

## **American College of Bankruptcy Distinguish Service Award Speech**

It is truly an honor to receive this award. Over the years, I've watched with such admiration as the giants of the bankruptcy world have been honored. It's hard for me to imagine that I now stand where they did. For that, I thank the College.

It's a special honor to receive this award jointly with my former Capitol Hill colleague, my former law firm partner, and my long-time friend Ken Klee. I cannot overstate his contribution to the Bankruptcy Code's creation. As you might have gathered from Gerry's remarks, there was a special synergy between us that enabled us to produce a product that was far superior to anything either of us could have done alone. And over the years, he has continued to provide the insight, challenges, and the support to all of our later joint efforts. And for that, I thank him.

But the real honor is being able to have had the opportunities to be a part of this engaged, close-knit community that makes up the bankruptcy world and to have been able to contribute to the enormous success of the bankruptcy laws and what they have done for so many people. I'm proud and honored to have been part of the creation of the Bankruptcy Code, but it would not have been possible without the generous participation of many members of the bankruptcy community, who gave unselfishly of their time, their experience and their expertise to guide two young Congressional staffers in their work.

This community, more than any, is deeply concerned with getting the law right, and its members devote untold hours of time to that effort, through writing, speaking, participating in organizations that study and advocate for law reform, for improvement in bankruptcy law and practice, so that it can be more effective in helping the millions of people that it helps each year.

That is as true now as it was in 1978. The College and its 800 members are clear evidence of that commitment to service. None of us can serve alone. So this award is as much a testament to the College, its Fellows and the entire bankruptcy community as it is to any one of us. And for that, I thank all of you.

Of course, the most important support has been from my extraordinary, loving wife Kathleen. Our relationship was a happy product of the Bankruptcy Code: we met while working together in Washington on the bankruptcy legislation. She has provided guidance, patience, love, advice and stability. And for all of that and so much more, I thank her.