

REMARKS

OF

THE HONORABLE KAROL V. MASON  
ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL  
OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS

AT THE

AMERICAN SOCIETY OF CRIMINOLOGY ANNUAL CONFERENCE  
INTRODUCTION OF  
AMBASSADOR ANDREW J. YOUNG

ON

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2013  
ATLANTA, GA

Thank you, Dean Walker. I'm delighted and honored to be here to introduce our very distinguished speaker. You are absolutely right, I'm both a friend and a huge admirer. It's a thrill for me to have this opportunity.

In order for me to give a proper introduction, it is important for you to understand my connection with Ambassador Young. Like everyone here and across the country, I know him as a civil rights icon and a diplomat who served his country with distinction.

I know him as one of the pioneers who stood with Dr. King and confronted segregation with nonviolent action, ultimately helping to achieve passage of the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act.

I know him as the first African American elected to Congress from the Deep South since Reconstruction. And I know him as the U.N. Ambassador who fought to end white-minority rule in Namibia and Zimbabwe and who helped President Carter focus his Administration's efforts on human rights.

But I also know him as a champion of this city, which, for someone who calls Atlanta home as I do, is high praise in itself. I know him as the passionate, skilled negotiator who has attracted substantial business investment and who, more than anyone else, was responsible for bringing the Olympic Games to Atlanta in 1996.

Several years ago, when I was working at the law firm of Alston and Bird here in Atlanta, I had the great privilege of introducing him at a Black History Month program. You can imagine what a heady moment that was for me to welcome someone of his stature to my firm. It was a day I'll never forget.

Now, here I am again, presenting him to this distinguished audience of criminologists. It is so gratifying to join him as we discuss how we are using research to improve our criminal and juvenile justice systems. So many of the challenges we face today hinge on issues of race and fairness:

- High rates of imprisonment among African American males;
- Minority youth in disproportionate contact with the juvenile justice system;
- Young black men dying violently at higher rates than any other race and age group; and
- Black and Latino children separated from their incarcerated parents.

These are the civil rights issues of our day.

We are making progress confronting these issues, thanks in great part to the knowledge we've gained through research. We're learning that a truly effective system of justice, and a fair system – a system free of bias – are not mutually exclusive but are one and the same. We're discovering that we can both rid the system of prejudice and keep our communities safe. In fact, safe communities depend on fairness.

I'm proud of the role the Department of Justice and my office – the Office of Justice Programs – are playing in advancing this knowledge. Under an Attorney General committed to smart and fair criminal justice practices, we're working to make sure our criminal justice system is applying the evidence so many of you have helped to develop.

But we need the experience and the wisdom of lions like Ambassador Young to guide us. We need their inspiration and insights to light the way to a better, more just system.

When I think about my own role in this historic Administration – serving the nation's first black President and its first black Attorney General – I am humbled by the opportunity. I know I owe this privilege to soldiers and crusaders like Ambassador Young. And I know I have an obligation to live up to the ideals that he strived for in his many years of public service, and that he continues to model to this day.

He is a bright, shining example for me, as I hope he is for all of us. It's an honor to be with him today and to introduce him to all of you.

Please welcome Ambassador Andrew Young.

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