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Craig D. Robins, Master of Ceremonies for the Theodore Roosevelt Inn, presenting Justice Samuel A. Alito with gift after delivering keynote speech. Photo Credit Cliff Weissman

Theodore Roosevelt Inn Hosts Justice A. Samuel Alito

Members of the Theodore Roosevelt American Inn of Court of Long Island, New York, were privileged to have United States Supreme Court Justice Samuel A. Alito, Jr. deliver the keynote address at their 2006 annual dinner in September. The event was very well attended by approximately 200 guests including many judges from the federal, state and local branches, and numerous other dignitaries. Justice Alito, who is the newest appointment to the Supreme Court, flew in from Washington just for the occasion.

In an extended cocktail hour, guests had a rare opportunity to meet, talk and mingle with the Justice, who was also good-natured and cooperated with the many attorneys and judges who sought to be photographed with him. All found Justice Alito to be a warm, personable and charismatic gentleman.

The evening's highlight was a half-hour speech Justice Alito delivered that was filled with anecdotes from the time he was nominated by President Bush to the end of his first term. He called this his "travelogue of the past year." Although his speech contained mostly amusing and light-hearted stories which seemed to easily captivate the audience, the Justice also took the opportunity to discuss the importance of judicial independence. Discussing his own experiences during his confirmation process, the Justice suggested that the news media in particular threatened the judiciary by raising too many unfounded ethical charges against judges and judicial nominees.

All guests, whether Republican or Democrat, readily agreed that Justice Alito was a master story-teller and a charming speaker with a keen, yet soft-spoken sense of humor. The Justice received rather long, well-deserved, standing ovations both before and after his presentation. The Justice said that being nominated by President Bush was an incredible shock and that the confirmation process was an incredible transformation which resulted in him being plunked into the world of Washington politics.*