



by Hon. Joanna Seybert

## Southern District of New York and Eastern District of New York Chapters of the FBA Honor Gen. William K. Suter

On March 13, 2013, FBA Eastern District of New York Chapter President Ernest T. Bartol and Southern District of New York Chapter President Phil Schatz welcomed William K. Suter, major general, U.S. Army (Ret.), the 19th clerk of the U.S. Supreme Court, who is retiring this summer after 22 years as clerk and 50 years of combined service to the United States.

Gen. Suter presided over a special swearing-in ceremony held in the Eastern District Courthouse in Brooklyn, in which 24 attorneys were admitted to the Bar of the U.S. Supreme Court. Prior to his becoming the clerk of the Supreme Court, attorneys could be admitted only at the Supreme Court itself. General Suter began the custom and practice of conducting swearing-in ceremonies outside the Supreme Court, and he has now personally conducted more than sixty admissions.

After conducting the swearing-in and informing the newly-admitted members of the benefits of membership in the Bar of the Supreme Court, Gen. Suter entertained the audience with several anecdotes spanning from his time playing college basketball at Tulane University, to his service in the military (where he served with both Sgt. Elvis Presley and future Gen. Colin Powell), his acting as the judge advocate general of the U.S. Army, and, after retirement, being selected in 1991 by then Chief Justice of the United States William Rehnquist to serve as clerk of the Supreme Court. Gen. Suter's passion for the Supreme Court was evident as he shared memories of his long service to the Supreme Court, his personal interactions with various justices, and his advice to attorneys preparing for their first argument before the Court based on his observation of more than 1,700 oral arguments.

"The general"—so called to distinguish him from now retired Associate Justice William Souter—was appointed after a search for a person who could "militarize" (administratively, not martially) the Court. He has done that, but his initiates have also eased

access to opinions, improved Court/attorney interactions, and enhanced the welcoming of visitors to the Court.

After the swearing-in ceremony, General Suter attended a luncheon hosted by District Court Judge John Gleeson, which drew more than 20 district court and magistrate judges from the Eastern District of New York. Gen. Suter was quite impressed with the views of both the Manhattan and Brooklyn Bridges from the judges' dining room, and the historical fact that the Eastern District of New York was created by President Abraham Lincoln.

Following the luncheon, Gen. Suter visited the Southern District Courthouse in downtown Manhattan for a reception sponsored by the SDNY Chapter of the FBA hosted by District Court Judge Paul A. Crotty. The reception was attended by FBA members and officers, the chief judge of the Second Circuit, Dennis G.

Jacobs, and many other judges from the U.S. Court of International Trade and the Southern District of New York. Chief Judge Jacobs had just returned from a chief judges conference attended by Chief Judges Loretta A. Preska of the Southern District of New York and Carol B. Amon of the Eastern District of New York, who generously made their courthouses available for the admissions, luncheon, and reception. After Judge Crotty's warm introduction, Gen. Suter shared even more stories from his long service to the Court. The grand finale was dinner at the best steakhouse in the five boroughs—Peter Luger's in Brooklyn.

The judges of the Eastern District of New York and the Southern District of New York as well as the FBA members of both chapters all honor this great American for his remarkable 22 years of service to the justices, lawyers, and litigants in the Supreme Court, and his 29 years active duty service to the U.S. Army. ☺



At the event—(l to r) Olivera Medenica, Darren Shield, Michael Zussman, Stacey Yeung, Hon. William K. Suter, William Dahill, Phillip Schatz, and Raymond Dowd.

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