

RETIREMENT OF JUSTICE STEVENS

SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

MONDAY, JUNE 28, 2010

Present: CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS, JUSTICE STEVENS, JUSTICE SCALIA, JUSTICE KENNEDY, JUSTICE THOMAS, JUSTICE GINSBURG, JUSTICE BREYER, JUSTICE ALITO, and JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR.

THE CHIEF JUSTICE said:

And now I must regrettably note for the record that this is the last session at which our friend and colleague, Justice John Paul Stevens, will be on the Bench with us. Justice Stevens has served on this court with great distinction since December 1975. We wish him the best in his well-deserved retirement. On this occasion, we have sent Justice Stevens a letter that I will now read.

SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES,
CHAMBERS OF THE CHIEF JUSTICE,
Washington, D. C., June 28, 2010.

Dear John:

The Supreme Court convened for the first time in 1790. You have served on its bench for nearly one-sixth of its existence. For the past thirty-four years, this Court has drawn strength from your presence. Whether in majority, separate concurrence, or dissent, you have brought rigor and integrity to the resolution of the most difficult issues. Through it all, you have alloyed genuine collegiality with independent judgment.

Your decision to retire saddens each of us in distinct ways. We will miss your wisdom, your perceptive insights and vast life experience, your unaffected decency and resolute commitment to justice. But we also know that your presence will endure through your contributions to the Court's work. You have enriched us through your inspiring example of public service. The bonds of friendship that we have forged extend beyond our common endeavor.

We wish you and Maryan great happiness in the years ahead.

Affectionately,

JOHN G. ROBERTS, JR.
ANTONIN SCALIA
ANTHONY M. KENNEDY
CLARENCE THOMAS
RUTH BADER GINSBURG
STEPHEN BREYER
SAMUEL A. ALITO, JR.
SONIA SOTOMAYOR
SANDRA DAY O'CONNOR
DAVID H. SOUTER

THE CHIEF JUSTICE said:

Justice Stevens, we will allow you time for rebuttal.

JUSTICE STEVENS said:

Well Chief, I have addressed a response that's addressed 'Dear Colleagues', and it occurred to me sitting here that if I had written this letter when I joined the Court, it would have been addressed 'Dear Brethren' but 'Dear Colleagues' suits today's composition of the Court.

SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES,
CHAMBERS OF JOHN PAUL STEVENS,
Washington, D. C., June 28, 2010.

Dear Colleagues,

Collegiality and independence characterize our common endeavor. I thank you for your kind words.

Far more importantly, Maryan and I thank each of you and each of your spouses—present and departed—for your warm and enduring friendship.

It has been an honor and a privilege to share custodial responsibility for a great institution with the eight of you and with ten of your predecessors. I have enjoyed working with each of you and with every member of the Supreme Court workforce that has always taken such excellent care of the Justices. If I have overstayed my welcome, it is because this is such a unique and wonderful job.

I wish you all the best.

Most sincerely,
John