

## STATEMENT OF MARK PAOLETTA, FRIEND OF JUSTICE THOMAS

The Thomases have rarely spoken publicly about the remarkably generous efforts to help a child in need. They have always respected the privacy of this young man and his family. It is disappointing and painful, but unsurprising that some journalists and critics cannot do the same.

The Thomases—quietly and honorably—devoted twelve years of their lives to helping a beloved child in desperate need of love, support, and guidance. In 1997, Justice Thomas and his wife brought their great nephew to live with them. They agreed to take in this young child much as Justice Thomas’s grandparents had done for him and his brother in 1955. Justice Thomas’s grandparents changed the trajectory of his life, and the Thomases hoped to do the same for a child in need.

Justice Thomas and his wife made immeasurable personal and financial sacrifices and poured every ounce of their lives and hearts into giving their great nephew a chance to succeed. In the summer of 2006, the Thomases were struggling to find a school where they could send their great nephew. In discussing these challenges with their dear friends, Harlan and Kathy Crow, Harlan recommended that the Thomases consider one more option: sending their great nephew to Randolph Macon Academy. Harlan had attended Randolph Macon, and he thought the school would be a good fit.

Harlan had financially supported Randolph Macon since the 1980s, and funded scholarships for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Harlan offered to pay the first year of Justice Thomas’s great nephew’s tuition in 2006, and that payment went directly to the school. Harlan Crow’s Office confirmed that he did not pay the great nephew’s tuition for any other year at Randolph Macon.

After some time, Randolph Macon recommended the great nephew attend a boarding school in Georgia for one year. Harlan offered to pay the first year of tuition for their great nephew at the Georgia school, and again, those tuition payments went directly to the school.

By the next school year (2009), the Thomases’ great nephew returned to Randolph Macon. He moved back to Savannah in December 2009, after he turned 18. The Thomases love their great nephew. It is despicable that the press has dragged him into their effort to smear Justice Thomas.

This story is another attempt to manufacture a scandal about Justice Thomas. But let’s be clear about what is supposedly scandalous now: Justice Thomas and his wife devoted twelve years of their lives to taking in and caring for a beloved child—who was not their own—just as Justice Thomas’s grandparents had done for him. They made many personal and financial sacrifices to do this. And along the way, their friends joined them in doing everything possible to give this child a future.

Harlan Crow’s tuition payments made directly to these schools on behalf of Justice Thomas’s great nephew did not constitute a reportable gift. Justice Thomas was not required to disclose the tuition payments made directly to Randolph Macon and the Georgia school on behalf of his great nephew because the definition of a “dependent child” under the Ethics in Government Act (5 U.S.C. 13101 (2)) does not include a “great nephew.” It is limited to a “son, daughter, stepson or stepdaughter.” Justice Thomas never asked Harlan Crow to pay for his great nephew’s tuition. And neither Harlan Crow, nor his company, had any business before the Supreme Court.

This malicious story shows nothing except for the fact that the Thomases and the Crows are kind, generous, and loving people who tried to help this young man.