

IN SUPPORT OF CONFIRMATION OF
CLARENCE THOMAS
AS ASSOCIATE JUSTICE OF
THE UNITED STATES SUPREME COURT

JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
U.S. SENATE
WASHINGTON, D.C.
September 10, 1991

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FOR THE UNITED STATES SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE HEARING ON
CLARENCE THOMAS - By Bobby B. Stafford, Esquire,
Alexandria, Virginia,
September 10, 1991

If I were given the opportunity to appear before the Senate Judiciary Committee, I would say - This is a great moment in history for me and the social group from whence I come to be present and testify on the question: Whether or not Clarence Thomas should be confirmed by the advice and consent of the United States Senate?

A commonality of Southern, ethnic and religious heritage preordained my alignment in support of Judge Clarence Thomas. It is easy for me to empathize with Clarence Thomas since we both have deep roots from the same geographic section of the deep South. I, one of eleven (11) sons and two (2) daughters of Edward, a railroad attendant and Katheryn, a housewife, became a product of an education struggle by parents whose total commitment in the rural area of Kingstree, South Carolina was to educate all of their children through college; they achieved this level and in addition, most have received post graduate professional degrees. Or, in the Clarence Thomas' case, in excerpts taken from his commencement address, Savannah State College, June 9, 1985, he states that "I watched the strongest man in the world endure go that he could raise his two grandsons, go that he could make something of his life; and go that his two grandsons (my brother and me) could do the same with ours. I watched a quiet strong grandmother slave away in the kitchen,

clean house, cook and endure, so we could make it. I watched through a child's eyes as my young mother, Miss Mariah, Miss Bec, Miss Gladys, Miss Gertrude, Cousin Hattie, Cousin Bea, Cousin Julie all worked countless hours in other peoples' kitchens, with aching feet and pain filled heads for little pay and no benefits - but they endured so that we who watched them could make it."

Though there were degrees in the manner in which harsh segregation rules and laws were administered and though these harsh segregation policies and laws put a different strain on the impact that each of us felt by virtue of their placing a different tenor on the same experience; nevertheless, the oppression struck our hearts and souls the same way.

Also, we were both directed and guided to a pathway of necessity for pursuing an education to its fullest extent as a way to escape total destruction and ultimately, to reach a highway to a meaningful and successful life.

To be sure, we are now parked in the State of Virginia; for Clarence Thomas, it was Pin Point, Georgia and for me, it was Kingstree, South Carolina. It has been said of such experiences that we have had that they are not worth a "nickel"; however, I would wager that neither Judge Thomas nor I would be willing to sell all of these experiences for a million dollars.

Similarly, both of us are lawyers, though our law degrees were earned at different law schools, his at Yale University Law School and mine at Howard University School of Law. Contrary to

any other school of thought in our social group, I, like Clarence Thomas, subscribe to the theory that there is a way to succeed, and if you will, promote "Civil Rights", without being per se, offensive. These methods are unique for they do not embrace or countenance with "selling out" our social group.

The protagonist for our social group who so vociferously hollows "no confirmation" contends that you must offend "The Man" in order to pursue "Civil Rights". Let us be a little mindful of 1st Peter, 2nd Chapter, verses 4 thru 9 - "Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious." It is thusly said that

"The stone which the builders rejected
Has become the chief cornerstone. "

A warning, we must be careful not to kill the messenger.

Notwithstanding other non-ethnic voices opposing confirmation, we must look to the body politic of America Majority who don't find Clarence Thomas per se, offensive to them as a Supreme Court Justice. For this reason, these various interest groups have to depend and rely upon the protagonist from our ethnic group to pull "their chestnuts out of the fire for them, lest they would seriously offend their own body politic."

In closing, what I have come to say: I stand absolutely for the confirmation of Clarence Thomas as an Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court. His confirmation is in the best interest of all of the people of the United States.

The naysayers or dissenters will ultimately come to learn that the United States Senate, if it finds it to be its proper discretion, exercised a wise judgment in its confirmation of Clarence Thomas as history unfolds itself. This is my faith in my brother from the South, a black man, a good role model for our little boys and girls...