

Statement of Judge Alex Kozinski
December 18, 2017

It has been an unparalleled honor to serve as a federal judge for more than thirty-five years. I firmly believe that a strong judiciary, free from political pressures, is vital to the preservation of this great nation. I found in this country, and in my work, opportunities and satisfaction that I never thought imaginable when I arrived here, at the age of 12, a refugee from Communism. I am grateful to my colleagues with whom I have had the privilege of serving, and to the countless hard-working lawyers who have appeared before me. I have learned so much from them all and will be forever grateful for their professionalism, intellectual rigor, and in many instances their steadfast friendship.

It has also been my privilege to help train the best and the brightest of several generations of new attorneys. I was made better by working with them. My clerks went on to stellar careers in law, business and academics. Their success has made me proud and I am gratified by the outpouring of support I have received privately from so many of them.

Still, I've always had a broad sense of humor and a candid way of speaking to both male and female law clerks alike. In doing so, I may not have been mindful enough of the special challenges and pressures that women face in the workplace. It grieves me to learn that I caused any of my clerks to feel uncomfortable; this was never my intent. For this I sincerely apologize.

A couple of years ago, as I reached the age when several of my colleagues had decided to take senior status or retire, I began considering whether the time had come for me to move on as well. Family and friends have urged me to stay on, at least long enough to defend myself. But I cannot be an effective judge and simultaneously fight this battle. Nor would such a battle be good for my beloved federal judiciary. And so I am making the decision to retire, effective immediately.