

REMARKS OF COMMISSIONER J. THOMAS ROSCH ON DIVERSITY AT THE FTC

April 11, 2012

I spent Easter with my daughter, Laura; her husband, Ed; and two of our granddaughters, Carolyn, who is 17, and Julia, who is 14. My conversation with Laura focused on this event once I told her that I would be making some remarks here and asked her what I should say.

Laura told me a story. It was about when Carolyn was 10. Laura showed her a prom photo of a couple, one of whom was a blond girl, and the other of whom was an African-American boy. She said that Carolyn's only reaction was that the couple looked very happy.

I asked what that had to do with what I might say. Laura then reminded me that Carolyn – who lives in a Chicago suburb – has always attended schools with very diverse student bodies. So that influenced her reaction to the photo. Laura said to think about it. I have thought about it since.

Which brings me to the Chairman's wish that I discuss Laura's observation in the context of the difference between today's FTC and the FTC as it existed in 1973, when I first came to the FTC. Back then, there were few African-American or other minority lawyers. The diversity that existed then was between Gentiles, on the one hand, and Jewish people, on the other hand. Like Jodie Bernstein, like Mort Needelman, whom Jodie told you about the other day during her luncheon program. Like Richard Herzog, who headed up the National Advertising division. But when I first came back here, I didn't see those religious or cultural differences. This may be due in part to my early upbringing. I went to grade school and high school in Iowa and Nebraska. We lived in the midst of a lot of Jewish kids in both places. I can't count the number of Bar Mitzvahs and Bat Mitzvahs I went to. When I ran the Bureau, all I was interested in was who

was excellent at what he or she did. Accordingly, Jodie was my Deputy. Richard and Mort were division chiefs.

My point here today is threefold: first, as I described in my anecdotes, to the extent that we live and work in diverse environments, we focus less on our differences, and more on how we are the same. Second though, because we are apt to make hiring and mentoring decisions based on people that are like us, we must make our hiring and mentoring decisions based only on excellence. Third, as I see it, the tasks ahead of us are not only to base our hiring and mentoring decisions on excellence, but also to identify the factors that will enable us to ensure that our decisions are made on that basis alone. I realize we have a long way to go to accomplish these tasks. But I think we can do that and expect that the Diversity Council will be at the vanguard of that effort.