

Admiral Papp FLETC Graduation Research & Remarks – September 28, 2010

Thank you Director Patrick for the kind introduction.

I want to start off by thanking Valerie O'Neil for her wonderful rendition of the Nation Anthem! I always feel bad when we have someone do such a wonderful job singing the National Anthem, we stand at attention, then sit down—and forget to thank them – so let's start off by thanking her!

Good morning shipmates! It's great to be here with you. Some of you have been called shipmates before – for some of you it's a new term – let me just say that Shipmates is my short hand term of endearment for members of the Coast Guard family! Members of the Coast Guard family are the active duty, the reserve, the civilians the auxiliary and their families – and we also have extended members of the Coast Guard family, and certainly director Connie Patrick is one of those extended members, we rely on her, and she does just such a tremendous job training our Coast Guard personnel, running FLETC, and supporting Coast Guard law enforcement

training efforts including her world class support for our Maritime Law Enforcement Academy which would not exist without her efforts!

I also want to thank CGIS Director Cornett, who has done such a great job leading CGIS. Mr. Tarry, who is a new addition to the Coast Guard, is our Deputy Director of Intelligence, so it's great to have you here today as well along with Mr. David Leighton, CGIS Deputy Director. And, Mr. Carruth, NCIS Director, thank you for being with us. The partnership with the Navy is sound, and I don't think in the course of my career it has ever been better – and it is reflected here today in the cooperation between NCIS and CGIS.

It's wonderful to be back at Glyngo, Georgia—the cradle of federal law enforcement—as we graduate the newest members of our Coast Guard Investigative Service.

To the FLETC teaching staff, thank you for your instruction and leadership of these Coast Guard agents...your hard work has enabled them to become protectors of our citizens and Service, investigators that seek the

truth, and Coast Guard Investigative Agents who will preserve the public trust bestowed upon them.

To all the families here – especially the spouses – and it’s also great to have the kids here – you have had to endure and run families in your graduate’s absence, thank you – so their accomplishment is a tribute to you as well.

Graduates, I’m sure you’re all aware that YOU owe your families a special thanks. YOUR family has sacrificed their time and energy to make today a reality. They have been a shoulder for YOU to lean on, an ear that listened to YOUR concerns, and today they hopefully will be that someone YOU can celebrate with! YOU – we – all of us owe them a huge thanks. Thank YOU to all who travelled to be here today.

I know how special this event is...My father was a law enforcement officer...I therefore have an affinity for and always feel close to law enforcement. I distinctly remember sitting in the audience close to 50 years

ago, when my father was presented with his badge as a Connecticut State Trooper -- So children, I know you will remember this special event!

Graduates, today is also of course YOUR day – a day to celebrate YOUR accomplishments, all that YOU have learned, and to look forward to the challenge of CGIS service that lies ahead. I also know that some of YOU have been training here for as many as 5 months, and are looking forward to returning to your permanent duty stations and homes – or perhaps reporting to a new duty station – but most importantly returning to YOUR families.

Looking into the faces of this group of incredibly talented men and women, I see a future of enormous opportunity and unlimited potential.

YOU've come from every corner of our country...from cities and towns both large and small, and perhaps a few places that are mostly unknown! YOU came to learn your craft, hone your skills...and serve YOUR Nation.

Some of you have significant prior law enforcement experience...you have served as municipal police officers, in the Secret Service, the Drug Enforcement Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the Department of Transportation, the Department of Air Force, the Federal Protective Service and on active duty in the U.S. Air Force...

Any many of YOU are also active duty Coast Guard men and women with significant and diverse Coast Guard experience—YOU are Cutterman, Coxswains and Boarding Officers. YOU are Boatswains Mates, Operations Specialists, Yeoman, and even a Food Service Specialist—who I understand with his new FLETC training is now known as the “tactical chef”!

I suspect YOU brought all of these diverse experiences to bear over the last several months, and have come together as a group—hopefully making some new friends and shipmates that you can rely upon as your CGIS careers progress.

At times, you may have asked yourself what am I doing here? (I have those moments sometimes). But YOU have endured, achieved and

overcome...you are here, you have completed this journey and YOU are ready to graduate.

But, before you cross the stage and are presented with your hard earned CGIS credentials, I want to speak to you about your new power and authority – how YOU will use it – and most importantly, what should guide YOUR actions...

You see, while you've trained here for the complexities of today's law enforcement environment – your success will not merely be determined by your law enforcement prowess. It will also be heavily influenced, if not determined by your **sense of justice**.

What do I mean? As federal law enforcement agents, your position provides you with unique powers and authorities over our citizens, their property and livelihoods. But with great power, comes great responsibility—the responsibility, indeed the duty to use your power justly.

Coast Guard personnel have always been under a special obligation to exercise their broad powers prudently and judiciously and with restraint...Our *unparalleled level of law enforcement authority* caused the first Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton to provide a letter of Instruction to all Revenue Cutter officers. In this letter, Hamilton explained the need for restraint and the standard to be met. Hamilton instructed the officers as follows:

“Always keep in mind that your countrymen are free men and, as such, are impatient of everything that bears the least mark of a domineering spirit. Remain therefore with the most guarded circumspection, from whatever has the semblance of haughtiness, rudeness or insult...endeavor to overcome difficulties, if any are experienced, by a *cool and temperate perseverance in your duty*, by *address and moderation*, rather than vehemence and violence.”

This advice remains as true today as it did almost 220 years ago ... No one can doubt that Hamilton’s guidance advocating restraint and good judgment will be any less true—or any less less powerful—two years—two decades—or two hundred more years from now...

So today, I ask YOU to give considered thought to How YOU will use your new powers? What will guide YOUR exercise of authority? Of course, there are the laws—regulations—policies—and perhaps even tactics

which you've been studying over the past several months. And, of course, you all are duty-bound to comply with them. But, trust me, these alone will not be enough to guide you...

Beyond the conduct required by our constitution, or by our courts, lies our *individual sense of justice*. When I recently met with our House Congressional Sub-Committee Chairman, Representative Elijah Cummings, we were talking about selfless service. Chairman Cummings said, "we always ought to synchronize our conscious with our conduct." Synchronize our conscious with our Conduct...I think that's a great line – and it summarizes exactly what I am talking about.

We all have a sense of justice. It started to develop when we first were able to recognize right from wrong. Or, more accurately, when we first knew we had been "wronged". Perhaps this first occurred at the hands of a sibling—or neighborhood bully—who simply took something from us that was not theirs! We knew this was wrong. Unfair. Unjust. And it made us mad! Well, if you use your powers unjustly, know that our citizens will feel the same way – and they will have the same reaction!

Our innate sense of justice has been informed by our parents—our mentors—and it’s the sum of our individual experiences. It’s part of what makes us unique. Diverse. And Special. More importantly, it continues to develop and evolve as we grow, gain education, and life experience. I can confidently tell you that over 35-years of Coast Guard experience, my individual sense of justice continues to develop and grow each and every day.

As Muhammad Ali once wisely observed,

“The man [or woman] who views the world at age 50 the same way he did at age twenty has wasted thirty years of his life.”

Indeed, one could argue that what all of you have really been doing over these past several months is developing your sense of justice. It’s one of the most important things you can do, because, while your investigations may eventually make it into a court before a judge, for the most part, when you exercise your awesome powers, no one—but perhaps your partner—will be watching.

And what YOU do when YOU think no one is looking is the key component of ethical conduct. Will YOU do the right thing? Will YOU strive to be just—both in your investigations—your decision making and especially in your conclusions?

I can guarantee that already in many of your careers – and if it has not happened yet it will soon – a situation will present itself where YOU will have to instantaneously—instinctively—choose between preserving your individual integrity—over more short term temptations.

Always remember – you can NEVER get your ethics back. A well-developed sense of justice will always ensure that YOU stay on the right side of this decisional boundary.

Most importantly, YOUR sense of justice will ensure that your actions are consistent with WHO you want to be...and WHAT you want to be...it will be the EXAMPLE you set for our citizens when you enforce our laws, and they view the justness of our service, and ultimately our Nation, based

upon YOUR actions. YOUR actions will also serve to be an example for your subordinates, and especially your children and families.

I suspect everyone here vividly remembers those dark moments after our Nation was attacked by terrorists on 9/11. Those senseless attacks unleashed a strong urge to respond and strike back. You might recall President's George W. Bush's powerful speech line just after the attack, that spurred all of us who serve to action:

“Whether we bring our enemies to justice or bring justice to our enemies, justice will be done.”

But, President Bush also had to ensure we were not goaded by the terrorists into a senseless response, a response that if focused on a particular group of citizens—rather than those responsible for these crimes—would be patently unjust—and would make us no different than the terrorists who indiscriminately attacked thousands of innocent civilians...he reminded us that while **“We’re in a fight for our principles...our first responsibility is to live by them.”**

President Bush's counsel—that our first responsibility is to live by our principles—is our collective sense of justice in action. It is unique to our Nation. It's what makes America special. We have a constitution. It requires the laws to be applied without regard to race, religion, wealth or status. If we don't uphold the promises of our constitution—we'll lose the freedoms we so cherish—the freedoms that so many who serve our country have, and continue to give, the ultimate sacrifice to protect.

So it starts with YOU. Here and now, TODAY. As a new CGIS agent, it is YOU who are charged with upholding these freedoms—the very principles that make America a place worthy of living. YOU are sworn to follow our laws by the oaths YOU all took. If YOU strive to develop a sound sense of justice, let it be your guide, if you synchronize your conscience with your conduct, YOU will not only justly enforce the law, YOU will do something even more important, and more enduring--YOU will uphold the strength of our values...the values that have successfully guided our Coast Guard and our Nation for over 220 years...

Finally, I would like to say the one thing that I really came here to say today. Thank you. Thank YOU for choosing to serve our country. Thank YOU for choosing to serve our Coast Guard. When I meet with the Joint Chiefs, Secretary of Defense Gates often reminds us that only 1% of our population serves in the military. One-percent! So if that's true, I wondered what percent of our population serves in the Coast Guard. I had my aide run the numbers – and he came up with .014% -- so you see we who serve in the Coast Guard are a truly select group!

Thank you for your service!

Semper Paratus.