REMARKS FOR THE UT LAW SCHOOL DINNER

February 10, 2005

It's great to be with all of you. You're my friends and I cherish your friendship. I'm speaking not only for myself, but for Audre, who is a bit shy, but who is equally responsible for what made the reason for this evening possible.

I want to mention that our family is here: Our son, Ronnie, and his wonderful wife, Patricia, and the two greatest girls ever born in the history of the world who I am lucky enough to be able to call my granddaughters, Abby and Emily.

Well, that's the beginning. What this evening is about as far as I'm concerned is in a few sentences from Prof. Paul Woodruff's new book, *First Democracy*, and I'll quickly add if you haven't read it, you're missing one of the truly great books I've been privileged to read in my lifetime. Here are a few lines that remind me of what the real purpose of the project that we were able to do with the law school relative to aliens.

> "Where any group is denied the protection of the law, democracy has a smaller purchase. Slaves have rarely been given legal access to any system, and even as I write the United States denies legal access to certain categories of non-citizens who are under detention."

In a bit of wonderment as to why we accept injustices especially as they relate to people who are not in a position to defend themselves, with all the effort that has been made to meet this problem, if we measure progress by what could be, as to what is, we haven't made any meaningful progress.

I'm delighted that Audre and I were given the privilege of sponsoring this program. It is something that is very close to my heart. Both of my parents were aliens. My father was in the Russian Revolution in 1905 and came to the United States in 1913 and was certainly not well accepted by the community. He lived with the Mexican families and learned to speak Spanish before he learned to speak English. He had a pushcart and sold blankets on the west side of San Antonio. In fact, I was born on Buena Vista Street. We would walk into a small hut and there would be a man, wife and three or four children shelling pecans on a dirt floor. They would do all this work for $1 a day.

Each time we would walk out of the house, he'd shake his finger in my face and say, "This is injustice. You have to fight against that every day of your life!"

Well, I haven't done as much fighting about this as I should. I think that you've honored us this evening because your being here is indicative of your understanding of injustice. If you wanted to assess the problem in a few words, it is that we are a society where too few have too much and too many have too little. That's not a sustainable society. That's not a society that is acceptable. We need in this country dedicated, exciting leadership—the kind of leadership provided by Franklin Roosevelt who calmed this

nation with his wondrous proclamations. One I remember so well when we were sitting around the radio and these words came out of his mouth. "The only thing to fear is fear itself."

For those of us in this room, I have a fear in its most frightful meaning and there are many in our nation that do. Our commitment has to be that we contribute to a society where fewer and fewer are besieged with this thing called fear.