

RETIREMENT OF JUSTICE KENNEDY

SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

MONDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2018

Present: CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS, JUSTICE THOMAS, JUSTICE GINSBURG, JUSTICE BREYER, JUSTICE ALITO, JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR, JUSTICE KAGAN, JUSTICE GORSUCH, and JUSTICE KAVANAUGH.

THE CHIEF JUSTICE said:

Before we commence this morning's business, I would like to acknowledge the presence in the courtroom of Justice Anthony M. Kennedy, and I would like to read into the records of the Court an exchange of correspondence.

The first letter is dated today, December 3, 2018. It is to Justice Kennedy from my colleagues and me, and it reads as follows:

SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES,
CHAMBERS OF THE CHIEF JUSTICE,
Washington, D. C., December 3, 2018.

Dear Tony:

Although our new Term is well underway, we remain keenly aware of your absence on the Bench and in our Conference. From the time each of us came to know you, you have enriched our lives through your kindness, comradery, and generosity. We are heartened that you have maintained an active presence in the building, and we take great comfort that you remain our valued colleague here.

No one leaves Sacramento to become a prospector. But your labors since moving east have yielded a treasure of

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thoughtful decisions. This legacy will guide the understanding of judges, lawyers, and citizens for years to come.

Your example of ceaseless civility inspires us as we go forward with the work of the Court that you have so vitally advanced. We wish you and Mary well in your much-deserved retirement, and we look forward to many more years in this new chapter of our shared friendships.

Affectionately,

JOHN G. ROBERTS, JR.
CLARENCE THOMAS
RUTH BADER GINSBURG
STEPHEN BREYER
SAMUEL A. ALITO, JR.
SONIA SOTOMAYOR
ELENA KAGAN
NEIL M. GORSUCH
BRETT M. KAVANAUGH
JOHN PAUL STEVENS
SANDRA DAY O'CONNOR
DAVID H. SOUTER

THE CHIEF JUSTICE said:

The next letter is to myself and the colleagues on the bench and it is from Justice Kennedy. It reads:

SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES,
CHAMBERS OF ANTHONY M. KENNEDY,
Washington, D. C., December 3, 2018.

Dear Chief Justice and Dear Colleagues,

Please accept this expression of deepest appreciation for the uplifting words and sentiments in your most gracious letter. It will be treasured by our family.

This reply is not to say farewell, for it is my hope to linger here to be with all of you in the days and years to come. It is necessary, of course, to say farewell to being on the bench and in the conference room. There, for the past thirty years, it was a high honor to join with our colleagues in seeking

how best to define and interpret an idea and a reality—the idea and the reality of the law. Even if we disagreed in a particular case, we admired and respected each other as we sought to explain the law as we found it to be and to ensure that, over the course of time, the law and the freedoms it sustains will be ever more secure, ever more revered.

We first came to Washington knowing few who lived here, but the members of the Court at once reached out to Mary and me with gifts of guidance, understanding, and above all, the priceless bond of friendship. It seems proper to quote from the Poet and to say that for all these gifts “I can no other answer make but thanks, and thanks, and ever thanks.”

With assurances of my continued highest regards, I remain,

Yours sincerely,
Tony