 my daughter is a coach, a good friend of Kelli's. And  
17 Saturday, the day before he died -- and he had been there  
18 all the time. I'd show up for the games and we'd talk  
19 awhile, but what he would do is he would go at one end of  
20 the court for the first half and then when they'd switch  
21 baskets he'd move up to the other end of the court, but  
22 always on a different side. And I always knew that this  
23 guys knows more basketball than anybody in the whole gym so  
24 he's analyzing it. But it struck me that day, that Saturday  
25 morning when he looked across the court, the second half,

1 and there's Ron, Zach, Rory and Kenna's over here on the  
2 team and Kelli's watching the game, and that's my last  
3 memory of Ron being there. He was a heck of a grandfather  
4 and dad. So, yeah, we're all going to miss him.

5 **JUDGE BUTTS:** MDJ Page.

6 **MDJ PAGE:** Your Honors, members of the family, if  
7 I can just briefly. I would just like to say that he was --  
8 and first of all I apologize for my lack of my coat. But he  
9 was an educator and people were talking about educating the  
10 little people, and that included little judges. I'm the  
11 biggest little judge in the county. And from 1986 until the  
12 Thursday before he passed when he was in front of me he was  
13 a professional educator and we had a lot of great  
14 conversations and he poked his head -- and this is kind of  
15 also to Kelli and her kids. He came into my office and  
16 said, I know you're kind of interested in things and he  
17 printed out the entire arguments presented by the three  
18 attorneys in the Birchfield case, and we would have a couple  
19 of conversations about things. And I said, well, wow, I  
20 mean it was like a ton of paper. And I said you ought to  
21 let me give you a ream of paper. He said, no -- I think the  
22 firms paying for it. And, and so we would have these  
23 variety of conversations and I was thinking, now how can I  
24 pay him back? I mean clearly I would get in trouble if I  
25 would give him a little cash or something. That would

1 really be bad.

2           So anybody that went to the Donnie Waltman  
3 watering hole would see him after he paid his bill going to  
4 the recycling can and ripping off the pop tops of soda cans.  
5 So for about a year, every seminar, every continuing  
6 education, every -- any event that I went I would make a  
7 public announcement that if anybody was interested, I'd put  
8 this bowl next to wherever the sodas were and if you were so  
9 inclined I would appreciate it if you could leave me the pop  
10 top of your can. So it was actually probably about, I don't  
11 know, six months, five months before he passed away that I  
12 called him into my office and I said, now, I've been trying  
13 to think of a way that I can express my appreciation because  
14 everybody thinks about the magistrate and that kind of  
15 stuff. And he said, well, no, I just -- I'm happy to do  
16 this. I knew that you would be interested. And I reached  
17 into my drawer and pulled out this 5-pound bag of pop tops,  
18 okay, which he was so excited to give to Rory and he just  
19 smiled at me and he said, we're even. And he just loved the  
20 fact that he could present that to you.

21           So I will always remember him as an educator and  
22 when I close my eyes I can still see him going through the  
23 recycling cans and popping off tops so.

24           **JUDGE BUTTS:** Mr. Mitchell.

25           **ATTORNEY EDWARD MITCHELL:** May it please the



1 Court, Pam, Kelli, and members of the family. I first met  
2 Ron Travis in September of 1967. We both entered the  
3 Dickinson School of Law, and I want to tell -- I can tell  
4 you something about him that very, very few of you know  
5 unless you've heard me say it before. I want to talk about  
6 Ron Travis the solider.

7 In 1967 was during the Vietnam War, and during the  
8 draft people who came to law school in 1967 came with what  
9 they had called a 2S deferment, student deferment. They  
10 took that away during the first year of law school. So at  
11 the end of the first year of law school our class dropped  
12 from 129 to 72. Ron Travis, in order to stay in law school,  
13 got into the ROTC program that Dickinson College made  
14 available. And then -- and pursued that throughout the  
15 remainder of law school.

16 In the summer of 1969 he went to basic training at  
17 Fort Indiantown Gap along with thousands of other ROTC  
18 students, and at the end of the summer he was the honor  
19 cadet of the thousands of people -- of people who went  
20 through basic training he was the number one solider. Now  
21 he didn't serve. He finished -- I mean he continued ROTC  
22 through the remainder of law school and then Judge Bell  
23 justice Bell, told him when he hired him no one who had ever  
24 clerked for me before served in the military.

25 So that was his -- his short career in -- as a

1 solider, but like everything else he did in life he excelled  
2 and was number one. That's the way I remember him.

3 **JUDGE BUTTS:** Thank you. Anyone else?

4 Then, ladies and gentlemen, this now concludes the  
5 memorial service for Ronald C. Travis. I'd like to, again,  
6 thank the family, members of the law association, and  
7 friends for coming here today and celebrating his wonderful  
8 life, and this special session of court is now adjourned.  
9 Thank you.

10 **(WHEREUPON, the proceedings concluded at 5:10 p.m.)**

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