

Ms. Cindy Kline, assistant deputy clerk of the Circuit Court of Montgomery County, administered the oath of office to Dr. Jeremiah Floyd.

Re: Remarks by Dr. Floyd

Dr. Floyd read the following remarks into the record:

"The Board of Education of Montgomery County has discharged its official duty as prescribed by the Annotated Education Code of the State of Maryland, and I'm extremely pleased to be able to join them on this side of the table to further the peoples' public educational business.

"In speaking before the electors of Bristol in 1774, Edmund Burke said, 'Your representative owes you, not his industry only, but his judgment.'

"My friends on the Board, you have rendered your judgment and in keeping with the guidelines laid down by Emily Post, in general, and by my mother and father, in particular, who taught me the essence of what it means to have good manners, let me thank you most sincerely for the trust and confidence in me that you have shown by your action. I will do everything that I can to merit it during these next two years.

"To the citizens of this county who spoke, wrote letters, and used your God-given powers of persuasion in my behalf, I thank you, too. I am humbled by your faith, trust and confidence in me, and I want you to know that I want and must have your continued support to do this job and to do it well.

"There isn't a whole lot else that I have to say here this evening. For I fully intend to be judged by what I do - not just by what I say.

"But when the Board interviewed me two weeks ago, I noted that 47 cents of every property tax dollar goes to support our schools. I said then that I believed this to be the soundest investment in our future that we could possibly make. That proposition still holds for me. I take it as a matter of fact, and also as an article of faith, that the only purpose for the existence of this enterprise that we call 'public schools' is to ensure that every - not just some - every single student who lives here, receives the very best education that is possible for us to deliver to him or her. I hope that you share my view on this. And I know that you do because the evidence is overwhelming. That is what we pay for, and this is what this Board of Education, charged by you, is committed to do.

"All of us in this business - whatever our positions - must continually remind ourselves of one cogent fact. That is:

- o The Maryland General Assembly did not create the MCPS so that that Board members could enjoy these 'fat' stipends that are

offered for Board service.

- o Nor was this system created so that the superintendent and other administrators, or teachers or other support persons can be gainfully employed

"These things we need and they are nice. But the primary purpose - the *raison d'etre* - for the existence of the MCPS is to serve students. I am proud to say unequivocally that I am an unabashed student advocate. And that I am single-mindedly devoted to that cause.

"I think that I should at least try to deal with one more item before I sit down, and for lack of a better handle to put on it, I'm going to refer to it as 'interpersonal-relationships.'

"As most of you know, by now, I was not present last Monday night when this decision was made. I was out of town on business; however, since returning the next day I have witnessed in the press a rather extensive discussion about what happened, why, and what the event signals for the future of black citizen-Board relationships in the county.

"Since I am the successful appointee and will have to work with all sides for the next two years, I feel it is incumbent upon me to offer some comments and insights. I have absolutely no interest in dealing in personalities and assessing blame. I have no way of knowing exactly what happened since I wasn't here and, furthermore, raking over old ground simply is not my style. Tonight I have already thanked those persons who lobbied on my behalf. The use of the term 'lobbied' is deliberate and I offer no apology for using it. For this is the 'American way.' There isn't a single appointment made anywhere - local, state or national - not one that is worth having, where all one needs to have is an 'impressive' resume. It is an incontrovertible fact that 'impressive resumes' only get attention not action. Lobbying public officials for a just cause is a Constitutional right. I learned a long time ago in U.S. history that the First Amendment ratified in 1791 guarantees freedom to petition. So this was not a small matter of somebody doing somebody else a favor and agreeing to listen to them.

"During the time that I have lived here in this county I have witnessed a number of such petitioning right here in this room on a variety of subjects. I have even participated in a few of them. So I am very comfortable in this arena, even if they deal with matters that I don't particularly like. This is the American way.

"In this case, there was a good deal of concern due to the 'so called' racial overtones of the conflict. Well, can anyone deny that race has been a significant factor in our past experiences? And, given this fact, we must ask how can black people, in the absence of credible evidence, expect that fairness, honor and equity will automatically prevail? We all know that it takes a long time to understand the meaning of the past. Sometimes you have to look

more than once.

"So I ask all of you who are interested, to review the events of last Monday night. And I ask my colleagues on the Board to review the extent to which they demonstrated quality communications with the black community about this matter. See if you can identify factors, real or perceived, which might account for their doubts and the outrage which followed.

"Black people know well what Frederick Douglass meant when he said: 'The man who is outraged is the man who must make the first outcry.' Douglass also said: 'Men will not care much for a people who do not care for themselves.'

"If we didn't know it before, we surely must know it now. The black citizenry in Montgomery County does not comprise a credulous people. We who are black know all too well that credulous people are easily fooled and often swindled. So from that perspective comes the realization that as far as we are concerned, no public official and, that now includes me, has a blank check to take this element for granted.

"There is a story in the autobiography of Will Rogers which I believe is instructive here. In it, Ed - the main character - said an Indian told him that the reason a white man always got lost and an Indian dident (sic) was because an Indian always looked back after he passed anything so he got a view of it from both sides. You see the white man just figures that all sides of a thing are the same. Thats (sic) like a dumb guy with an argument, he don't (sic) think there can be any other side only his. That's what you call Politicians.

"My friends, Will Rogers said: 'You can learn a lot from what that Indian told Ed beside just how not to get lost.' He said further that: 'You must never disagree with a man while you are facing him. Go around behind him and look the same way he is looking and you will see that things look different from what they do when you are facing him. Look over his shoulder and get his viewpoint, then go back and face him and you will have a different idea.'

"One more story with which I am familiar might help us to understand something about the prevailing mood among the black citizens here. It is found in the writings of Langston Hughes. In this story, it seems that 'A wealthy white Georgian who for many years had held a position of prominence on Wall Street returned to his small Georgia home town for a visit. He encountered an aged Negro friend, a boyhood playmate, selling pies about the streets. Said the wealthy lawyer, 'Well howdy do, Old Jim. All these many years since I've been away from here I've held a position of prominence and have accumulated wealth, and here you are still selling pies on the street. You have my sympathy.' To which Jim replied: 'To hell with your sympathy--buy a pie.'

"I believe that the goals and priorities which have been set by this

seconded by Dr. Floyd, the following resolution was adopted
unanimously:

Resolved, That the Board of Education adjourn its meeting at 8:25
p.m.

President

Secretary

WSC:mlw