

male, and 1 white woman who have heretofore come before this body for advise and consent. In fact, because he had the black experience in his life, he is perhaps the better qualified than all but two members of the Supreme Court.

This committee can believe the President of the United States when he says that Judge Thomas is the best man for the job. Just because he happens to be a black man does not disqualify him, nor should it by any test or criteria. It has only happened twice in our history that a black man has been nominated. It is highly doubtful that any of us in this room will see it happen again.

It is my judgment that there are a great number of Americans out there, and, yes, there are people throughout the world, who are watching this great drama unfold. It is also my judgment that the great majority of those Americans, white, black, brown, yellow, and red and of all religions and faith, want to see Judge Thomas sitting as an Associate Justice on the Supreme Court of the United States. They want to see fair play and justice done to this man. They want to be able to point to this man and say to their children that they too can aspire to the highest Court in the land, that they too can expect fairness and justice, and they too can put their hopes and dreams in America where the rule of law and not of man reigns supreme.

In conclusion, let me say to the members of the committee, no President of the United States, whether he is Republican or Democrat, has ever or will ever appoint a black man or a black woman to the highest Court of the United States unless that person is well, well qualified. Despite the vicious, unwarranted, and unprecedented attacks upon the nominee, he still stands tall. He has exhibited more than just plain character while under fire. This black man has exhibited sheer guts and will power above and beyond the call of duty to his country. He has displayed courage and valor in the face of the bitter criticism and abuse heaped upon him. Such valor and courage in the time of war is rewarded in the armed services of the United States by award of the Congressional Medal of Honor. What could be a greater test of character than that displayed by the nominee before this committee?

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator SIMON. Thank you, Judge Tanner.

Margaret Bush Wilson, whom I have known back from the days when she was considered a radical. Happy to have you here, Mrs. Wilson.

STATEMENT OF MARGARET BUSH WILSON

Ms. WILSON. Thank you, Senator. I have to apologize for this voice. I have had some thyroid surgery, and it has affected my vocal cords. Some of my colleagues say it is a good idea that I can't talk. [Laughter.]

I have prepared a written statement which I trust that all members of the committee will receive, if they have not already. I propose not to—

Senator SIMON. We will put the statement in the record, and I assume someone has it. I do not have a copy of it right here.

Ms. WILSON. I would hope that it would be in the record and therefore I can just speak briefly from it.

I think it is most appropriate that your questions probe, as many of you have done, the fundamental character of the man, Clarence Thomas, and how he thinks about and analyzes issues. It seems to me that that, more than anything else, is the critical thing that this committee must address, rather than his specific views on specific issues, because how he thinks about and analyzes issues will determine what kind of Justice he will be in the first third of the 20th century, what kind of Justice he will be as he deals with the problems, the like of which none of us in this room can even imagine, much less frame questions about.

With that in mind, maybe I can help the committee in a small way to understand who Clarence Thomas is. I make this offer in part because, at least to some degree, the Judge Thomas I have been reading and hearing about is not the Judge Thomas I know.

I would like you to go back with me to the spring of 1974. One afternoon I was seated next to the then attorney general of the State of Missouri, who is now my distinguished senior Senator from Missouri, John Danforth. We were at a luncheon at some public event, and he said to me during the table conversation, "I have a bright young man whom I would like you to get to know. I am inviting him out to be on my staff. He is a graduate of Yale, and he will be coming out to the State to be on my staff."

I said, "Well, that is fine." And then he added, "And he is black." And I said, "Well, that is great." Then he said to me, "Do you happen to know a place where he can live? I don't think Jefferson City is the most exciting place in the world to spend the summer." It just so happened that my own son, who was in law school, had just told me a few weeks before that he wasn't coming home for the summer, and so almost on impulse, I said to Senator Danforth, "Yes, I do." He said, "Well, where is that?" I said, "In my own home."

And so some 2 months later, one sunny afternoon I think toward the end of May or the first of June, my doorbell rang, and at the door was a striking young man. And he said to me, "My name is Clarence Thomas," and I replied, "Yes, I know. I have been expecting you."

Then for 2 months, Clarence Thomas lived in my home as my guest. And I think members of the committee and members of the panel and everybody in this room knows, if somebody stays in your home longer than a week, you get to know a lot about them as a person. You know something about their values, something about their character. And so I have this unique insight at a time in young Clarence's life when the least thing he expected was to be a nominee to the Supreme Court of the United States.

I want to tell you several things about him that I observed: One, that he was a very disciplined person. I can't recall a young person who seemed to have clearly in mind what he wanted to do and then proceeded to do it. He was up every morning doing his exercises with my son's weights. He did have one fault, though. He started out with the weights up in my bedroom, and I had to stop that and bring them downstairs.

After that, he went off to study, and he spent the day with the books. I made only one requirement: Be home in time for dinner. And he kept his promise. He would come home for dinner.

That is when I got to know something about Clarence Thomas, because these meals were the give and take of a family of folks who like to talk about what was going on in the day-to-day life of this country. And I must say we had some lively discussions with Clarence Thomas, because he then was very, very stubborn about his views and not willing to accept anything on face value.

We didn't always agree, but I was impressed with this young man's ability to analyze, his insights, and his own sense that he had to think things through for himself.

So I can tell you that Clarence Thomas is a man of good moral character. He is disciplined. He has a very keen mind. He is, contrary to what I have been hearing today, in my judgment a scholar. And I think he will be a scholar on this Court.

He has been busy at different levels of Government where the scholarship and the ability to do that has been limited. I think the Supreme Court experience will open for this young man vistas that he has not yet displayed because he does have the fundamental keen intellect which I think is so essential for this Court.

The day he left he asked me how much he owed me. I said to him, "Clarence, you don't owe me a thing. But I do want you to make a promise. I want you to promise as you move through your career that if you are ever in a position to reach out and help somebody, like I have helped you, that you will do that." And he made that promise, and I am convinced that he has been keeping his word ever since.

Now, across the years I have been keeping in touch with him. I respect his integrity, his legal mind, and his determination. I have found him to be sensitive and compassionate, doing what he believes is right and working to make the world a better place in which to live.

Mr. Chairman, I want to speak to a comment and to the questions which were directed by Senator Kennedy—and I am sorry he is not here. But I want to provide an insight, in view of Senator Kennedy's probing and important comments and questions this morning.

Clarence Thomas I suspect was as impatient as I am now with the progress in addressing some of the fundamental problems of people who are deprived in this Nation, and particularly the problems that confronted one-third of our American citizens who are of African descent and who are still poor. Some of us have mastered the art of disagreeing without trashing anyone or any institution. Perhaps in the past in his younger days, Judge Thomas was impolitic in some of the things he said. But I think you and I will agree that Judge Thomas has now mastered the art of disagreeing without being disagreeable, that he has demonstrated this especially well in these hearings.

I trust that organizations which have expressed opposition to Judge Thomas have watched his comments and his demeanor in these sessions and are willing to temper their views. Some of them have urged that you reject his nomination. I hope that they will reconsider. Some of his critics have said that despite Judge

Thomas' chairmanship of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission for 8 years, he does not champion the cause of civil rights. But they obviously don't know him or the real facts about his tenure on the EEOC. And I have been particularly pleased that some members of this committee have placed in the record documentation—

Senator SIMON. If you can conclude your remarks, Mrs. Wilson.

Ms. WILSON. Yes. I think I can conclude them by saying, Mr. Chairman, that I strongly support Clarence Thomas. I think he has the temperament, the background, and I appreciate this opportunity to share my views with you.

[Prepared statement follows:]