



Department of Justice

ADDRESS

BY

THE HONORABLE GRIFFIN B. BELL
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES

AT

THE DEDICATION OF THE NEW COURT FACILITY
IN WARNER ROBINS, GEORGIA

11:00 A.M.
FRIDAY, JULY 8, 1977
WARNER ROBINS, GEORGIA

It is a real pleasure to be here today. Perhaps some of you know that I had some clients here in Warner Robins before I actually graduated from law school, so I have fond and special memories of Warner Robins.

I am amazed at how this city and Houston County have grown in recent years. I have no doubt that this fine new court building was badly needed.

In the five months I have been Attorney General of the United States, one of the things that has fortified itself in my mind is the importance of administration of justice on the local, county, and state levels.

I do not mean by this that the role of the Federal government is not extremely important. It is. The Federal government can pursue crimes across state lines and conduct nationwide investigations which would be impossible for a more localized jurisdiction. Undoubtedly, the Federal government has an extremely important role to play in national justice.

Nevertheless, the first contact most citizens of this country have with justice is at the local level. It is municipal, county, and state law enforcement agencies which usually respond to reports of crimes, and it is upon courts at this level that most Americans are likely to depend.

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Let me give you some statistics. New York City has more than three times as many policemen -- about 25,500 -- than there are FBI agents, whose ranks number 8,300.

California has 1,800 county and city prosecutors. There are 94 U. S. Attorneys in this country and on their staffs there are 1,700 prosecutors.

Of all the court cases heard from coast to coast each year, only a small fraction are heard in the Federal courts -- despite all the headlines you may read about decisions of the Federal courts.

I make these points to illustrate the importance of this dedication of the new complex for the State Court in Houston County. Essential aspects of law enforcement and justice will be housed in this building, and I am certain that each aspect will endeavor to see that laws are carried out with full regard for the principles I have sought to institute at the Department of Justice -- integrity, fairness, openness, and restraint.

In short, I trust that this facility will serve the people of Warner Robins and Houston County in providing equal and timely justice for all.

I thank you for the chance to be here.