

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much. We are proud of your testimony. I realize that this is an imposing room, and with everyone watching us on television, it is not necessarily an easy thing to pop in and say, by the way, I have got a few words I want to say.

Ms. HOLIFIELD. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. I appreciate it. You have done it well.

Ms. Bryant, take your time, be at ease, do not worry about it, but when that little red light goes out, the seat will reject you into the sky. [Laughter.]

I am only teasing you, but try to keep it close to 5 minutes.

Ms. BRYANT. I will.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

#### STATEMENT OF EVELYN BRYANT

Ms. BRYANT. Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Evelyn Bryant, and I would like to thank the committee for this opportunity to speak in support of my friend Judge Clarence Thomas.

I live in Liberty County, GA, and serve as president of the Liberty County NAACP chapter. I appear here today not in my capacity as president of our local chapter, but as a friend of Clarence Thomas. I do believe that my comments reflect the opinion of the vast majority of black Americans, including my friends and my neighbors.

While Judge Thomas grew up in Pin Point, near Savannah, his grandparents owned a farm near Sunbury, in eastern Liberty County. He spent much of his youth on that farm developing the values which have become a hallmark of his life and achievements. I have not had the pleasure of knowing Judge Thomas for a long period of time, but have developed a great respect for him during the short time we have been friends.

It was a proud day for the citizens of southeast Georgia, black and white, when President Bush nominated Judge Thomas to the Supreme Court. This man, a product of the marshlands of the Georgia coast, the son of a section of the country rich in colonial history, at age 43, has accomplished so much.

Clarence Thomas was born into and grew up in a segregated society. His early years were spent in poverty. He lived his early life in an environment that exposed daily to the abuses of social and economic systems based upon the separation of black and white citizens in all aspects of life.

He is a person who has lived the black experience to the ultimate, yet, rather than blaming the system for any stumbling blocks to personal achievement, has, through hard work, discipline, commitment to strong values and his belief in our system of government, risen from his humble beginnings to the nomination by our President to the Nation's highest court. His sense of values were born and nurtured in a strong home and religious environment. Truly, this is an extraordinary man who conquered deprivation, without self-pity or complaint.

Judge Thomas has acknowledged that he has received a helping hand up from time to time in his educational and professional journey. He has graciously acknowledged this help and has expressed

appreciation to those who have befriended him along the way. But isn't it reasonable to believe that the availability and accessibility to those helping hands have been influenced by the character traits demonstrated by Clarence Thomas. If we will only acknowledge it, haven't all of us achieved much in this life, received help and assistance from others? Few of us can truthfully take credit for all success that we may enjoy.

Young black males in our society are increasingly finding themselves unemployed, displaced from a family environment and resorting to drug use and sales for physical and economic gratification. Young people, possibly as never before, need positive role models as beacons for their lifestyle. It seems to me that Clarence Thomas, his life and accomplishment exemplify the role model that we seek for our young people.

Let me submit that, even though during the last three decades vast strides have been made toward reducing discriminatory practices and expanding opportunities for blacks and other minorities, we are not where we need to be in eliminating bigotry as a bar to opportunity in America.

But, as the economic and educational plight of blacks and other minorities improve, have we also not grown in our ability to think, develop ideas, question fast approaches and articulate concerns with the directions we are going in attacking the ills of society?

Who is to tell all blacks that we are not compelled to join in a lock-step mentality toward the best approaches to improve the life of blacks and other minorities? Who is to tell us that we cannot and should not exercise our right to demonstrate an ability for independent thinking as to future avenues which should be taken to maximize the improvement of the quality of life for our people?

Clarence Thomas has demonstrated that he is an independent thinker, maybe too independent for some self-appointed spokesmen against his confirmation. It is for this very independence of intellect that Clarence Thomas has been criticized by certain black leaders and white liberals. While some may disagree with his approach, no person who knows Clarence Thomas, his caring attitude or his willingness to help others, could ever question his motives and his dedication to improving the life of American blacks.

In contrast with the other members of the current Supreme Court, Judge Thomas alone has firsthand knowledge of the plight of minorities in the United States. Isn't it reasonable to expect him to show understanding and compassion toward those who have suffered discrimination?

Judge Thomas' public statements make clear that he is heartily committed to equal justice and equal opportunity. What sets him apart from the self-appointed spokesmen, however, is his conviction that some old methods have not worked to improve the lot of the great mass of minorities. Judge Thomas agrees with the goals, but sometimes disagrees with the methods because of failed results.

If we are to realize our ultimate goal of total equality, it will not be the result of a single voice coming from black America. Judge Thomas himself said that little progress has been made in the field of civil rights until a mentality and willingness was developed to attack the status quo. Maybe the time has come for all of us to take inventory of the success and the failures of past policies and,

at the very least, open a dialog on where we should be going to maximize the opportunities for all Americans.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, the confirmation of Judge Thomas will be a testimonial to what America is about. It will send a loud and clear message to our young people that anything is possible in this country for those willing to make the necessary sacrifices and commitments to hard work and discipline.

The life of Judge Thomas is a perfect example of the promise of equality and opportunity in America. Judge Thomas and his rise from humble beginnings fit like a glove the profile of the American dream. I respectfully urge you and your colleagues to confirm his nomination.

Thank you again for this opportunity to share with you my thoughts on my friend Judge Thomas.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Obviously, I am not a very fierce Chairman. You have gone twice the time, as well.

Please try to surprise me, Ms. Frazier, and get it in in 5 minutes.

#### STATEMENT OF DEANIE FRAZIER

Ms. FRAZIER. I will. My name is Deanie Frazier.

The CHAIRMAN. I am sorry, I said Diane. I am very sorry. For that, you can go 6 minutes, but not 7. [Laughter.]

Ms. FRAZIER. Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I wish to thank you for the distinct privilege to participate in one of America's finest expressions of democracy.

As the attention of our great country is focused on the possibility of our having the second African-American on the Nation's highest court, the kind Senators of these hearings show that there is an absolute atmosphere of racelessness, which shows how great our country is. To watch hours on end the superior legal minds dealing on an elevated level, which we the common people never think in terms of, is indeed educational.

Senators, as a member of the Chatham County Commissioners, I stand in awe of this august body and humbled, indeed, that you would permit me even to come before you to make a brief statement in behalf of Judge Clarence Thomas' nomination to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Clarence Thomas represents the kind of person that lets the down and out know that they can rise above the basic social, economic, and educational levels to the pinnacle of American life.

Help make these visions manifested. Help lift the curtain that blocks the light of expectation, which many are blinded because of various considerations and situations. Help make a dream real, a contribution possible, a greatness of national pride even greater. Make a decision to help our national image become just a little more representative of what we know the world sees in our efforts. Help now by voting for Judge Thomas to become an Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

Mr. Chairman and honorable Senators, it may cause a debate, should the flow of events that brought Judge Thomas to this point be referred to as miraculous. Yet, the debate can be shut off. If we consider the fact that this very nomination is beyond the natural,