

SENATOR BOND
INTRODUCTION OF JUDGE CLARENCE THOMAS
9/10/91

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, it is a great pleasure to come before you today to join in the presentation of Judge Clarence Thomas, the President's nominee for Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court.

I first met Judge Thomas when we both worked in Jefferson City in the early 70s. Both of us began our careers in state government as assistant attorneys general under Jack Danforth. It was an exciting and intellectually challenging place for a young lawyer to work; and the outstanding caliber of people that Jack Danforth brought to that office is best illustrated by the jobs that some of them now hold -- federal judge, chairman of the FCC, and soon, Supreme Court justice.

Even among such a cast of stars, Clarence Thomas shone as a lawyer. He was not content to simply move cases through the office, but instead worked to use his position to accomplish change and to improve the lives of people in our state. His legal skills and his intellect were noticed not just by Jack Danforth, but by many others as well. When Jack was elected to the Senate in 1976, Judge Thomas applied his skills to a series of jobs ranging from corporate lawyer to chairman of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission -- giving him the opportunity to learn firsthand about a wider range of legal areas than most recent nominees to the court.

Though his skills as a lawyer and a judge are obvious, they are not the only reason that this committee should vote to approve Judge Thomas' nomination. Just as important is his compassion and understanding of the impact that the Supreme Court has on the lives of average Americans. We are all familiar with Judge Thomas' background -- it is an inspiring story, and there is no doubt that he can be proud of his achievements. But it is also important to focus on his continuing efforts throughout his life to live up to the values and principles that his grandfather instilled in him -- and which I know were strengthened by the many years he spent living in Missouri. This strength of character is every bit as important as his professional qualifications, and I urge you to consider it as you proceed with these hearings.

Mr. Chairman, there have been many accusations and straw men raised over the course of the past few months. Unfortunately, that has become part of the nomination process. Though we cannot stop people from voicing their opinion or attacking a nominee -- unfair or groundless as those attacks may be -- we can disregard such charges and focus on the important details -- the nominee's fitness for the job. I urge the members of the committee to do that and I know that when they do, they will find Judge Thomas to be well-qualified to serve as the newest member of the United States Supreme Court.