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Nomination and Confirmation of Supreme Court Justices: Some Personal Observations

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FRANK M. COFFIN LECTURE ON LAW AND PUBLIC SERVICE

Editor's Note:

The following remarks were delivered on October 13, 1992, on the occasion of the first Frank M. Coffin Lecture on Law and Public Service, henceforth to be an annual event at the University of Maine School of Law.

The speech was written by the late Joseph L. Rauh, Jr., who died a few weeks before the speech was to be given. The speech was presented by his widow, Olie Rauh, and their son, Michael Rauh.

Joseph Rauh's speech is reprinted here in its entirety with the kind permission of Mrs. Rauh, preceded by the comments of University of Maine School of Law Dean Donald Zillman and Senior Circuit Judge Frank Coffin. The Board and Staff of Volume 45 of the Maine Law Review are privileged to publish these remarks in memory and honor of Joseph L. Rauh, Jr.

WELCOMING REMARKS FOR THE FIRST FRANK M. COFFIN LECTURE ON LAW AND PUBLIC SERVICE

*Donald N. Zillman**

Good evening and welcome to a very special evening. We honor tonight three distinguished Americans—William Brennan, Frank Coffin, and Joseph Rauh. I take particular pride in noting that they are all members of the legal profession. Lawyers and the legal profession have been the subject of controversy and criticism throughout history and today. But the law is a profession that can bring out the very best in its practitioners and their work can bring out the best in America. The men we honor tonight make us proud to be Americans.

What stands out in the mention of Brennan, Coffin, and Rauh is public service. That is our purpose here tonight. We begin an annual series of lectures under the sponsorship of the University of Maine School of Law that will bring to the Law School, to the University of Southern Maine, and to the State of Maine, persons who in their work and writing have viewed the law as a public profession. Accordingly, they have demanded that a commitment to public service is a part of legal training.

Our lecture series honors a man who exemplifies the law and public service—The Honorable Frank M. Coffin. There is always a danger in publicly introducing a legend to his friends. Many of you here tonight know the Coffin legend better than I. The humble birth in the log cabin. The long barefoot treks through the snow to the one-

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room schoolhouse. The manly admission to chopping down the blueberry tree. Throwing the quarter (no silver dollar for a frugal Mainer) across the mighty Androscoggin.

I cannot do justice to a legal career that has touched both the public and private sectors, including service in all three branches of government. For over a quarter century, Frank Coffin has been regarded as one of America's most distinguished appellate jurists. That is the public record. It is well known and it is indelible. What may not be as well known to the general public is the remarkable affection in which Frank Coffin is held by so many for so long and for such good reason. It is said that "No man is a hero to his own valet," and a whole, sordid generation of "kiss and tell" books have allowed staffers, secretaries, and superfluities to tell why the princes, presidents, and pop stars are less than they seem to the public. Frank Coffin is the exception that proves that the great need not exclude the good.

Our earliest enthusiasts in helping to create the Coffin Lecture were the remarkable fraternity and sorority of Coffin law clerks. Many are here tonight. All have encouraged us in our efforts. Three deserve special thanks—David Cohen, Barbara Riegelhaupt, and Kaighn Smith. Our thanks should also go to Joan Amerling, Barbara Gauditz, Colleen Khoury, and Kristi Clifford of the Law School faculty and staff. Without their many hours of work this event could not have taken place. For all of them and for me, it has been a labor of love.

Our warmest Maine welcome goes to Justice and Mrs. Brennan. Our thanks, admiration, and welcome to Mrs. Rauh and to Michael Rauh for completing another piece of the remarkable legal career of Joe Rauh. Your presence here tonight to honor Frank Coffin touches us deeply and reminds us how well we have chosen in naming the University of Maine School of Law's Distinguished Lecture series after the man I now introduce—Frank Coffin.