

Chapter Hosts 40th Annual Supreme Court Luncheon

On May 26, the Capitol Hill Chapter hosted its 40th Annual Supreme Court Luncheon in the magnificent West Conference Room of the court. This year's luncheon featured Justice Clarence Thomas and was again a sell-out event.

Chapter President Jeff McDermott welcomed Justice Thomas and noted that this was the third luncheon at which he had spoken. Justice Thomas also spoke at the chapter's 1995 and 2005 luncheons. McDermott noted that Justice Thomas is a great friend to the Federal Bar Association, serving as a honorary life fellow of the Foundation of the FBA and having spoken to numerous sections and chapters.

Justice Thomas began his remarks by noting that he had just returned from a trip to Savannah, Georgia, in his 40-foot recreational vehicle. He and his wife have traveled all over the country in their RV and enjoy the time on the open road. Justice Thomas noted that it is not often that he is recognized and he enjoys the anonymity. However, he did share some amusing anecdotes with the chapter about people remarking that he looks "just like Clarence Thomas" or a fel-

low customer at a gas station looking inside the RV and telling him, "Whoever you're transporting in there must be really important!"

Justice Thomas has visited the majority of states in his RV and discussed how the trips give him the opportunity to interact with ordinary people all across the country. He noted that while many people do not closely follow the decisions of the Supreme Court, the Court's actions do affect all Americans, and he tries to remember the people he meets when deciding cases. He also cherishes the road trips because it gives him a chance to experience life outside of the Beltway.

After his remarks, Justice Thomas took questions from attendees that ranged from civility in public life to his first years on the Court to the importance of the First Amendment. McDermott thanked Justice Thomas and presented him with a small token of gratitude: a porcelain box illustrated with one of the frescos from the Senate chamber created by Constantino Brumidi (often referred to as the Michelangelo of the Capitol). After the luncheon, Justice Thomas was very generous with his time and graciously took photos with many of the attendees. ☺



Jeff McDermott currently serves as the president of the Capitol Hill Chapter. He is the whistleblower protection ombudsman and a senior investigative counsel for the Department of State, Office of the Inspector General.

