

R. Neal Batson Distinguished Service Award Remarks

*March 13, 2010*

Ray, thank you so much for your kind words, for your friendship, and for the fun that we have had working together over the years.

It's been a great privilege and honor to work with many of you who are here today, but I would especially like to mention Judge Bill Norton.

Judge, I remember when you were working on the creation of the College in the late 1980's. You called one day and asked me to send you a copy of the by-laws of the American College of Trial Lawyers. Not long thereafter, you called again to tell me that I would be invited to join the first class of the College—a great honor for me. Thank you for all that you have meant to me and to my career, particularly for the opportunity to work on your treatise and to participate in your seminars. And, Judge, I want you to know that Jeanie and the boys also thank you, for THEY learned how to SKI at your Park City seminars while I was inside LECTURING!

As we all know, our work often requires long hours, frequent travel and time away from home and family, so I especially want to thank my wife, Jeanie, who has been a vital part of my life and career—without your love, support and assistance I would not have been able to devote so much time and energy to my law practice and pro-bono activities.

The Distinguished Service Award is ESPECIALLY meaningful to me because it comes from an organization and a group of people who are dedicated to service.

Whether you are a judge, professor, lawyer, accountant or other professional – you are all involved in serving other people.

But it is the VOLUNTEER service – a requirement for membership in our college – that has distinguished you and this organization. Whether it is working with a legal aid clinic, speaking at a seminar, mentoring a law student or young lawyer, or some other activity, you would not be here today had YOU not demonstrated a commitment to putting something back into your profession.

So, as I accept this award, I am cognizant that EACH ONE OF YOU in this room is deserving of recognition for what you have done and continue to do in your service to others.

I am also cognizant of the example we must set for others. And, as I think about that, I am reminded of a life experience.

Jeanie and I spend our summers hiking in the mountains of Western Colorado. Several years ago we were hiking the Grizzly Lake trail just outside of Aspen. While we were crossing a snowfield Jeanie spotted some animal tracks in the snow. She took photographs and when we returned home she confirmed that they were the paw prints of a mountain lion. Now, we knew from talking to some of the old-timers that mountain lions roam the Colorado mountains, but they are seldom seen or encountered. Yet, this was a reminder to us that the lions ARE THERE, and they are watching you as you hike.

There are those in our professions who, like the mountain lion, are watching us—not because we are hiking in their territory, but because of our ACCOMPLISHMENTS. We may not be aware of them, but they are there, and they are watching.

Therefore, I believe that as leaders in our professions it is especially important for us to be good role-models, and, AS SUCH, to encourage those who ARE WATCHING to follow our example of GIVING BACK to our PROFESSIONS *and* to SOCIETY.

Thank you.