

## A LOVE STORY: JUSTICE SANDRA DAY O’CONNOR AND FORDHAM LAW SCHOOL

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On October 24, 1984, a few years after becoming the first woman Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court,<sup>1</sup> Justice Sandra Day O’Connor arrived at Fordham University School of Law (“Fordham Law School”) to rededicate the school’s renovated and expanded building.<sup>2</sup> Founded in 1905,<sup>3</sup> and occupying a succession of sites in New York City,<sup>4</sup> it is now located at 150 West 62nd Street in Manhattan.<sup>5</sup> The school had undertaken for the first time a major capital campaign among its alumni to raise \$7 million to make the rededication possible.<sup>6</sup> Justice Earl Warren, then Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, was present at the school’s original ground-breaking in 1960,<sup>7</sup> and Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy was the dedication speaker when the building was finished.<sup>8</sup> The opening of the 140 West 62nd Street building for classes in September 1961 marked the beginning of Fordham University’s presence at Lincoln Center.<sup>9</sup> Justice O’Connor’s participation in 1984 reflected a joint effort to secure that

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1. See DENNIS ABRAMS, *WOMEN OF ACHIEVEMENT: SANDRA DAY O’CONNOR* 116 (2009).

2. See Hon. Sandra Day O’Connor & Hon. Judith S. Kaye, *A Conversation with Justice Sandra Day O’Connor and Judge Judith Kaye*, 81 *FORDHAM L. REV.* 1149, 1150 (2012); JOHN D. FEERICK, *THAT FURTHER SHORE: A MEMOIR OF IRISH ROOTS AND AMERICAN PROMISE* 133–34 (2020).

3. *About Fordham Law*, FORDHAM L. SCH., <https://www.fordham.edu/school-of-law/about/> [<https://perma.cc/5GXA-LRQD>] (last visited Apr. 3, 2024).

4. See ROBERT J. KACZOROWSKI, *FORDHAM UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW: A HISTORY* 21–23 (2012).

5. See *id.*; *Visiting the Campus*, FORDHAM L. SCH., <https://www.fordham.edu/school-of-law/about/visiting-the-campus/> [<https://perma.cc/K75B-R2DA>] (last visited Apr. 3, 2024).

6. See KACZOROWSKI, *supra* note 4, at 327–28.

7. See Constantine N. Katsoris, *A Tribute to the Fordham Judiciary: A Century of Service*, 75 *FORDHAM L. REV.* 2303, 2307 (2007); Charles Grutzner, *Fordham Unveils Lincoln Sq. Stone; Warren Is Speaker*, *N.Y. TIMES*, May 4, 1960, at 1.

8. See generally Robert F. Kennedy, U.S. Att’y Gen., *Address by Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy at the Dedication Ceremonies of New Fordham Law School Building* (Nov. 18, 1961) (transcript available at [https://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1042&context=lc\\_140w62st](https://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1042&context=lc_140w62st) [<https://perma.cc/H2FV-Z6ZD>]).

9. See *New Law School Opening for Fall Semester; Modern Structure First at Lincoln Center*, *LEXAGRAM*, May 1961, at 5, 5.

presence by Professor Constantine N. Katsoris and Fordham Law School graduate Robert J. Corcoran, then serving as a member of the Arizona Court of Appeals and later serving on the Arizona Supreme Court.<sup>10</sup> To mark the occasion, Father Joseph A. O'Hare, S.J., the university's president, created an exception, at my suggestion, in awarding her an honorary degree at an event other than the university's commencement.<sup>11</sup> The moment was an exciting one, and the law school's assistant dean, Robert M. Hanlon, Jr., prepared a beautiful citation to accompany this honor.<sup>12</sup> He sat in the dean's conference room and wrote the words of the citation.<sup>13</sup> For the next thirty years, the citation would hang for all to see in the law school's first floor atrium until the school moved into its new building at 150 West 62nd Street. Fordham's historic law dean, William Hughes Mulligan, who served as master of ceremonies in 1984, remarked to laughter that it was his planning in 1960 that made the occasion "inevitable."<sup>14</sup>

Of the many memories I have of this day in the life of Fordham Law School, it was the magical presence of Justice O'Connor, joined by her husband John O'Connor, that stands out.<sup>15</sup> In accepting the honorary doctorate at Fordham, she spoke of the role of lawyers, stating:

[W]e as lawyers and judges hold in our possession the keys to justice under a rule of law. We hold those keys in trust for those seeking to obtain justice . . . . Lawyers who are sensitive to their role in society will surely view their responsibility to the public as transcending the . . . skills of their profession. The vision of the proper role of the lawyer was aptly described by Chief Justice of New Jersey Arthur Vanderbilt. Chief Justice Vanderbilt believed that a good lawyer has five functions that include being a wise counsellor, a skilled advocate, a contributor to the improvement of the legal system, an unselfish and courageous leader of public opinion, and a professional willing to answer the call to public service.<sup>16</sup>

Of Fordham Law School, Justice O'Connor stated:

[The institution] has long been involved in trying to achieve with its programs precisely the kind of personal values and integrity that Chief Justice Vanderbilt advocated . . . . Fordham Law School has produced many fine lawyers and many fine judges. It stands high in the ranks of law schools trying to instill and encourage high personal and professional standards. You have a magnificent new house within which to continue to improve the law as well as the lawyers. I wish you every success.<sup>17</sup>

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10. See Constantine N. Katsoris, *Special Essay: A Ram from Sparta*, 91 FORDHAM L. REV. 1073, 1090–91 (2023).

11. See Katsoris, *supra* note 7, at 2308.

12. See Appendix A.

13. See Appendix A.

14. FEERICK, *supra* note 2 at 133–34; See John D. Feerick, *Dedication to the Honorable William Hughes Mulligan*, 7 FORDHAM INTELL. PROP. MEDIA & ENT. L.J. 1, 4 (1996).

15. See O'Connor & Kaye, *supra* note 2.

16. Sandra Day O'Connor, *Legal Education and Social Responsibility*, 53 FORDHAM L. REV. 659, 662 (1985) (citing Arthur T. Vanderbilt, *The Five Functions of the Lawyer: Service to Clients and the Public*, AM. BAR ASS'N J., Jan. 1954, at 31, 31–32).

17. *Id.*

Inspired by her presence and words, it seemed as if almost everyone present that day, more than 1,000 people, wanted her autograph on the printed program of the dedication.<sup>18</sup> When I apologized to her husband for the demand placed on her time by requests to sign so many programs, he said it was “okay” because she understood her place in history and was happy to do so. At the luncheon that followed, John O’Connor and Dean Mulligan (who had recently resigned from his service on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit) struck up an animated conversation of jovial exchanges, with each saying to the other “I had not heard that before.”

As the years passed, Fordham Law School’s earlier building at 140 West 62nd Street became a venue for many other shining moments, including former Chief Justice Warren E. Burger’s last public address in 1995,<sup>19</sup> a Fordham John F. Sonnett Memorial Lecture on the subject of “The Decline of Professionalism.”<sup>20</sup> In October 1992, Justice O’Connor happily returned to the school to receive Fordham’s Louis Stein Prize,<sup>21</sup> a prize established in 1975 to celebrate the lives of lawyers who lived up to the highest values of our democracy.<sup>22</sup> In the presentation of the prize, Justice O’Connor touched on her life from growing up on a farm where she fixed windmills, repaired fences, and drove trucks and tractors;<sup>23</sup> to her early years as a lawyer when she served as a county deputy attorney in California;<sup>24</sup> to later joining her husband in Germany when he was a member of the U.S. Army Judge Advocate General’s Corps;<sup>25</sup> to raising their three children<sup>26</sup> while practicing law in Arizona<sup>27</sup> and volunteering to serve on not-for-profit boards;<sup>28</sup> to her employment as an assistant attorney general for Arizona;<sup>29</sup> to her service in the Arizona State Senate where she became the first woman to be majority leader of a state senate;<sup>30</sup> to her appointments to the Arizona judiciary;<sup>31</sup> and to her nomination by President Ronald Reagan and unanimous Senate

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18. See O’Connor & Kaye, *supra* note 2, at 1150.

19. MICHAEL M. MARTIN & CONSTANTINE N. KATSORIS, FORDHAM LAW & THE SUPREME COURT: CELEBRATING OUR RELATIONSHIP 4 (2011), [https://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=misc\\_publications](https://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=misc_publications) [<https://perma.cc/V2CZ-HEFQ>].

20. See generally Warren E. Burger, *The Decline of Professionalism*, 63 FORDHAM L. REV. 949 (1995).

21. Martin & Katsoris, *supra* note 19, at 4.

22. See *Fordham-Stein Prize*, FORDHAM L., <https://www.fordham.edu/school-of-law/centers-and-institutes/stein-center-for-law-and-ethics/fordham-stein-prize/> [<https://perma.cc/DJG9-EYZL>] (last visited Apr. 3, 2024).

23. See ABRAMS, *supra* note 1, at 21; EVAN THOMAS, FIRST: SANDRA DAY O’CONNOR 6–7 (2019).

24. See ABRAMS, *supra* note 1, at 37.

25. *Id.*

26. See *id.* at 44.

27. See generally *id.* at 39–45.

28. See *id.* at 45.

29. *Id.* at 43–44.

30. See *id.* at 44–46; THOMAS, *supra* note 23, at 72.

31. See ABRAMS, *supra* note 1, at 51, 53.

confirmation<sup>32</sup> as the first woman to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court, taking the oath of office on September 26, 1981.<sup>33</sup>

Justice O'Connor returned to Fordham again on September 30, 1999, when the school celebrated the millennium, honoring its faculty, present and past.<sup>34</sup> She commented in her remarks that the early invitation she received to such a celebration was her first, and therefore she had no competitive invitation to consider. Her presence led to an overwhelming turnout of more than 1,200 graduates, family members, and friends, and it was held in a tent at the university's Lincoln Center campus just as the law school had begun a capital campaign to construct a new law school building.<sup>35</sup> The Millennial Tribute was a glorious one in the history of the school, with James F. Gill serving as master of ceremonies, University President Father Joseph A. O'Hare, S.J., bringing greetings from the university, former Fordham Law Dean Judge Joseph M. McLaughlin offering reflections, and me presenting the Dean's Medal of Recognition to Professor Constantine N. Katsoris and Ernest E. Stempel.<sup>36</sup>

A favorite always for Fordham invitations to participate in important moments in the law school's history, Justice O'Connor was invited to be a guest classroom speaker in 2002 as the school launched its first ever summer law program in Dublin and Belfast, in partnership with University College Dublin and Queens University Belfast.<sup>37</sup> We had learned the year before that she was planning to be in Ireland at that time with her husband, and happily it was when the program would be in Dublin. She accepted our invitation. She subsequently asked me to suggest places that she and her husband might visit, as they had made plans to be in County Galway a week or so before the program opened in Dublin. I suggested they visit Kylemore Abbey<sup>38</sup> and meet its abbess, Mother Magdalena, for a tour of the grounds. I told her it was the home of the Benedictine Sisters since the 1920's, following the bombing of their monastery in Belgium in World War I.<sup>39</sup>

On meeting Justice O'Connor at the airport in Dublin in July 2002, she told me of her visit to Kylemore and how the walled gardens were "among the most beautiful she ever saw." As an aside, I learned several years later from Mother Magdalena of an invitation she received from Justice O'Connor to visit Washington, D.C. to attend a session of the U.S. Supreme Court as

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32. *See id.* at 58.

33. *See id.* at 60, 116.

34. *See Fordham Law Treasures Its Memories of Justice Sandra Day O'Connor*, FORDHAM L. NEWS (Dec. 1, 2023), <https://news.law.fordham.edu/blog/2023/12/01/fordham-law-treasures-its-memories-of-justice-sandra-day-oconnor/> [<https://perma.cc/LZZ7-J397>].

35. *See Excelsior: Ever Upward: The Campaign for Fordham*, FORDHAM L. SCH., <https://www.fordham.edu/give/the-campaign-for-fordham/> [<https://perma.cc/ML2C-RLF6>] (last visited Apr. 3, 2024).

36. *See* Joy Brennan, *O'Connor Orates*, RAM, Oct. 7, 1999, at 3.

37. *See* Katsoris, *supra* note 10, at 1091.

38. *See generally About Kylemore Abbey*, KYLEMORE ABBEY, <https://www.kylemoreabbey.com/about> [<https://perma.cc/4TG9-J4UZ>] (last visited Apr. 3, 2024).

39. DAME M. COLUMBAN, *THE IRISH NUNS AT YPRES: AN EPISODE OF THE WAR xvii* (R. Barry O'Brien ed., 2022) (ebook).

her guest. Mother Magdalena did so and will recount to all who ask the remarkable experience it became. She stayed at the O'Connors' home during the week of February 25, 2003. She attended arguments in the Supreme Court on February 26 regarding an Agent Orange case;<sup>40</sup> had lunch at the Court the following day with Justice O'Connor and "lady friends" of the Justice; and enjoyed dinners with Justice O'Connor and her husband, one attended by Senator Christopher J. Dodd (the longest serving senator in the history of Connecticut). Mother Magdalena also recalled the wonderful tour given to her of the Smithsonian by John O'Connor. A picture of Justice O'Connor and Mother Magdalena hangs proudly today at Kylemore Abbey,<sup>41</sup> one of Ireland's most favorite tourist sites.

Justice O'Connor's participation in the summer law program came to be a remarkable experience for students and faculty alike, including the then Dean of the University College Dublin Sutherland School of Law, Paul O'Connor.<sup>42</sup> He had joined us at the airport and offered his reflections on meeting her, that "one could not but be impressed by her graciousness, warmth, and ease of manner. It was a privilege to welcome her to the law school at UCD in my capacity as Dean."<sup>43</sup> He added that in her subsequent address to students at an assembly, "what struck [him] most was the emphasis she placed on the value of participating in activities that involve supporting the public community."<sup>44</sup> I recall that in that assembly she also told students, emotionally delivered, that she "had two callings in life: to be a mother" and "establishing a career in law which she said proved rewarding in ways she could never have expected. She encouraged the students to see the law as a noble way to serve others."<sup>45</sup> I also recall that in response to a question about writing of opinions for the Court majority, she said that she was always open to language suggestions from other Justices, lest you "find yourself in the minority."

Two Fordham Law School graduates who were students in the 2002 summer program shared their memories of Justice O'Connor's participation. Maura McHugh Mills remembered a day bus trip in Dublin with the students and Justice O'Connor "sitting up front on the bus" and "being extremely good natured as students would engage her in various small-talk subjects."<sup>46</sup> She added:

I remember thinking that she was enjoying herself, though, and was a good sport about riding around with a bunch of law students . . . . I also remember her remarking on the steep learning curve she encountered when

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40. *See generally* Oral Argument, *Dow Chemical Co. v. Stephenson*, 539 U.S. 111 (2003) (No. 02-271), <https://www.oyez.org/cases/2002/02-271> [<https://perma.cc/43JD-5MNN>].

41. *See* Appendix B.

42. FEERICK, *supra* note 2, at 166.

43. Email from Paul O'Connor, Former Dean, Univ. Coll. Dublin, to John D. Feerick, Norris Professor of L., Fordham Univ. Sch. of L. (Dec. 30, 2023, 05:10 AM EST) (on file with author).

44. *Id.*

45. FEERICK, *supra* note 2, at 175.

46. E-mail from Maura McHugh Mills to John D. Feerick, Norris Professor of L., Fordham Univ. Sch. of L. (Jan. 9, 2024, 11:14 AM EST) (on file with author).

she was appointed to the Supreme Court and being in awe of her as she shared some casual comments about being the first woman on the Court and how this brought many challenges.<sup>47</sup>

Another student at the time, Melissa Peters, said:

I recall being surprised (and impressed) to learn that Justice O'Connor grew up in a ranching family, on a working cattle ranch in Arizona. Having been born and raised in Montana, I have an understanding of what that lifestyle entails—particularly the hard work and long hours—and have a lot of respect for ranchers and their work ethic . . . .<sup>48</sup>

Melissa also remembered how difficult it was to get a photo with Justice O'Connor and the “6 [to] 10 Irish barristers that were surrounding her, all of whom were trying to get an opportunity to speak with her.”<sup>49</sup> She noted how gracious Justice O'Connor was in agreeing to be photographed with them.<sup>50</sup> Melissa added: “I’ve never regretted elbowing my way into that flock of barristers!”<sup>51</sup>

A highlight for all the students, after addressing them at the assembly, was sitting at a table with Justice O'Connor as she inscribed for each of them a copy of a book that she and her brother, H. Alan Day, wrote, titled *Lazy B*, of growing up on a cattle ranch where her parents and grandparents lived and toiled.<sup>52</sup> I treasure today her inscription in my copy, “For Dean Feerick, with admiration and good wishes.” So does Dean O'Connor, in whose copy she wrote, “For Paul O'Connor with good wishes from one of the clan.”<sup>53</sup> Maura’s inscription read: “For Maura: With good wishes. Sandra Day O'Connor 7/02.”<sup>54</sup> On the pages of all the inscriptions appeared the printed words “*Lazy B*.”<sup>55</sup>

Following the assembly, she addressed jurists and lawyers at a reception and dinner held at the Honorable Society of King’s Inns, the Irish Inns of Court, receiving a standing ovation on that occasion. She was introduced by Professor Katsoris, whom I invited to join us along with Professor James P. White, Consultant on Legal Education to the American Bar Association at the time. She knew both and appreciated their presence.

On July 15, 2002, *The Irish Times* published an interview that Justice O'Connor had with legal affairs editor, Carol Coulter, who noted that “[b]y the age of eight, [Justice O'Connor] was riding horses, helping with cattle,

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47. *Id.*; see, e.g., LINDA HIRSHMAN, SISTERS IN LAW: HOW SANDRA DAY O’CONNOR AND RUTH BADER GINSBERG WENT TO THE SUPREME COURT AND CHANGED THE WORLD 151 (2015).

48. Email from Melissa Peters to John D. Feerick, Norris Professor of L., Fordham Univ. Sch. of L. (Jan. 2, 2024, 6:52 PM EST) (on file with author); see, e.g., ABRAMS, *supra* note 1, at 21.

49. Email from Melissa Peters, *supra* note 48.

50. *Id.*

51. *Id.*

52. See generally SANDRA DAY O’CONNOR & H. ALAN DAY, *LAZY B* (2002).

53. Email from Paul O’Connor, *supra* note 43.

54. Email from Maura McHugh Mills, *supra* note 46.

55. See *id.*; Email from Paul O’Connor, *supra* note 43.

and able to shoot a .22 rifle.”<sup>56</sup> Coulter added: “[Justice] Sandra Day O’Connor still carries the fresh, athletic appearance of a woman reared on a ranch, who combined academic and professional distinction with a love of the outdoor life.”<sup>57</sup> Of the cases that which she sat in on, Coulter referenced *Roe v. Wade*<sup>58</sup> as well as *Atkins v. Virginia*,<sup>59</sup> in which the Supreme Court found that imposing the death penalty on those who were “mentally retarded” violated the Eight Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.<sup>60</sup>

Four years after Justice O’Connor’s participation in the summer law program, she left the Supreme Court to care for her husband.<sup>61</sup>

In 2011, under the leadership of Fordham Law School’s Dean Michael M. Martin, I extended two speaking invitations to Justice O’Connor to come visit the law school during the 2011–2012 school year: to deliver in 2012 the law school’s Robert L. Levine Distinguished Lecture and to judge the final round of the annual Irving R. Kaufman Memorial Securities Law Moot Court Competition.<sup>62</sup> She replied crisply:

I would like to do something at Fordham but I have a counter proposal. I prefer not to sit on moot courts any more. Enough is enough. However, the subject of judicial elections is important (a subject that I mentioned in the invitation and that I care about). Would you invite Judith Kaye to participate with me on that topic as a conversation?<sup>63</sup>

I proceeded to do so, and, in April 2012, that conversation occurred.<sup>64</sup>

Justice O’Connor’s openness to a conversation led to a remarkable program sponsored by the *Fordham Law Review* on April 17, 2012, of two women who made history by their careers in the judiciary: Justice O’Connor as the first woman Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court and Chief Judge Judith S. Kaye, the first female Chief Judge of New York.<sup>65</sup>

In their remarks that day they shared reflections of having to balance the raising of children with their careers as lawyers.<sup>66</sup> Despite being third in her Stanford Law School class of 1952,<sup>67</sup> Justice O’Connor said: “I couldn’t even get an interview at a law firm. I was female. They wouldn’t talk to me.”<sup>68</sup> One firm, however, offered her a secretarial position; she did not

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56. *A Woman Well Used to Laying Down the Law: Sandra Day O’Connor Made History in 1981 When She Was Appointed a Member of the US Supreme Court by Ronald Reagan*, IRISH TIMES (July 15, 2002, 1:00 AM) [hereinafter *A Woman Well Used to Laying Down the Law*], <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/a-woman-well-used-to-laying-down-the-law-1.1088535> [<https://perma.cc/42Y3-6K6W>].

57. *Id.*

58. 410 U.S. 113 (1973).

59. 536 U.S. 304 (2002).

60. *See id.* at 321; *A Woman Well Used to Laying Down the Law*, *supra* note 56.

61. *See* ABRAMS, *supra* note 1, at 111.

62. *See* Letter from Sandra Day O’Connor, Retired U.S. Sup. Ct. Just., to John D. Feerick, Professor, Fordham Univ. Sch. of L. (July 11, 2011) (on file with author).

63. *Id.*

64. O’Connor & Kaye, *supra* note 2.

65. *See id.* at 1158.

66. *See id.* at 1158, 1165.

67. *Id.* at 1158.

68. *Id.*

accept.<sup>69</sup> Chief Judge Kaye, a graduate of New York University School of Law who, like Justice O'Connor, finished at the top of her class, worked part-time in two firms as she raised her children.<sup>70</sup> As their conversation progressed, Justice O'Connor denounced the elective system for choosing judges, referring to experiences with judges who had to fundraise for elective office.<sup>71</sup> She said that "the best model is . . . an appointive system. I know in my state we got a larger percentage of women judges immediately, and it stayed that way. It has been very effective."<sup>72</sup> She also stated that when she began law practice there were some "very fine" judges in her state, but there were some who were not.<sup>73</sup> "I remember one," she said, "who used to go out and play some little instrument on the street corner and had a monkey."<sup>74</sup> She added, "That's not what I want my judges doing."<sup>75</sup> Justice O'Connor also made reference to a judge who spoke inappropriately to her when she was representing a client as a young lawyer.<sup>76</sup>

Chief Judge Kaye noted that 75 percent of the judges in New York were elected,<sup>77</sup> but since 1977 its highest court had appointed members.<sup>78</sup> Chief Judge Kaye made references to work being done by commissions in New York to strengthen the elective system,<sup>79</sup> including one that I chaired at her request several years before.<sup>80</sup> They both agreed that it was essential that people of the highest quality and integrity should be our judges.<sup>81</sup>

Another subject on which they agreed was the importance of teaching civics to our youth.<sup>82</sup> Speaking of public schools and their reduction in the country, Justice O'Connor said, "We have real problems coming on. And we need to teach every youngster how the government works, both at the federal and state level, and how they can be a part of it. This is critical to our country, I think. In an effort to help on that, I managed to get a little nonprofit entity organized . . . ."<sup>83</sup> She called the nonprofit iCivics,<sup>84</sup> adding that "I have chairpeople in America, in all fifty states, and all fifty states have at least some of their schools using it, and I'm not going to stop until all of them

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69. ABRAMS, *supra* note 1, at 36–37.

70. *See* O'Connor & Kaye, *supra* note 2, at 1158.

71. *See id.* at 1152.

72. *Id.* at 1166.

73. *Id.* at 1152.

74. *Id.*

75. *Id.*

76. *See id.*

77. *Id.* at 1154.

78. *See id.* at 1152.

79. *See id.*

80. *See generally* COMM'N TO PROMOTE PUB. CONFIDENCE IN JUD. ELECTIONS, FINAL REPORT TO THE CHIEF JUDGE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK (2006), <https://moderncourts.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/FerrickJudicialElection.pdf> [<https://perma.cc/A5TV-C37V>].

81. *See, e.g.,* O'Connor & Kaye, *supra* note 2, at 1152.

82. *See id.* at 1157.

83. *Id.* at 1156.

84. *Id.*



use it.”<sup>85</sup> Chief Judge Kaye responded: “You should know that, in our state, [we have over] 500 teachers using it, and we’re very proud of that.”<sup>86</sup>

Both spoke of the benefits of judges who serve together getting to know each other and of reaching decisions and opinions based on a consensus.<sup>87</sup> Both also agreed on the importance of lawyers serving on not-for-profit boards.<sup>88</sup> Justice O’Connor emphasized the point stating, “As a young person, male or female, get out there and get involved with some community organizations where you can make a difference, and where you can use your talent and energy and ability to start making the world a better place in some discrete area.”<sup>89</sup> She expressed concern in her state of “people [acting] disagreeably instead of talking major issues through and working cordially with . . . different points of view. We don’t seem to be able to do that anymore.”<sup>90</sup> She spoke of the establishment of O’Connor House in Arizona as a place where people of different points of view can come together and see if they can find common ground on civic issues.<sup>91</sup> In response, Chief Judge Kaye said the message she drew from Justice O’Connor was the importance of “remain[ing] positive about your life, whatever stage it is you’re in, and think[ing] affirmatively and positively[,] and find[ing] ways to use your talents constructively.”<sup>92</sup>

I brought this fascinating conversation to a conclusion by quoting words of John Wesley that Justice O’Connor quoted in her graduation speeches as follows: “Do all the good you can. By all the means you can. In all the ways you can. In all the places you can. At all times you can. To all the people you can. As long as ever you can.”<sup>93</sup> I added “[Y]our lives have been models of this homily.”<sup>94</sup>

Justice O’Connor’s death on December 1, 2023 led to many accolades and media accounts of her remarkable life as a mother and lawyer.<sup>95</sup> She left Fordham Law School an extraordinary legacy of her presence on multiple occasions that no one present will ever forget.

As the citation to her Fordham University honorary degree proclaimed: “Today, Alma Mater Fordham salutes this ‘valiant woman’ and gathers this new daughter to herself to praise the fruit of her learning and to ‘let her

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85. *Id.*

86. *See id.*

87. *See id.* at 1165–66.

88. *See id.* at 1162–63.

89. *Id.* at 1164.

90. *Id.* at 1163.

91. *See id.*

92. *Id.* at 1163–64.

93. *Id.* at 1167 (quoting JOHN WESLEY, LETTERS OF JOHN WESLEY 423 (George Eayrs ed., 1915)).

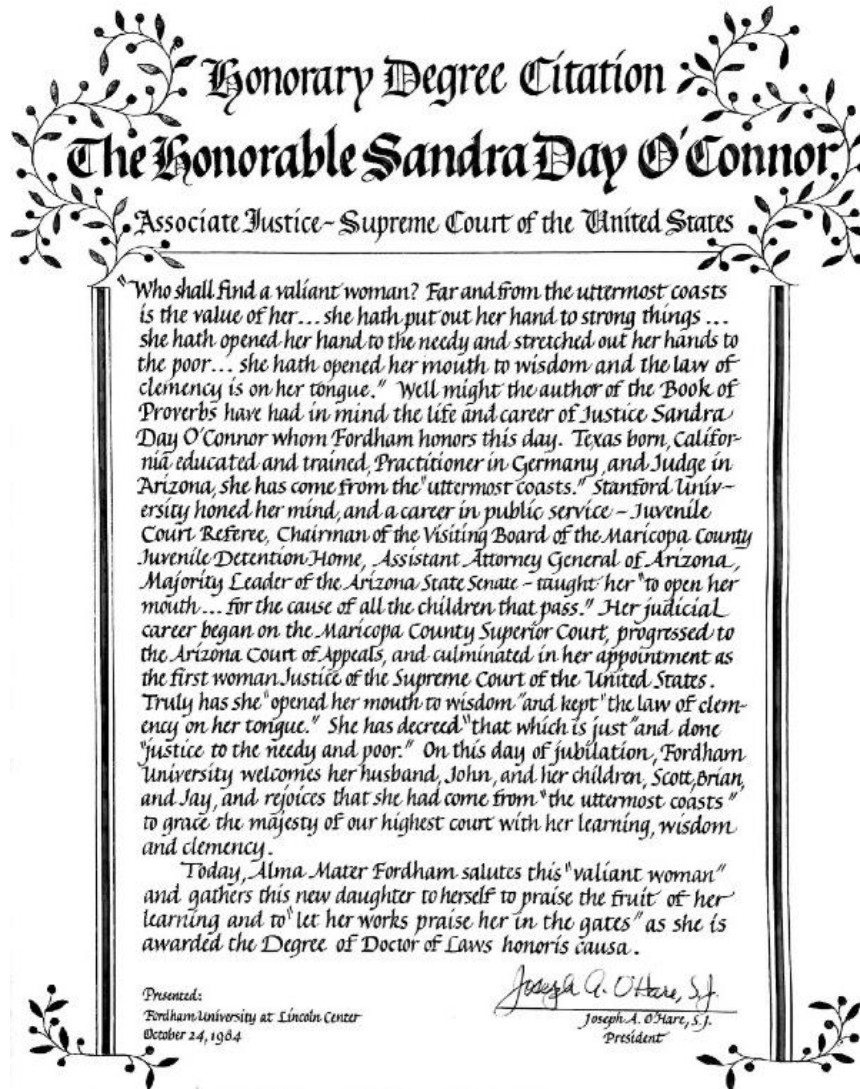
94. *Id.*

95. *See, e.g.,* Amy Howe, *Sandra Day O’Connor, First Woman on the Supreme Court, Dies at 93*, SCOTUSBLOG (Dec. 1, 2023, 10:23 AM), <https://www.scotusblog.com/2023/12/sandra-day-oconnor-first-woman-on-the-supreme-court-dies-at-93/> [<https://perma.cc/Q8T4-5894>].

works' praise her in the 'gate' as she is awarded the Degree of Doctor of Law honoras causa."<sup>96</sup>

## APPENDIX A

HONORARY DEGREE PRESENTED TO JUSTICE SANDRA DAY O'CONNOR,  
AT FORDHAM UNIVERSITY AT LINCOLN CENTER ON OCTOBER 24, 1984



96. See Appendix A.

APPENDIX B

PHOTOGRAPH OF MOTHER MAGDALENA AND JUSTICE O'CONNOR  
CURRENTLY DISPLAYED AT KYLEMORE ABBEY

