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**Brett Kavanaugh**

*U.S. Supreme Court Swearing-In Ceremony Address*

delivered 8 October 2018, White House, Washington, D.C.



[AUTHENTICITY CERTIFIED: Text version below transcribed directly from audio]

Mr. President, thank you for the great honor of appointing me to serve as a Justice of the Supreme Court. I've seen firsthand your deep appreciation for the vital role of the American judiciary. I am grateful for your steadfast, unwavering support throughout this process. And I'm grateful to you and Mrs. Trump for the exceptional, overwhelming courtesy you have extended to my family and me. Mr. President, thank you for everything.

I'm honored to serve on a Supreme Court headed by Chief Justice John Roberts. Chief Justice Roberts is a principled, independent, and inspiring leader for the American judiciary. As a country, we are fortunate to have John Roberts as Chief Justice of the United States. I'm honored to serve alongside all of my new colleagues, each of whom I know and each of whom I greatly admire and deeply respect. All nine of us revere the Constitution. Article 3 of the Constitution provides that the judicial power shall be vested in one Supreme Court. The Supreme Court is an institution of law. It is not a partisan or political institution. The justices do not sit on opposite sides of an aisle. We do not caucus in separate rooms. The Supreme Court is a team of nine and I will always be a team player on the team of nine.



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As a new justice on the Supreme Court, I understand the responsibility that I bear. Some 30 years ago, standing here in the East Room with President Reagan, Anthony Kennedy took the oath to be a new Justice of the Supreme Court. Justice Kennedy became one of the most consequential justices in American history. I served as Justice Kennedy's law clerk in 1993. To me, Justice Kennedy is a mentor, a friend, and a hero. On the Supreme Court, he was a model of civility and collegiality. He fiercely defended the independence of the judiciary and zealously guarded the individual liberties secured by the Constitution. Justice Kennedy established a legacy of liberty for ourselves and our posterity. I will always be humbled and proud to sit in Justice Kennedy's seat on the Supreme Court.

I thank the Members of the United States Senate, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell for his leadership and steady resolve. I thank Judiciary Committee chairman Chuck Grassley for his wisdom and fairness. And I give special gratitude to senators Rob Portman, Susan Collins, Joe Manchin, Jon Kyl, and Lindsey Graham. They are a credit to the country and the Senate, I'll be forever grateful to each of them and to all the senators who carefully considered my nomination.

Presiding over the final vote in the Senate on Saturday was Vice President Pence. I'm grateful to the Vice President for his sound advice and faithful support. I thank Counsel to the President, Don McGahn, who was a warrior for fairness, and performed his critical duties in the finest traditions of our Constitution. I thank all the outstanding people in the White House, the Department of Justice, and the Senate who worked day and night on this nomination.

One of a federal judge's most important responsibilities is to hire for new law clerks each year. The law clerks are recent law school graduates and they work in the judge's chambers for one year. They're among the best and brightest young lawyers in America, and they become the future leaders of the legal profession. I thank my former law clerks who devoted so much time and energy to support me during the confirmation process.

Inspired by my mom, who was a trailblazer for women in the law, I've worked hard throughout my career to provoke -- promote the advancement of women. Women still face many barriers in the American workplace and all of us have a responsibility to address that problem. During my 12 years on the D.C. Circuit, a majority of my law clerks were women, and almost all of them went on to clerk at the Supreme Court. A clerkship on the Supreme Court is one of the most coveted achievements and credentials in American law.



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I'm proud that all four of my newly hired law clerks at the Supreme Court are women -- a first in the history of the Supreme Court.

Tonight, I thank all my friends -- so many amazing and fearless friends -- from my high school days, college, law school, clerking, the Bush White House, including President George W. Bush; from the judiciary, teaching, coaching, playing sports, the vibrant loyal and tight-knit Catholic community here in the D.C. area, and so many others. Ashley and I are grateful for their prayers and for the prayers from the thousands and thousands of people we have heard from throughout America. When I give advice to young people or speak to students, I tell them, "Cherish your friends." "Look out for your friends." "Lift up your friends." "Love your friends." I love all my friends.

I thank my family. My mom, Martha, and my dad, Ed, are here. I'm their only child. My mom was one of Maryland's earliest women prosecutors and trial judges. My dad taught me his work ethic and love of sports. They've given me a lifetime of love and I'm forever grateful to them.

My daughters, Margaret and Liza, are smart, strong, awesome girls. They're in the middle of fall lacrosse, looking forward to the upcoming basketball season. I thank their teachers for giving them the day off tomorrow so that they can come watch two cases being argued at the Supreme Court.

My wife, Ashley, is a proud west Texan from Abilene Texas, graduate of (Abilene) Cooper (Public) High School, University of Texas at Austin. She's the dedicated town manager of our local community. She's got a deep faith. She's an awesome mom, a great wife. She is a rock. I thank God every day for Ashley and my family.

The Senate confirmation process was contentious and emotional. That process is over. My focus now is to be the best Justice I can be. I take this office with gratitude and no bitterness. On the Supreme Court, I will seek to be a force for stability and unity. My goal is to be a great Justice for all Americans and for all of America.



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I will work very hard to achieve that goal. I was not appointed to serve one party or one interest but to serve one nation. America's Constitution and laws protect every person of every belief and every background. Every litigant in the Supreme Court can be assured that I'll listen to their arguments with respect and an open mind. Every American can be assured that I will be an independent and impartial Justice devoted to equal justice under law.

Although this Senate confirmation process tested me, as it has tested others, it did not change me. My approach to judging remains the same: A good judge must be an umpire, a neutral and impartial decider who favors no litigant or policy. A judge must be independent and must interpret the law, not make the law. A judge must interpret statutes as written. And a judge must interpret the Constitution as written, informed by history and tradition and precedent.

In the wake of the Senate confirmation process, my approach to life also remains the same. I will continue to heed the message of Matthew 25.<sup>1</sup> I will continue to volunteer to serve the least fortunate among us. I will continue to coach, teach, and tutor. I'll continue to strive to be a good friend, colleague, husband, and dad.

As in the past, our nation today faces challenges and divisions. But I am an optimist. I live on the sunrise side of the mountain. I see the day that is coming, not the day that is gone. I am optimistic about the future of America and the future of our independent judiciary, the crown jewel of our constitutional Republic. As a justice on the Supreme Court, I will always strive to preserve the Constitution of the United States and the American rule of law.

Thank you all.

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 25: 35-36: "For I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; <sup>36</sup> I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me."