



2427 W. 21st Street
Minneapolis, MN 55405
(612) 235-6028
(866) 925-8459
www.tennesseanlaw.com

Robert J. Tennesen

Speech on the Acceptance of Life Membership

In The Uniform Law Commission

The Palmer House, Chicago, Illinois

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Good afternoon Mr. President, Commissioners, staff, guests, and especially my wife Chris who joined us last evening.

Thank you for this honor.

When Jack Davies called in May 1989 and told me to apply for appointment — I, as I expect many of you at the time of your appointment, lacked a clear understanding of what the Uniform Law Commission did, or how it did it.

I did not appreciate the responsibilities of a commissioner and I certainly did not expect to be standing here today. All I knew for certain was that I was going to the annual meeting in Kauai. When the boxcar load of draft acts arrived I began to understand what I had gotten into. I have since learned.

In the present milieu of turbulent political noise, full of anger and hatred, of intolerance and ignorance, regurgitated from know-nothing radio and TV talking heads, from bloggers and the street corner, **the ULC is an island of reason and**

respect, of character and civility, of knowledge and analysis, of debate and accommodation.

The Uniform Law Commission is a bastion of democracy and is an essential element of our polity.

We commissioners view it our duty to inform ourselves of the issues facing our state and our country.

We are engaged in the great political debate.

We give freely of our time, our talent and our money without expectation of personal gain or glory.

We do it because we believe in democratic principles and the rule of law.

We do it because of our respect for and rapport with each other and our dedication to the Uniform Law Conference and the contribution it makes to the commonweal.

In contrast to people isolated by their iPods, we commissioners walk the street hearing the syncopated sounds of the city.

In the four corners of the Minnesota Senate chamber are four words: **Freedom, Equality, Justice and Courage**. The Uniform Law Commission exemplifies the true meaning of these words. The Commission is dedicated to the preservation and expansion of Freedom, our work reflects our dedication to Equality and Justice and we continually demonstrate the Courage to act in the face of ignorance, intolerance, anger and hatred.

As an organization, the ULC is not arrogant, not rash in speech, not disputatious, it knows where it stands and where it does not and knows so much of history that it can defend what it does.

May it always be so!

Thank you.