President Ramo: Shhh. You know, the person that taught me to do "shhh" was David Levi. But he said he learned it from Oprah. So, so there we go.

I've said before at these lunches that one of the most interesting—and David, you will, I hope, find the same thing. One of the most interesting and in some ways hardest and most delightful tasks that a President gets is to select the speaker for this wonderful lunch honoring life members.

It's always hard because, as you can expect and as you can see from this class, there are so many incredibly distinguished, important, able, and interesting people in every class. This year, as I looked through the class, though, one person's biography came out to me, and that is because it was the first time I've had an opportunity to invite to speak to the class an actual minister.

I always think myself that lawyers are, if they do right, agents of the Lord, but I never actually thought myself that I would be lucky enough to meet someone who had been in practice at one of the most distinguished law firms in our country, who had turned his life, in fact, to a study of divinity and who became a significant figure in the Episcopalian Church.

Lucky enough for all of us, you had such a person in your class. His biography is in the materials. It has been a special pleasure for me to have a chance to speak to him and his wife. But let me introduce to you the speaker for your class, the Reverend Doctor Wesley Williams, Jr. Wesley? (*Applause*)

Rev. Dr. Wesley S. Williams, Jr. (U.S. Virgin Islands): I speak so often to Episcopal audiences, but other church groups as well, and we have a way of getting people to pay attention. And that is by saying, "The Lord be with you." And everybody says— But I don't think that works here.

My subject is, is there life after or apart from law practice? And I'd like to ask you that question. Is there life after you get aged out of your law firm? How many of you think the answer is yes?

(*There was a show of hands.*)

Rev. Dr. Williams: Okay. You would think from my biography that I agreed with you, but I do not. I do not. That's designed to get you to pay attention. You know that. (*Laughter*)

Based on my own professional peregrination, productive, I think, I believe—now I'm just practicing saying this—of well into my seventies. Ah, I got it out, Karen. I honestly think that law practice, by nature, is an integral and energizing part of any life you live, no matter what the externalities may suggest. You're still a lawyer. You think like a lawyer. And in many, many ways, you will do what a lawyer would do every step of the way. It's uncanny.

Law practice of the sort that we lift up in the ALI has proved itself to be manifested as an important part of every imaginable pursuit of mine, from casual or purposeful observation, to disciplined research, to appreciation of the complexity—here it is—the complexity, if not elusiveness, of truth. Truth,

most often found in the interstices and truth only rarely immutable. Only rarely immutable. Lawyers see that all the time.

I'm talking about verbal articulation. I'm talking about wordsmithing on the written page. In both cases, notwithstanding the challenges of ever-evolving language. We can do that. Most other people are not prepared.

And I refer here if you are a truly vibrant, in a truly vibrant denomination, you speak the language of your people. And that means that you're going to speak the language that's constantly evolving in grammar as well as vocabulary. It's not the neologisms only that you have to look out for, the grammar changes—thank you, Mr. McWhorter, Professor McWhorter at MIT. Some of you know whom I'm talking about.

Thank you, Susan Lugo, who put me onto his books. Especially, of course, with the successive waves of international encounter.

So I also refer to the never-ending need for us to understand all sides of a proposition, and then to soar above it, with sound, ethical judgment. That's what we do, and that's what's needed, and that's what you'll find in anything we get ourselves associated with. Gets us into trouble. Gets us kicked off boards. Gets us— (*Laughter*)

Yes, indeedy. It gets us into trouble at times, but it's essential.

How did all of this get started in my case, and I think you'll find it a little bit interesting. I'm going to try to do it quickly.

As an undergraduate, I began my understanding of the immutable interrelationship of words and their productive use on the one hand and that great conundrum we loosely call culture, which is a mix of history, sociology, psychology, natural sciences, philosophy, and theology. And my field of concentration was styled Romance languages and literature. It sounds like learning to speak a foreign language. That's not remotely what it's about.

And I found its apogee in the invitation to parse for meaning behind the symbolic language of the best of the late-19th-century French poets, looking beyond everything they said to what they meant. And as many of you know, the usual answer was, well, it depends on what you bring to it. That's one answer. And another very famous one, well, you know, "There are nine levels of meaning in every one of my poems."

Somebody here knows whether it was Mallarmé or—I think it was Mallarmé, in fact, who said it. Yes. Okay. There are exactly nine. He was kidding. Of course, there are as many as we bring to the table.

So my field took me around and around and finally landed me on something that I thought about as I was writing my—working on my dissertation for the Doctor of Ministry. And it's a book by Laurence Wylie, entitled *Village in the Vaucluse*. Some of you may have read it. But which helps us see that culture is complex and personal, and I would add it's like the divine gift of life at work in all of us.

I think it's an extremely religious book, and Larry Wylie, if he were alive, would disagree. Larry did not believe in God, except in the most amorphous sense, and never set foot in a church, he assured me many times when I tried to pin him down.

But he got it. And lawyers get it. And they're prepared to represent any and everybody.

But I hasten to say that the foregoing was joined with another kind of apogee-like experience in a course that I took as an undergraduate given by Jerome Bruner, who also has died. And it was an exploration of the things that resemble us, but that we clearly are not.

So I was studying the life of the robin. It's extremely important. I was studying the stickleback, the seahorse. I was studying, you know, all of these various animals. It was really quite wonderful.

I read books on child development. I read Dr. Spock, and we also studied something that in those days was called cybernetics. There are much fancier words, and it's broken down nowadays.

To these last, I added, you know, just as you'd expect, an in-depth look at Africa in the 20th century, Russia in the 20th century, the Leontief's input–output analysis of global economics. Wonderful, wonderful ways of seeing all sides of the issue.

And my Woodrow Wilson Fellowship brought me the greatest gift of all, of course, some of you know, which was my wife. But also it took me into another part of the world, into Far East studies. I was a teaching fellow in Far Eastern philosophy and poetry.

Who knew? I mean, that came out—I don't know where it came from. But they sort of put together my background and figured that I'd handle it well, and I think I did.

And then for a close study, don't get any ideas, but they thought that I should work in the area of life under the Japanese occupation of Korea in the wake of the mind-changing Russo–Japanese war.

Remember that in the Russo–Japanese war, everybody in the West thought that Japan was sort of a third-world country. And all of a sudden, here is a European country, and that's the way Russia thought of itself at the time, that got its socks knocked off by the Japanese.

So what did the Japanese bring to the table? How did they function as occupiers of part of that world? Again, just looking closely how people live, how people act when they are put in positions they've never had before.

And of course, we didn't learn about that. We didn't learn that lesson, and we didn't—I mean, we Americans didn't do anything about it until we were forced to take a good, hard look, and so goes that front in World War II.

And then, of course, there was the wonderful, wonderful learning experience and liberating experience of bringing ethical and moral reasoning into the world, something that lawyers do all the time, in the civil-rights movement. And I spent, being less bold than some—I was a faculty member of North Carolina A&T College one summer during the sit-ins at the counters, and I will not lie. I didn't sit in myself, but I stood on the side and watched. But anyhow, it taught me a lot.

And Harvard Law School then just blew my mind, and especially, I think about this. We were talking the other evening about two really—my colleague and very dear friend George Dudley and I were talking about who moved our admissions to the Supreme Court. Mine was by William Coleman, of sainted memory now. And his was by Charles Alan Wright.

And Charles Alan Wright—Peter Trooboff will remember this—was visiting from Texas and was at Harvard in our first year, and he gave us the business because he decided that the only way that we were going to be effective as advocates for what we thought was really the moral, the ethical way to go about things would be if we confronted the enemy in the classroom, and he would be it.

And he was. And it was rough, and we didn't get the point of what he was doing until about half the year. You know how immature students can be. And about half way through, we finally figured out, he's doing this to teach us.

And surely, as you know, he was. And indeed, he was, I think, one of the dearest, dearest professors for my particular class for just that reason.

In any event, there's the lawyer in the making, learning what we have to do and learning it the hard way. And that's the better way, learning by looking inside the minds of others.

Naturally, what I delighted in most and pursued as a junior, junior, junior, junior teaching fellow at Columbia Law School was the wonderfully mysterious amalgam known as legal process. So even though I was offered some clerkships, I said, no, I want to take this other job offering that I had, and those of you—if any of you are from Columbia Law School, you'll remember Walter Gellhorn.

And Walter Gellhorn said, look, this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. You will be the first to be a legal counsel for a full committee of the Senate, the United States Senate. And if you have any interest in legal process and want to learn what it's about and how our laws are made, this is the way to do it, get up close.

That was just the beginning of the Nixon Administration. Again, I started in the deep end of the pool on Capitol Hill, and then after about two years, I translated to the deep end of the pool at Covington & Burling because just before I got there, the petition in bankruptcy was filed. And I was given—

because there was so much work to do, I was given charge. I was fresh, new to law practice. I was given charge of a major aspect of the reorganization.

It was developing the marshaling techniques and also settling the pre-bankruptcy general unsecured claims. There were approximately 200,000 of them, and I had never really tried any cases at all, civil cases. And here, I had 200,000 of them.

You learn to deal with having to go to people's bedsides as they are dying. You learn to do all the wonderful things that lawyers have to do when they're really—it's not faking it. It's just measuring up under extraordinary circumstances. Something new.

And it took, I'd say I put in my time sheets for the last time, Penn Central, about 17 years after I first went to Covington. So starting at the deep end in one, the deep end in another. On Capitol Hill, man, I learned a lot. And on with the passage of the 1970 amendments to the Bank Holding Company Act and the mergers and acquisitions of banks, and blah, blah, blah, and a whole lot of things.

Immersing myself likewise on other sides—culture, social service, civil rights, humane endeavors of all sorts. Like I was the head regent for the Smithsonian Institution. I was the chairman of the board of the Board of Regents. I was on the Executive Committee of the National Symphony Orchestra Association, presidency of the largest private social-welfare agency in the Washington metropolitan area.

For Harvard, I was on the Executive Committee of the Board of Overseers. I served as both a worldwide Harvard Law School Association chair and the Harvard Law School Fund, and I was the chairman of the oversight board for Harvard Divinity School. Where did that come from? For Harvard Divinity School.

It came in a very funny way because the president of the university at the time, Derek Bok, knew me from my years in the law school. He was teaching collective bargaining at the time. And he said, you know, we have this glorious, this wonderful report, every three-year report on the state of the divinity school. But I suspect that there's something wrong and that it's a little bit too rosy. I want someone to go in with a critical eye.

He's not asking me because I'm a great theologian. He wants a critical eye. He wants a lawyer. He wants hard questions. He wants all the things that we do, and we will learn along the way, and perhaps we learn a little theology as well. So there was that and the Harvard Memorial Church after the divinity school.

And I was the senior lay officer of Washington National Cathedral. Boy, has that done wonderfully. And at the same time, president of the Standing Committee of our diocese.

Now one of the greatest gifts to me, in opening my eyes to other things that a lawyer can best appreciate, was a gift from my wife when we had, I think it was after our 25th not anniversary—yes, our 25th anniversary. I usually say 25th reunion, and forget my context. But it was our 25th anniversary, which was she allowed me to spend two hours, every Sunday morning for five years, with a group of rabbinic scholars.

And it was one of the—there was another life-changing experience, learning how they thought. They were from different congregations around Washington.

I learned language. I learned biblical Hebrew and Greek. The Greek was started at that school. The Hebrew came from them. And I gained access to that vast amount of Talmudic learning, which would be a delight for any lawyer who had the time to pay attention.

Karen gave that to me. She gave me two hours every, every Sunday morning, and then I raced downtown and taught Sunday School, and yada, yada, yada. And I then was soon chosen to be on the Board of Examining Chaplains for the church.

But there is one thing that I did that I would like to do again. In most cases, it's nice moving on, moving on to the next thing. I've a lot of passions here. What's your passion? Put an "s" on it. What are my passions?

But there is one that stands out, and that was when I became chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond and chairman of the national association of Federal Reserve Bank chairmen and deputy chairmen. That, again, put lawyer to work, not second-guessing the general counsel, but lawyering in the way we thought about the issues that were part and parcel of the work of the Federal Reserve Bank.

It was all about lawyering. It was all about understanding the elusiveness of truth. Looking at those interstices, trying to get to a result without losing your morals or your ethics. It was a wonderful, wonderful experience.

Finally, I remember a conversation that I had with my slightly older law partner, whom I'm sure a goodly number of you know, now senior U.S. Circuit Court Judge Michael Boudin. And Michael was uneasy and itching to get on to something else other than representing people in antitrust cases.

And so I went to talk to him about the fact that I knew time was running out, and I wanted to do something different, something that would involve more of my passions in various areas. And he said be careful not to veer too far from where you are. Not to lose the accumulated wisdom and other manifestations of your experiential trajectory already established painstakingly and, he understood, lovingly over the years.

It's not that I loved Covington less. It's that I wanted to put it all together. And he understood that my overarching passion truly had to do with helping other people to see how it does all fit together and how we should use the

talents that we bring together, that we bring from our practice in the law to our practice at whatever else we do.

This ecclesial adventure of mine of the past decade is no transitory lark. In a myriad of ways, it's the culmination of my law practice. All along, I've been putting law-practice skills and law-practice frame of mind to work.

So is there life after law practice? No. There's law practice at the very heart of an effective, wonderfully led life. Where there's life, there's law.

Now I probably should say where there's life, there's love. And I do say that on Sunday, but today is Tuesday. So where there's life, there's law. Amen. (*Applause*)

President Ramo: Well, I share with you only maybe one thing in common. When I suspect you were at North Carolina A&T, I was teaching at Shaw University, and then one summer, when many of the law schools decided to have students from historically black colleges, at Duke Law School in the summer, I taught seven young men who came from all the best historically black colleges across the South.

I had only, in teaching law, the experience of going to the University of Chicago. And so we were studying constitutional law. We started out. They would ask questions. I would ask questions. It was the Socratic Method.

After the third day, somebody asked me a question about a case, and I said, "Well, Mr. Smith, what do you think of that?" And one of them pounded his fist on the desk and said, "You know nothing." (*Laughter*) "We've been here for three days. You have done nothing but ask us questions. I am going to Harvard Law School, and you are not helping me." Which made me realize that I had not explained to them anything about the Socratic Method and that perhaps had I the skills of our previous speaker, I would have been a better teacher.

Thank you so much for taking the time to help us see what one human being can do in exploring the great richness of life and in taking the magnificent things we do learn as lawyers and making everyone's life better.

Thank you.

Congratulations to our life members. Congratulations to our 50-year members, and we now have an opportunity both to honor one of the best among us first and then to get into a little bit on two subjects that I know will engage everyone.

Lunch has been wonderful, but best of all has been hearing and seeing each of you.

Thank you. (*Applause*)