



At the Inductee Luncheon the day before the ceremony, Past President Bart Dalton welcomed our new Inductees.

“Welcome everyone, especially new inductees, spouses, partners, special friends. Welcome to our College. It’s a celebration this weekend, but it’s not just a celebration for you. It’s a celebration for us, the Past Presidents of the College, our current Executive Committee, our Fellows, our Regents, because we get to see you as our next group of great advocates The College is a great honor to be a part of, but we are not an honorary society. We’re a dynamic institution that works hard at protecting the rule of law.”

Bart first addressed the friends, partners and spouses in attendance. “You know, some of the most interesting people I’ve ever met in my life, I’ve met at these meetings. And you know what? They weren’t always Fellows. They were you. So I look forward to meeting you.

And then he addressed the inductees.

“You have to be saying to yourself what every Fellow I know said to themselves, how did I get here? How the hell did I get here? That’s what I’m here to tell you.

“First, the first thing you had to be was noticed. Somebody saw you in court. You may have had a case against a Fellow. You may have had a case against a Fellow’s partner. A judge who may be a Judicial Fellow or who knew a Fellow said, maybe you ought to look at her, or maybe you ought to look at him. . . . Maybe they will meet your standards.

And what are those standards? Well, . . . you have to be unquestionably qualified, preeminently qualified. We talk about only the one percent, but we don’t come close to the one percent nationally. . . . Good lawyers do not live here. . . .

Fellows are a step above that. Fellows are not second-chair lawyers. We’re the first-chair lawyers, and that’s the standard. And the standard is based on three separate qualities. . . .

“The second step is ethics. If your ethics are the least bit questionable, you’re not sitting here today. . . .

“And the third thing is professionalism, or what we call collegiality. You know, we try cases all the time. We handle cases all the time with lawyers who may not share our values. They may be rude. You know, rudeness is a weak person’s impersonation of strength. You are not rude. You’ve been tested. Kipling said that, if you can meet with triumph or tragedy and treat both just the same, that’s you. You’ve been tested. You’ve won, and you’ve lost. And when you did either, you did it professionally, you did it with integrity, and you did it with grace.”

So how did we figure all of that out about you? Bart described the process, starting with the state or province investigation, getting a case list, calling every opposing counsel and judge. Then the National, confidential poll. And with that, the Regent’s investigation. And the Board of Regents review.

“You ran a gauntlet you didn’t even know you were running, but here we are. Here we are, and congratulations for being here.”

But beyond congratulations, Bart made an ask.

“The rule of law is under attack, and I don’t say that as a political statement. I don’t even say it as a temporal statement, because the rule of law has always been under attack. When Plutarch wrote about the rise and fall of the Roman Empire, he told the story about the first thing that Mark Antony, who wanted to be a dictator, wanted to do to defeat the republic. The first thing he did is that he ordered the murder of the greatest advocate of the republic, a trial lawyer, Cicero. The rule of law has been under attack ever since. It’s under attack today. It was under attack ten years ago. It continues to be under attack.

“And what the world needs, what this country and Canada need are great advocates who are willing to stand up and promote the rule of law. That’s you. We’ve given you a great honor this weekend, an honor you richly deserve, and now we’re handing you something else. Churchill said that the price of greatness is responsibility. We’ve handed you this, and we hope you help us continue to promote the rule of law.

“But for now, let’s celebrate. And in the words of our founder, long and happy may be our years together.”