Thank you for this generous honor.

It goes without saying that I am very humbled to be here given the legacy of the past recipients of this award with distinguished records of deep and influential writing, insightful teaching, and impactful service. And I will spend my academic career working to write and teach and serve consistent with this gift.

As [] mentioned, receipt of this award is coming at a tragic and difficult time for me and my four children. But in many ways, the Story Award at this time also provides the chance to reflect on deep-seated values of family, sacrifice, and faith that are important to this community and to the development and flourishing of personal excellence and character in the practice of law.

Because we can be better lawyers and professors and scholars the more focused we are on the search for truth, and the more faithful we are to family, to personal community, and to a commitment to a set of ideals and principles higher than ourselves and beyond any individual ambition.

Tonight in reflecting on the Story Award, I first want to thank and remember my husband Jeff, who provided so well for me and our children and whose enthusiasm for excellence was infectious. He helped to instill in our children a passion for wrestling with ideas and a courage to seek the truth. And his hard work and time taking our family on many varied adventures facilitated opportunities for me to enjoy government service at the Department of Justice, to join many law school symposia, conferences, and Federalist Society chapter events around the country, and to take a lengthy period of time in our basement as a Georgetown Olin/Searle Fellow when I researched the original meaning of “officers of the United States.” Also, a very deep and rich thank you to my in-laws, Jeff’s parents, Tom and Jenny, who are wonderfully generous and kind and spend so much time with each of our children.

Then, within the legal community, many mentors have provided encouragement and a model of excellence for scholarship and service and family-oriented values along the way. Professors when I was a student like Brad Clark, Greg Maggs, Amanda Tyler, John Duffy, and Judge Dick Leon, who both taught about the law but also went to great lengths to help me find an appellate clerkship close to D.C. where our family was situated at the time with the public-sector businesses that Jeff had started. Then later, Dean Bill Treanor, Larry Solum and Randy Barnett who provided the wonderful forum of Georgetown Law as an incubator for my Article II research, along with Professor Robin West who led a collegial weekly discussion group for fellows and taught us all a great deal about how to present scholarship and gently, but incisively, critique each other’s work.

Earlier, during clerkship years, Judge Kavanaugh and Justice Thomas made their chambers a welcome place for expectant and new moms trying to juggle work and family. The community that they maintain among their clerks proved critical over eight years away from fulltime work when my four children were very young.

Perhaps most touching, however, are the personal acts of generosity and sacrifice from which my scholarship and practice have benefited over the years. The kinds of gestures that could not ever be replicated by any generic program or government or impersonal manmade institution. Acts like those of my Thomas co-clerk Will Consovoy, also tragically, recently taken by cancer, who one week took over all of my cert pool work in the Thomas chambers so I could spend extra time at home with my sick one-year-old daughter Avery. And who, then, later provided an on-ramp onto the Scalia Law faculty by hiring me as his firm’s Supreme Court student clinic director and sponsoring my bar passage many years after law school graduation.

Then individuals like then-Dean Henry Butler, Dean Ken Randall, and academic deans Helen Alvare and previously Rachelle Perkins, who have enabled the Scalia Law School to be a place where ideas can flourish and free debate can be pursued.

[pause]

In addition to the outstanding legal legacy of Justice Joseph Story, the namesake of this award, Justice Story himself had a life filled with family and also early loss – eventually having seven children but facing the passing of his wife and father within months of each other, at a relatively early age while nonetheless managing to be one of the most prolific legal scholars and writers of his time.

In honor of Justice Story’s legacy of excellence and the memory of Jeff, thank you to the Federalist Society for this award and the encouragement to continue to work hard, to help students and the legal community pursue truth and open debate, and to remain dedicated to values and ideals that are greater than ourselves. Thanks.