

Wolf Law Building Dedication Remarks

September 8, 2006

David H. Getches

Hallelujah!

I won't ask how many people doubted they would ever see this day. But here we are.

Good afternoon and welcome. Justice Breyer, Regents of the University, President Brown, President Mathis, honored guests, and colleagues, students, alumni, and friends of Colorado Law, we are here to celebrate a remarkable accomplishment.

Although some may have doubted that our feat was possible, I can tell you this: some people never dared to admit doubt.

We are here because of faith, commitment, perseverance.

Because of risk taking.

Because of generosity.

And on account of the wisdom of civic engagement.

And, of course, we are here because of hard work, *damn* hard work.

Faith? The Wolf family stands out as among our first, stalwart faithful. Marvin, Judi, Erving, Joyce, and Elaine, please stand.

Marvin's leadership supported by Judi, was matched by the kindness of his brother and sister-in-law Erving and Joyce, and sister-in-law Elaine, the widow of brother

Melvin Wolf. They gave the naming gift to honor the parents of the three brothers' – Leon and Dora Wolf, who were people of less than modest means, whose fondest dream was to see their sons be educated and succeed. And so they did, magnificently. We are proud to carry the Wolf name forward on this great building and you of the Wolf family epitomize all the many faithful people here who stuck with us through the worst of times, and we are grateful to all of them today.

Commitment? From his first day at Colorado Law as dean, Hal Bruff committed himself to building a new home for the school. Stand up Hal.

The days and nights Hal put in planning, fundraising, strategizing, are all today rewarded. Hal never lost his commitment to the project, continuing on the building committee after stepping down as dean. His belief that we would succeed inspired others to maintain their commitment, and that commitment is rewarded today.

Perseverance? There are many who stand for the perseverance that built this place. But I want to recognize our faculty and staff for their perseverance. Teaching in classrooms where the drone of mechanical systems drowned student and faculty voices alike. Researching from books stored in a library basement where one risked asbestosis for the sake of scholarship. Offices that turned into saunas on sunny days. You were patient – well, mostly – and you surely kept plugging away, at our important work of educating, even in adverse conditions. You brought your time and talents to the Building Committee. Would the current and emeritus faculty please stand? You emeritus deans, too.

And from among the faculty let's recognize with special gratitude two of the chairs of the Building Committee. Barbara Bintliff led us through the planning process. Painstaking detail, future-oriented creativity. Thanks for your perseverance, Barbara. Charles Wilkinson was our guide through the heady times of

reconfiguration, contracting, building – and finishing. Charles, you persevered; you brought this baby home! Thank you Barbara and Charles!

Risk-taking? To get where we are, we had to do some things *never* done before in financing higher education construction. Truly remarkable support for what was unprecedented came from our administration, our presidents, chancellors, and vice-chancellors. The easiest thing to do in a time of financial distress would be to hunker down and blame the woes of the university and the law school on circumstances or the decisions of others. But *our* leadership did *not* behave like bureaucrats. They used their imaginations to devise a novel financing plan, stuck their necks out, and advocated for us. To represent this uncommon willingness to think outside the box and take risks I want to call on Provost and Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs Phil DiStefano who has been our stalwart through the entire project. Please stand, Phil. You represent the deeds and loyalty of all our friends in high places like Byyny and Porreca, Tabolt and Stump, Hoffman and Bracken, and now Brown. Thanks to our great University leaders.

And generosity? Wow, how can we choose someone to name to symbolize this virtue? If you look just inside this door you will see a wall plaque with over 200 names of major donors. Even more people have given since the sign was made and they will be added. Of course there is the Wolf name emblazoned above the doors of this building. And the names of others who committed amounts in the *millions* to the effort, like the Wittemyer family, and the Wise family, and MDC Foundation, come to mind. Names of our friends – alumni, law firms, and others – are attached to more than 50 spaces within the building. This building will always be a monument to private philanthropy. We set a goal of \$12.8 million to raise privately. More than a goal, we *had* to do it to pay for construction.

I am pleased to announce that, as of yesterday, we have *exceeded* our goal even as new pledges come in. And every penny of these new funds now are going right into education and programs within the building.

This was accomplished by the more than 1000 people who have contributed amounts that were significant to them, including nearly all our faculty and staff. Near the grill -- itself the gift of the class of 1999 -- within a month you will see hundreds of bricks with names of donors from many former classes and others who have given recently.

But as our symbol of generosity I want to single out the Class of 2006. *This* class was the last to spend 3 glorious years in Fleming, after coming to a school whose literature promised them a new building before they graduated. They paid extra tuition for that promise. They ate dust and listened to the noise of construction for over a year. And then they raised more than \$16,000 to make a class gift of art – the mural you see inside the building, plus 3 oil paintings, to grace this building which they will *never* attend. That's selfless generosity. Would members of the class of 2006 please stand as the representatives of all who gave. Thank you.

And what about civic engagement? This is our best story, the virtue that made the most difference. It's about the students. In 1997, our law students supported Hal's efforts to finance a new building and voted to pay \$1000 a year added tuition to make it work. But then, in 2001, shortly after the funds promised by the state were appropriated, they were abruptly rescinded before much could be spent. The financing plan was undermined. The students kept paying of course.

This project got moving again, however, *only* because of more student engagement. In spring of 2004, with leadership from our wonderful Colorado Law students, the campus student government, UCSU, passed a fee to be paid by all students on this campus -- \$400 a year every year for 20 years – to pay the share of the building cost

the state could not pay as the economy deteriorated and the dreaded TABOR amendment took hold.

Leading the effort for a campus-wide student fee from Colorado Law was Brian Mason. The other law school representatives that year were Henry Bangert and Jarod Beatty. The co-sponsors of the student legislation, were Richard Murray, then an undergraduate and now a law student, and Eugene Pearson. And hundreds of law students attended the UCSU hearings.

Think about the power of what the students did. They overcame the entirely legitimate belief that the job of financing academic buildings belonged not to them but to an earlier generation that was in charge of the state government. They decided to step up and to pay more for their education because if they did not, no one else would fund construction on the campus. They saved a great but forsaken institution from years of stagnation by investing in its future. Today, they have filled the gap left by the state and built this building, the ATLAS building, and a block away the business school has started a major addition. A visual arts building is in the planning stages. The students insisted that these buildings they helped to finance be *green* – energy efficient and environmentally friendly. That they must be built by *well-paid and trained laborers*. These commitments, expressing the *moral imperative* of the students, are all provided in the student legislation.

To the students I say, *you* are terrific citizens and the future leaders of our government. I would like to ask Brian Mason to stand and receive our congratulations on behalf of the hundreds of students who made our dream a reality. Thank you students.

Finally, hard work? Ten years in the making, political and economic obstacles, financing models never dreamt of before, new contracting forms, a 30-month project completed in 18 months, challenging green building standards, and architectural

challenges. Many of us toiled doing what *we* thought was hard work. But everyday we could look out the window and see – on a blazing hot day, or in the snow, or on a Saturday – hundreds of men and women giving their hearts to the project. I want to recognize those workers, represented today by our superintendent with Saunders Construction Company, and the interface between management and those who put it all together, Mr. Ed Dieffendorf.

We have had the best of construction management and supervision with Saunders and the best planning and oversight by our campus partners from the Office of Facilities Management, just as we have had the best of the architectural world with Davis Partnership and Centerbook. But to symbolize the spirit of hard work that will let many hundreds of people – from professionals, to tradesmen, from supervisors to laborers, Mr. Ed stands for the work ethic in each of us and in each of the workers who brought this building into being and who can claim it as theirs, too. They gave us their talents and skills and sweat. We are delighted that none had to give their blood or life. This *was* a safe worksite, and we are thankful for that as well.

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When all of us are gone, this building will stand. In the end, our greatness is *not* our building but what we *do* here. To set our course, *focusing on tomorrow and the work this building enables*, I am delighted to announce today the launching of a new chair, the DeMuth Chair funded by alumni Larry DeMuth and his brothers Lael and Alan, in honor of their father the late Colorado Law Professor Laurence DeMuth.

We will begin searching at once for a leading professor who exemplifies the DeMuth qualities of ethics and professionalism to fill that Chair.

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Let's hope that future generations of students can feel the *joy and inspiration* we feel today as we celebrate having planted our home here, with as much permanence as the human hand can fabricate. Saunders built it to last more than a century.

Centerbrook and Davis gave us the best of the Charles Klauder architectural genre, which is the signature of this campus. It will be a place for generations of alumni to cherish.

Now, we claim this building as a place to do our work. But more, it is a statement of what our work is about. In its *solidarity and mass and dignity*, the building says *we are about serious stuff here*. The *rule of law* is the lawyer's responsibility, and the lawyer's gift to society.

In its *openness* to the outside light and its brisk colors this building says we have *hope through action*, and the action is out there.

The spirit of *civic engagement* that enabled and animated this project *must* be a way of life for future professionals who call this their alma mater. It is for professionals to *engage and serve*.

And civic engagement is borne of the *sense of community* we can draw from the public spaces and the stairways that bring us together.

In the building's *wise use of resources*, its greenness and its use of local, western stones, timber, metals, it reminds us of our past, as well as our commitment to a *sustainable future*, wisely using what nature provides.

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The *values of our society*, should be reinforced, and taken away by the young professionals who are educated here. If you look carefully, you will see, etched subtly

in the limestone lintels throughout the building, words that represent values we want to reinforce – *justice, truth, liberty, equality, expansiveness, wisdom, compassion*. They are carved in stone inside the Wolf Law Building and we want them to live inside all who come here to learn, and who go on, in the tradition of our graduates, to make an impact on our society and our world.

Our celebration is huge today. I am told that there are more than 1000 people here. Our community *is* large and our gratitude *is* profound. Thank you all for making this place and this day. Let's dedicate *ourselves* to the *greatness of spirit* that that made it a reality and to the ideals it represents.

Thank you.

Introduction of Karen Mathis

Last month Karen Mathis became President of the American Bar Association, a first for a lawyer from Colorado. Karen is a 1975 graduate of this Law School.

She has embraced as a theme of her presidency “a season of service” advancing the ideal that lawyers should perpetuate a spirit of giving back, even as their careers ripen. A second theme focuses on youth at risk and the duty of society to serve better our children. This comes from her heart and her experience.

We are proud to have her as an alumna and especially proud that she is using her prestigious role as ABA President to champion the ideals of service that are a signature of Colorado Law.

I present to you ABA President Karen Mathis.

Introduction of President Hank Brown

The 21st president of the University of Colorado, Hank Brown, is an exemplar of public service. State legislator, congressman, US Senator, President Brown is also thoroughly a Buff, with his undergraduate and law degree having been earned on this campus. We have benefited from his experience, his wisdom, and his commitment, as he serves as CU President, spreading the good will that made him popular among all Coloradans as a political leader.

We thank Hank Brown for taking on, once again, the mantle of a new public service assignment, and giving us, at the University of Colorado, this chapter of his distinguished career.

Please welcome President Hank Brown, Colorado Law class of 1969

Introduction of Justice Stephen Breyer

We are especially honored today to have with us United States Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer. Justice Breyer has been on the court for 12 years. He is the Circuit Justice for the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals, our circuit.

Today, we hosted a discussion where five of our former deans debated and discussed Justice Breyer's book, *Active Liberty*. And we have embraced ideals from that book as our theme for this Dedication of a building that would not be here but for the active engagement of our entire community in solving problems left intractable by government.

Jeffrey Toobin of the *New Yorker* writes of going to interview the Justice at his home and, seeing the floor littered with children's toys, asked about it. Justice Breyer explained, "Their not mine, they are for my grandchildren."

Please welcome Justice, and grandfather, Stephen Breyer.

