

**INTRODUCTION OF JUDGE AMY CONEY BARRETT
TO THE SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
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Chairman Graham, Ranking Member Feinstein, Distinguished Members of the Judiciary Committee, Senator Young and Senator Braun:

It is an honor to appear today to introduce Judge Amy Coney Barrett, nominee for the position of Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. I have known Judge Barrett for just shy of twenty years. A native of New Orleans, a *Phi Beta Kappa* graduate of Rhodes College in Memphis, Tennessee, and a *summa cum laude* graduate of Notre Dame Law School where she finished first in her class, I first met Judge Barrett when as dean of the law school, my colleagues and I recruited her to join our faculty in 2002. I was aware of Judge Barrett's reputation as a student, but I never taught her. Thus, I remember that in her initial interview, I was not thinking of her so much as a Notre Dame alum, but as a candidate in whom many law schools would be interested: top of her class, executive editor of the law review, two clerkships with demanding jurists – Judge Laurence Silberman of the Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit and Justice Antonin Scalia – a short period of private practice with now Baker Botts, and an Olin Fellowship at George Washington University Law School. From my standpoint, in a market in which law schools compete aggressively for candidates with sterling credentials like this, Amy Coney Barrett was quite a win for us.

Over the course of the next few years, I was responsible for providing an environment in which Judge Barrett's potential as an academic could reach the maturation necessary to meet the university's high standards for tenure. It was the easiest task of my ten years as dean. I watched her develop into an exceptional teacher and a superb scholar. "Develop" is a bit of a misnomer, however, for in many ways Judge Barrett sprang full grown into the legal academy.

The first of three distinguished professor awards from graduating classes over the years came from only the second class of students she taught. When I visited her classes in those early years, it was easy to understand why. The students then and now stand in awe of her intellect and appreciate her consummate professionalism. Reading her course evaluations is like reading a thesaurus with only superlatives. Her courses are marked by clarity of presentation on substance, but open-minded, non-directive discussion respectful of differences of opinion and differences in learning style. Our students strive to meet her high expectations so as not to disappoint her and appreciate her accessibility outside the classroom for support and mentoring.

At the same time that Judge Barrett was building relationships with our students, she produced scholarship that was superb in quality and depth, and she quickly developed a national reputation. Senior scholars across the academy hold her work in high regard. Without breaching

the confidentiality of the tenure process, I can say that her case was as easy as a tenure decision can be. Her work appears in top law reviews including University of Chicago, Columbia, Virginia, Texas, and Cornell. I was not surprised in later years to see her tapped for service on the Advisory Committee on Federal Rules of Appellate Procedure and elected to membership in the American Law Institute. In Judge Barrett's three years on the Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit, her opinions reflect many of the same qualities as her scholarship -- intellectual rigor, painstaking analysis, clarity of thought -- accompanied by her deep commitment to apply the law to the facts of the case before her.

Stellar as Judge Barrett's professional accomplishments, no picture would be complete without mention of her personal qualities. She is brilliant but humble; fair and objective, but also empathetic; open-minded and respectful of differences; a skilled listener able to build consensus; generous to others, especially those in need. If I had to pick only a few words to describe her, I would tell you that she is a woman who leads an integrated life of mind, heart, and soul that allows her to move seamlessly between her professional responsibilities and her commitments to family (the oldest of seven children, she is now mother to seven children herself).

It humbles me now, as it did at the time, to think that twelve years ago I was tasked with evaluating Judge Barrett's professional qualifications in a university setting. As a junior faculty member she ran circles around me. Judge Barrett left me in the dust many years ago, and nothing brings me more joy than to say so. This is precisely the level of excellence we should demand for institutions of singular importance to us.

I have only communicated with this august committee on two occasions. The first was ten years ago when I wrote a strong letter in support of now-Justice Elena Kagan, whose term as dean of Harvard Law School overlapped with my own. The second is today introducing and endorsing Amy Coney Barrett in equally strong terms. Some might find these recommendations in juxtaposition, but I find them entirely consistent.

Over the years I have been privileged to meet in university settings many Supreme Court justices, including Ruth Bader Ginsburg whose loss we all mourn. Although the justices sometimes differ in their judicial philosophies and interpretive methodologies, to the person they all possess powerful minds, a rigorous work ethic, skilled listening abilities, an openness to persuasion as well as an ability to persuade, objectivity and impartiality, integrity, and a deep and abiding commitment to apply the rule of law to the facts of the case before them. They understand their role as advancing the rule of law, not advancing their personal policy preferences. They understand their responsibility to preserve the Court as an institution -- not wings of the Court, but the Court -- a single institution that plays a singular role in our republic.

I know first-hand from working closely with Amy Coney Barrett for almost two decades that she possesses these same qualifications in abundance. I trust that in your dialogue with her over the course of the next few days you will come to the same conclusion and recommend her confirmation to the full Senate as an Associate Justice.

Thank you.