

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Press Center



Opening Statement of George W. Madison, Nominee for General Counsel of the Treasury Department Senate Committee on Finance June 5, 2009

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Remarks as Prepared for Delivery

Thank you Chairman Baucus, Senator Grassley and members of this committee, for the opportunity to appear before you today in connection with my nomination to be the General Counsel of the Department of the Treasury.

I am deeply honored to be President Obama's nominee for this position and I am sincerely grateful to Secretary Geithner for recommending me to the President.

I know the time is brief. If you permit me, Mr. Chairman, I would like to introduce the members of my family who are here today and who have supported me in all I've accomplished. I am joined by my two daughters, Kristin and Jillian. Kristin was the first born and attends Broward College/Nova University in Davie, Florida. She hasn't finally decided yet upon her career but she is leaning in the direction of psychology. My daughter Jillian graduated, just last weekend, from The Lawrenceville School near Princeton, New Jersey and will be attending Stanford University in the Fall. Kristin and Jillian are accompanied by Kristin's boyfriend Frank Stadelman, also a student in Florida. My girls have survived a series of personal challenges during the last 8 years with the tragic death of their mom. They have my deepest admiration and respect for how they have faced this grievous loss at such early ages. They represent well their mom.

Mr. Chairman, I welcome this opportunity, if confirmed, to serve our country and contribute whatever I can to the President's and Secretary Geithner's efforts to stabilize the financial system and reinvigorate the economy.

Public service is in the blood of my family and I beg your indulgence to spend a minute to explain. While I was raised in Jersey City, New Jersey and now reside in Greenwich Connecticut, I am from an old Washington DC family who imbued in all of us the abiding importance and the responsibility to give back to our communities and to our country. For your information and as a reminder to my children, I will relate two quick family stories. First, my grandmother's grandfather, Gabriel Coakley, along with two other freed slaves, initiated a fund-raising campaign in the 1860s to build the first house of worship and school for black Catholics in the District. Mr. Coakley obtained permission from President Abraham Lincoln to hold a "Strawberry Festival" on the front lawn of the White House on July 4, 1864. With these funds and others previously committed, Coakley founded Saint Augustine Catholic Church and School which recently celebrated its 150th Anniversary.

The second story relates to my grandmother herself, Dr. Lena F. Edwards, who became a medical doctor in the 1920s. After nearly 40 years of providing health services to the minority community in DC and NJ, in 1961 she built and staffed a 25 bed hospital in Hereford, Texas for Mexican migrant workers. In 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson awarded her the Medal of Freedom in recognition of her work in Texas. The presentation was made in the Blue Room of the White House and other honorees included Leontyne Price, Father Ted Hesburgh, Carl Sandburg, John Steinbeck and Aaron Copland.

The important lessons of these stories and others help explain why, for me, public service is both a privilege and an obligation. As you know, the General Counsel of the Treasury Department supervises a staff of approximately 2000 attorneys and 1600 support staff. By statute, the General Counsel is the chief legal officer of the Department who provides legal advice and counsel to the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, Under Secretaries and other senior officials on legal issues ranging from Department management, to government financial operations, to the public debt, to revenue and customs laws, to international and domestic economic, monetary and financial affairs, to law enforcement and the financial war on terror, the ethics program, legal claims and legislative reports to Congress and OMB. In addition to all of that, at this time in our history, if confirmed I would welcome the opportunity to offer my legal perspective to the successful implementation of the programs initiated by Congress, the President and the Secretary to stabilize the financial system and reinvigorate our economy.

This is an important and immensely rewarding role at a critical time in our history and I pledge to you thoughtful, diligent and dedicated service, should the Senate choose to confirm me.

