"And here as we celebrate the 125th anniversary of Valparaiso University of Law,
I simply want to assert that those of you who study, teach and practice law
are an invaluable, indispensable part of the process."

125 YEARS
CELEBRATED
IN STYLE

125th Anniversary Gala
May 1, 2004
The Field Museum, Chicago

79 year-old former President George H.W. Bush engages the crowd of 1,400 with stories about his many trips to China, his sons' elections, and barbs about now being called "41." The speech was covered and later broadcast nationally by C-SPAN2.
I'm very pleased to be speaking before the dinner, because if the chef has any broccoli here, I'm gone! I'm going back to Texas!"

"If I can be so bold as to offer a thought here to future generations of students at Valparaiso, I would suggest you could hardly do better than to study [Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas'] lifetime of courage and commitment and learn from his tremendous example."

"I do not believe in litmus tests. And if you don't believe that, look at Clarence Thomas and David Souter. That's my living example that there were no litmus tests."

"I'm now "41." I was George Bush, President of the United States!"

"Somebody said, 'What's it like to have your son be President of the United States of America?' It's exactly the same you feel about your kid when he comes home and hits a triple in Little League, or your daughter gets an A."

"I don't like lawyer jokes much. I've told some in my past, but I'm not good at that. I'm better at Monica Lewinsky jokes...Thank God Barbara's not here."

"You have a wonderful way of making a guy feel at home."

"Never, ever take for granted the love of your family."

While Assistant Dean Bruce Berner read the invocation, I could hear Mr. Bush kicking the forks around on the floor...I used that time to PRAY that forks on the ground would be my biggest faux pas of the evening.

As the student orchestra left the stage, Mr. Bush asked to speak to the trumpet soloist, so I tapped the student as he walked down and eavesdropped on Mr. Bush congratulating him on a job well done. His graciousness extended from Dean Conison and President Harre seated across from him, to the server who asked him to sign his place card for her, which he did in a single word.

"Somebody said, 'What's it like to have your son be President of the United States of America?' It's exactly the same you feel about your kid when he comes home...Thank God Barbara's not here."

"You have a wonderful way of making a guy feel at home."

"Never, ever take for granted the love of your family."

When Mr. Bush commented on what an interesting museum the Field is, I told him about Sue, the largest Tyrannosaurus Rex ever found in its entirety. Mr. Bush asked how they knew it was a girl and I said, "Well, can't you see the bow in her hair?"

Throughout dinner people approached the table and wanted to say hello and ask for pictures and autographs. With the grace of a seasoned politician, he politely accepted each request and greeted each person with the same enthusiasm.

While the museum was breathtaking, the music lovely and the alumni impressive, what I will cherish most from Valparaiso University School of Law's 125th Anniversary Gala is my encounter with President George H.W. Bush. I will always remember his gracious style and peaceful demeanor.

Editors-in-Chief: Jonathan R. Pasky
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2003-04 Contributors:
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Faculty Advisors:
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The orchestra filled the expanse of Stanley Field Hall with Copeland's "Fanfare for the Common Man" while the balcony brimmed with over one thousand guests, all dressed to the nines. The largest celebration in VUSL's history was underway.

Katharine Antommaria-Ingham, former dean of VU's College of Arts and Sciences, was there with her husband, daughters, and their families. "I was on the phone for tickets right at the beginning," she confessed.

Valparaiso Mayor Jon Costas, '89, expressed his amazement with the 125th Gala saying, "This is a once in a lifetime experience. We all want the schools we come from to rise to the next level. Tonight signifies where the law school is headed."

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Even NBA player and former VU basketball star Bryce Drew was there, admitting he was excited—he had never been in the same building as a U.S. president before.

At seven-thirty in the evening, former President George H.W. Bush made his entrance, with VUSL Dean Jay Conison and University President Alan Harre at his sides.

After a light salad, Mr. Bush was called upon by Emcee Cornell Boggs, '85, to give the keynote address. The former President thanked Don Fites, '98 Honorary, who had approached him over two years ago to speak at the Gala.

For thirty minutes he enraptured the crowd, at one point asserting, "Milestones such as that which you celebrate tonight are not only occasions for looking back and rededicating yourself to the founding principles that have sustained this wonderful institution through many years, but also a chance to really look forward."

Here is to another 125 years, VUSL.
125th gala

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year, VUSL!
A special thanks to:
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John Obermann,
the SBA Budget
Committee, and
every one of our
readers.
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