

“Dottie Frapwell: Celebrating 35 Years of Extraordinary Service to Indiana University”

Retirement Reception Honoring Dottie Frapwell

Remarks as prepared for

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President

Indiana University

Musical Arts Center Lobby

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1. INTRODUCTION

Good afternoon and welcome.

Thank you for joining us today as we gather to celebrate the long career and extraordinary service of Dottie Frapwell and to wish her the best in the next chapter of her life.

We are joined today by a number of senior leaders of the university, including many current and former vice presidents and former members of the Board of Trustees.

I'm delighted to welcome a current member of the Board of Trustees, Dr. Phil Eskew. Would you join me in welcoming him?

2. THE VITAL ROLE OF THE UNIVERSITY GENERAL COUNSEL

An article that appeared in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* a few years ago offered the following maxim: “there is no rest for the weary in a university general counsel's office.”¹

If this is true for some of the smaller universities mentioned in the article, imagine being an attorney whose “client” is an institution that includes:

- more than 110,000 students on eight campuses across the state, with more than 42,000 students on its flagship residential campus;
- more than 8,700 faculty and nearly 11,000 staff statewide;
- total research expenditures of more than half-a-billion dollars;
- a Big Ten Athletics program that includes one of the nation's top basketball programs;
- one of the largest and most active Greek systems in the country;
- a health and medical sciences campus and an affiliated state-wide hospital system that is the largest in the state and one of the largest in the nation;
- is home to the Kinsey Institute;

and

- is a leader in the rapidly evolving field of information technology.

Each of these areas involves myriad legal implications.

Imagine, also, having a hand in all of this over a period of more than three-and-a-half decades: a period during which higher education has become increasingly subject to state and federal regulations and during which our society has become increasingly litigious.

¹ Sara Lipka, “The Lawyer is In,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, July 1, 2005, Volume 51, Issue 43, Page A19.

In such an environment, a general counsel must be ready for anything and everything.

3. DOTTIE FRAPWELL: TRUSTED ADVISOR, COLLEAGUE, AND FRIEND

Through good times and difficult times, Indiana University could not have asked for a more well-prepared, wiser, or more reliable and principled representative than Dottie Frapwell.

Her sound judgment and steadiness under pressure have earned her tremendous respect not only among her IU colleagues, but also among members of the community and among colleagues across the nation.

Dottie has provided exemplary service to Indiana University for more than 35 years, and all of us are truly grateful for that service.

I am also deeply grateful that Dottie has agreed to continue her service to IU as special advisor to the next vice president and general counsel. She now has that wonderful legal title, “of counsel”!

Indiana University has benefited greatly from Dottie’s wise counsel, and will continue to do so in her new role.

After earning a bachelor’s degree at Penn State University, Dottie came to Bloomington, where she earned a law degree in what is now the Maurer School of Law.

After graduating from the law school, she worked for two years as Chief Deputy Prosecutor for Monroe County.

In 1975, she joined the IU legal staff, where she served for three years as Associate University Counsel.

For a dozen years, beginning in 1978, Dottie served as Associate University Counsel and Medical Center Attorney. In that capacity, she advised doctors and administrators on matters of patient care, ethics, hospital law, and medical education.

Craig Brater, dean of the School of Medicine writes that he feels fortunate to have gotten to know Dottie when she was on the IUPUI campus, at the time when many of her duties involved issues related to the School of Medicine. Dean Brater writes: “I cannot recall what first brought me to her door, but I do recall being appreciative of her thoughtful approach and her unswerving support. That has persisted throughout the time I have interacted with her.”²

Dean Brater later got to know Dottie better when the two of them were part of a small group that spent a week in Madrid and Barcelona interviewing candidates for fellowships from a Spanish Foundation. Dean Brater writes that he and his wife, Stephanie, learned of Dottie’s “quick wit, thoughtful nature and her self-proclaimed but highly-exaggerated ‘princess’ character.”³

Having distinguished herself in the first two positions in which she served in the University Counsel’s Office, in 1990, Dottie was named Special Counsel to the President and Associate University Counsel. And in 1994, she was selected to head the office of university counsel, where she supervised 6 associate counsels in Bloomington and Indianapolis.

In the early 90s, Indiana University’s 15th president, Tom Ehrlich, knew that Dottie was just the lawyer whose wisdom the university, and he, as a new president, needed.

² From e-mail correspondence. Indiana University Office of the President, May 26, 2012.

³ Ibid.

Since his own background was in law, and since he had been a law school professor and law dean, he also knew that knowledge of the law was only a modest part of what was required to be an effective general counsel for a major university like IU.

He writes that “an understanding of how the university operates, what are its real—if often hidden—challenges, and how best to contain problems when they could not be resolved, were all part of the necessary arsenal.”⁴

Dottie agreed to work for a time as special assistant to then-President Ehrlich, learning as much as possible about all aspects of the University and, particularly, its “hot spots.” She did just that admirably, and was completely ready to take on the complex responsibilities of general counsel.

President Emeritus Ehrlich writes:

“As general counsel, Dottie advised the many people at the University who needed her judgment—myself certainly included—with great wisdom and understanding. She was always able to see all sides of an issue, even when others within the university wanted to focus just on a single angle of vision. This was one of Dottie's great strengths. At the same time,” President Emeritus Ehrlich continues, “she has not only brilliance, but also a glorious sense of humor, enormous charm, and a fundamental decency of character that together made her a superb general counsel, a very special person, and a dear friend.”⁵

In 2006, Dottie was named Vice President and General Counsel of the university, a title that acknowledged her role as chief legal adviser to the IU president and to the IU Board of Trustees.

⁴ From e-mail correspondence, Indiana University Office of the President, May 24, 2012.

⁵ Ibid.

She has been a trusted advisor to four university presidents: Tom Ehrlich, Myles Brand, Adam Herbert, and myself.

Of course, I have had the pleasure of working with Dottie since 1997, when I came to IU as Vice President for Information Technology. Rapid and ongoing changes in information technology bring with them complicated issues involving the use of that technology by students, faculty, and staff. Furthermore, as a global leader in IT, Indiana University has been at the leading edge, pioneering new policies, creating new contracts with service and equipment providers, and taking on new risks.

Dottie's guidance was invaluable. Brad Wheeler, our current Chief Information Officer and Vice President for Information Technology, says that Dottie recently pulled him aside to quietly tell him that the Office of Information Technology is "too good of a client," generating almost more volume than her small staff can handle.⁶ Although Brad couldn't be here today, I know that he would join me in saying that the working relationship between the Office of Information Technology and the Office of the General Counsel has been collegial and highly productive. Brad and I can also attest to the fact that this is not the case at every university, which is further testament to Dottie's effectiveness at IU.

In my roles as Vice President for Research and interim provost, I gained new perspectives on—and new appreciation of—Dottie's work. And, of course, Dottie has been a valued member of my cabinet during my tenure as president, giving sound advice on a wide variety of issues that impact the operation and the character of the university and the lives of students, faculty, and staff across the state. She has handled issues that have at times been controversial and even unsettling with equanimity and great skill.

⁶ From e-mail correspondence, Indiana University Office of the President, May 30, 2102.

4. SERVICE TO UNIVERSITY AND COMMUNITY

Throughout her career, Dottie has also exemplified the true meaning of service. She has extended great service to the Maurer School of Law, including 16 years on the Alumni Board and a term as the board's president. She has also served as a member of the law school's Board of Visitors and was recently inducted into the Maurer School of Law's Academy of Law Alumni Fellows.

Her service has also extended into the community. Dottie has served as a member of the Board of Directors of the Indiana University Credit Union, as a member of the American Council on Graduate Medical Education, and as a member of the Indiana Supreme Court's Character and Fitness committee.

5. BESTOWING THE PRESIDENT'S MEDAL

Today, I am delighted that we will be adding to Dottie's long list of accolades.

Dottie, would you please join me at the podium.

In recognition of all that you have done for Indiana University during a distinguished career spanning 35 years, it is my great pleasure to present you with the highest honor an Indiana University president can bestow: the President's Medal for Excellence.

Criteria for recipients of this honor include distinction in public service, service to Indiana University, achievement in a profession, or extraordinary merit and achievement in the arts, humanities, sciences, education, and industry.

Dottie, you have exceeded these criteria during the course of your magnificent career at Indiana University, and for that let me extend our deepest and most grateful thanks.

So, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the trustees of Indiana University, in gratitude for your extraordinary service, dedication, and leadership over many years, I am privileged and honored to present to you the President's Medal for Excellence.

Congratulations.

Dottie, I'm sure we would all like to hear a few words from you.

Thank you, Dottie, for those heartfelt words.

President Emeritus Ehrlich also quite rightly noted that you have left an extensive record of how to handle almost every conceivable challenge so that future general counsels need only consult your "play book" to know how to deal with virtually any issue.

We are deeply grateful for the many years of outstanding service you have given to IU, and all of us wish you the very best in the next chapter of your life.

Thank you all for joining us to help celebrate Dottie's career. Please enjoy the remainder of the reception and pass along your congratulations and best wishes to Dottie.