

Thanks for coming by. I hope you enjoyed your night here last night. I think at four o'clock this morning I saw somebody sitting out here. If you'da knocked on the door, I'd probably've given you a cup of coffee.

But as you may know, I have received word today that Justice Stevens has denied my request to postpone my sentence while my appeal is pending before the United States Supreme Court. Needless to say, I'm disappointed.

I want to speak to the citizens of this state who returned me to office for close to 40 years. I've been silent for a long time based on the advice from my attorney. And I'm going to pretty much stay that way, except for this statement tonight. I felt obligated to talk to the people that returned me to office for over 40 years.

I regret that's the circumstances that bring me here tonight. It would have been easy over the course of these years to fold under the unrelenting pressure and enter into a plea bargain that would've spared my family a lot of pain. But such a plea would just not have been truthful. To the people of Illinois, I'm not blind to the sentiment that some hold. But I want you to know that I did my best.

I want to thank my friends and the many people who have expressed their support with kind words and gestures over these many difficult times and years. I especially want to thank my friends here in Kankakee that supported me since the first day I ever ran for public office. And I especially want to thank my wonderful wife right here of 41 years, my high school sweetheart -- nope, sorry, 51 years. Fifty-one years we were married this year. Lura Lynn, my children, my oldest, Nancy, Lynda, Julie, Joanne, Jeanette, my youngest, my son, George Jr., their families. My brother Tom and his wife, my sister Katie, and the rest of my extended family. Their undying support and their love has kept me going.

I want to especially thank my good friends, Jim Thompson and Dan Webb, and the team that they put together at Winston & Strawn -- Brad Lerman, Tim Rooney, Julie Bauer and Ray Mitchell. And from the DePaul Center for Wrongful Convictions, the lady that sat by my side during the trial, Andrea Lyon. I want to thank from the Northwestern Center for Wrongful Convictions a woman that helped me a lot, Jennifer Linzer.

I've been fortunate to have at my disposal the finest legal team in the country in Winston & Strawn. However, there are many less fortunate with fewer means than I have still fighting for justice.

Tomorrow, I embark on a new journey in my life. I do so with a firm faith in God and the support and faith of my family.

We're gonna continue our fight. And I will report to the federal corrections facility in Oxford, Wis., as ordered tomorrow morning. But I do so with a clear conscience. And I have said since the beginning of this 10-year ordeal that I'm innocent, and I intend to prove that.