

Opening Statement of James A. Crowell IV
Nominee to be an Associate Judge of the District of Columbia Superior Court
April 2, 2019

Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Peters, and members of the Committee, it is a great privilege to be here. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to appear before you as you consider my nomination to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia. I want to thank the Judicial Nomination Commission and its chair, Judge Emmet Sullivan, for recommending me to the White House. I want to thank the President for nominating me. I also want to thank Congresswoman Norton for her support. Finally, I would like to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to the Committee members and the dedicated Committee staff for their hard work in considering my nomination.

I am immeasurably grateful for the support and inspiration of my colleagues, family, and friends, many of whom are here with me today. In particular, I want to recognize and thank my friends and colleagues, the United States Attorneys for the District of Columbia and the Eastern District of Virginia, Jessie Liu and Zach Terwilliger, and Judge Anthony Epstein of the D.C. Superior Court – for their friendship, support, and encouragement.

My wife, Michaeleen, has been my life partner and cherished friend for the last 19 years. Her love and support, and the gift of our children, Jac and Ellie, are the greatest successes of my life. I want to thank her father, Michael, for his love and support, and for being here with me today.

My family is from Mississippi and Louisiana, but my wife and I have made the District our home for the last 16 years. We came to Washington for Michaeleen to pursue her dream of working on Capitol Hill. As a young newlywed, I did not realize that her dream of coming to Washington would become our dream of making this city our home. We are communicants at St. Joseph's Church on Capitol Hill, where my son will soon be confirmed. I take pride in serving as a volunteer softball coach with the Capitol Hill Little League. I am a proud member of the American Legion. Our children were born here, and we have proudly raised them as D.C. natives. This is my home.

I was raised by a single mother with a high-school education, who worked tirelessly to provide for me and open doors of opportunity that no one in our family had walked through. She passed 20 years ago, but I hope that she is able to look down upon her son with pride on this day.

She taught me to expect nothing, and to be grateful for everything. To remain gracious in times of defeat, and humble in moments of victory. And always to leave things better than you found them. These have been, currently are, and will remain my guiding principles.

My presence here today is the result of a supportive family, exceptional colleagues, and my good fortune in joining two organizations that shaped me personally and professionally – the United States Army and the Department of Justice.

In 1994, as a 19-year-old private, I raised my hand for the first time to swear my allegiance to support and defend the Constitution of the United States. Over the course of 25 years, I have had the privilege of repeating that oath many times.

I started my legal career as a law clerk to United District Judge Charles Pannell, Jr., who taught me the meaning of judicial temperament – patient, unbiased, open-minded.

In 2001, I joined the Department of Justice through the Attorney General's Honors Program and served in the Antitrust Division, the Public Integrity Section, and as an Assistant United States Attorney. I was privileged to represent the United States as trial counsel in countless cases that protected the public and preserved public resources, and protected victims of crime. Now, as Director of the Executive Office for United States Attorneys, I continue to serve the Department's mission of ensuring equal and impartial justice.

I have also served in the U.S. Army Reserves for the last 25 years. I began my career in the Army as an infantryman, but after law school, became a Judge Advocate assigned as trial defense counsel. In that role, I represented countless soldiers accused of all manner of crimes. These soldiers' career, livelihood, and family security were on the line. That experience formed the basis for my strong belief that able defense lawyers are essential to the functioning of a constitutionally sound adversarial system.

Whether serving in a uniform or a suit, as a prosecutor or as a defense lawyer, I have sought to be a fierce advocate for the rule of law, a principled and independent decision-maker, and a faithful servant of the Constitution. I understand the D.C. Superior Court's mission to provide access to justice for all. If I am fortunate enough to receive your support, you have my word that I will strive to achieve that mission and approach every case, every controversy with a commitment to fairness and justice.

Thank you again for considering my nomination and I look forward to answering any questions you might have.