



**DEDICATION**  
to  
**Attorney General Richard H. Thornburgh**

*Honorable George H. W. Bush\**

It is an honor to write this tribute on behalf of my friend, former Attorney General Richard H. Thornburgh.

Once again, the *Seton Hall Constitutional Law Journal* recognizes a prominent individual of the legal profession. Most recently, Justice William J. Brennan, Jr. wrote about the accomplishments of the Honorable John J. Gibbons, who recently retired after a distinguished career as Chief Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit. This year the *Journal* honors another distinguished American, the former Attorney General of the United States, Richard H. Thornburgh.

I have known and worked with Dick for a long time. He has enjoyed a notable and productive career in government service. His most recent challenge, as Attorney General, was one of America's toughest: to retake our streets and make our neighborhoods decent and safe. During his tenure as Attorney General, the Justice Department made great strides in the prosecution of violent crime, drug trafficking, white collar crime, environmental crime, and civil rights violations. His accomplishments have been, and continue to be, distinguished.

Dick Thornburgh holds an engineering degree from Yale University, a law degree from the University of Pittsburgh, and honorary degrees from twenty-six other colleges and universities. As a two-term Governor of Pennsylvania, winning election in 1978 and re-election in 1982, his programs to assist crime victims, including a Victim's Bill of Rights, earned him the first national award given by the National Organization for Victim Assistance. Prior to being named the seventy-sixth United States Attorney General, Dick served from 1987 to 1988 as Director of the Institute of Politics at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government.

One of Dick Thornburgh's success stories is the work of the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces and the Asset Forfeiture Program. Over the six-year lifetime of the task forces, the number of defendants charged with major narcotics trafficking offenses

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\* President of the United States of America.

has increased by fifty-six percent, with convictions up by sixty-four percent. Moreover, approximately five hundred million dollars in property and cash were seized during 1990—two hundred million dollars of which was shared with state and local governments.

As Attorney General, Dick Thornburgh held an unprecedented crime summit in March of 1991, bringing together more than 650 federal, state, and local law enforcement officials, including judges, citizen organizations, correctional officials, and victim's groups to consider strategies and methods to combat violent crime. An initiative that grew out of that conference was "Project Triggerlock," an effort aimed at identifying armed violent offenders and prosecuting them to the maximum extent of the law, prohibiting probation, parole, and plea bargaining. The results have been impressive.

As Attorney General, Dick Thornburgh made great advances in cracking-down on white collar crime, particularly in savings and loan and defense procurement fraud, as well as fraud in the Department of Housing and Urban Development programs. Most impressive is that 803 defendants have been charged with major savings and loan financial fraud. Of the 645 defendants whose cases have been brought to resolution, 597 have been convicted and only 48 acquitted, for a ninety-two percent success rate under Dick's leadership.

Fighting environmental crime is yet another of Dick Thornburgh's successes. In 1990, he brought 134 indictments against "midnight dumpers" and other environmental offenders, and ordered more than one billion dollars worth of Superfund toxic waste clean-up at various sites.

Dick also played a major role in the civil rights arena, contributing to the passage of one of the most significant advances this country has made in civil rights: The Americans with Disabilities Act. Additionally, his diligent investigation of hate crimes has led to the number of such prosecutions in the last three years to almost match the total number of such cases in the twelve preceding years. Dick Thornburgh strongly supported the implementation of the Hate Crime Statistics Act of 1990, which provides for the collection of statistics on hate crimes nationwide. This act should enhance the ability of all governments—local, state, and federal—to respond more efficiently to specific acts of violence and to develop long-term strategies to combat hate violence.

The former Attorney General's commitment to the rule of law is not limited to our nation's boundaries. Over the past two decades Dick has met with leaders of emerging democracies in Europe, the Middle East, the Soviet Union, China, Central and South America, and Africa to discuss ways to promote democratic forms of justice.

Dick Thornburgh is a man who has met every challenge with a deep commitment to serve. His leadership has put us at the forefront of the fight against organized crime, drug trafficking, white collar crime, environmental crime, discrimination, and the deadly tide of violence that follows in its wake.

Thank you for this opportunity to honor my great friend. I wish both him and his family well.

