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David H. Getches, Dean, Univ. of Colo. Law School,
Remarks at the Clifford Calhoun Public Service Award
Luncheon (Apr. 26, 2004) (recipient, Charles
Wilkinson).

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Clifford Calhoun Public Service Award to Charles Wilkinson

April 26, 2004

Clifford Calhoun joins us again for the annual bestowal of The Calhoun Public Service Award. Cliff, you have been a role model for all of us. When it was time to draft new legislation or to form a bar committee, legislators or bar leaders knew whom to call upon. When the school was in need of an Associate Dean or acting dean, we knew Cliff would not, could not, say no. Martin L. King Jr. said "Everyone can be great, because everyone can serve." The civic virtue exhibited by Cliff made him not just a fine colleague, it is what makes him a great man. His spirit of giving to the community and engagement in solving problems and making our world better is what we celebrate each year in the Calhoun service award.

I'd like to recognize the former award winners who are with us today:

This year's award goes to Charles Wilkinson. We think of Charles as a revered teacher. He has received his share of teaching recognition. We also know him as a prolific writer. His research and publication record is enviable, with a dozen books and countless articles to his credit. And the fact that he links his research to his teaching is the criterion that earned him the coveted Hazel Barnes Prize from the University of Colorado just this past year.

But Charles's public service work is less known – at least to many on this campus. Yet it is stunningly far-reaching.

He is a member of a host of non-profit boards: The Center for Environmental Law and Policy, the Western Environmental Law Center, and Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Grand Canyon Trust.

He is a guest lecturer here in our local community, having given recent talks to the CU Women's Club, Town and Gown, the Boulder Watershed Forum, and Longmont Public Library. Not to mention ten or more keynote addresses around the country in the last year.

His services as a drafter of legislation are sought by Presidents, Senators, and Cabinet Officers. He wrote the Proclamation establishing the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument that was upheld by a federal court just this month.

He worked with the White House in creating a policy for protection of a hundred million acres of lands on the National Forests that are eligible for wilderness designation.

He is engaged in writing legislation to recognize Native Hawaiians and Native Americans. And also legislation to reaffirm the sovereignty of Indian tribes that has been thrown into doubt by recent Supreme Court decisions.

Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman appointed Charles to the Committee of Scientists to recommend changes in Forest Service regulations. The recommendations were accepted. This was no small effort. The committee held 13 2-3 day hearings around the country over a years' time.

At the request of Secretary of Interior Gale Norton, he briefed her and her top staff on the federal trust relationship with Indian tribes.

All this volunteer work requires huge time commitments. And his resolve to take time from all of his other work and from his family is driven by more than a desire to accumulate frequent flyer miles. He believes in, as Cliff has always believed in, the concept of engagement in activities and action in the space between government and the private world of the family. He has faith in the ideal that, to paraphrase Margaret Mead, "thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has"

Even when he accepts paid consulting work, Charles only does what he believes is for the good of the country and community. Turning down work that merely feeds

contention, he has accepted consultancies that place him as mediator in hugely complicated issues that have resolved issues between the Tibisha Shoshone Tribe and the Park Service in Death Valley, the Oglala Sioux Tribe in Badlands NP, and the City of Seattle and the Muckleshoot Tribe over fishing and water access.

Although we may have known little of Charles' huge service activities, others do know. Just last week the President of the University of Oregon announced that Charles would be awarded the University of Oregon's Distinguished Service Award.

We are delighted to give the Clifford Calhoun Award to Charles Wilkinson.