**Dr. T.J. Davis** (00:00): I choose to vote to make a difference, to participate in the great United States of America, to pay homage to my forebearers, to make the struggles that they undertook, to get the vote, to make that count, to have my voice heard, to have a sense that I have tried to make a difference. I must say that over the years, most often, I've been on the losing side when my vote is cast. But I also count that as being on the winning side because all voices are heard. I have participated in campaigns. I was once the assistant director for Get-Out-The-Vote Campaign where part of my job was to convince people who did not come out to vote that they should vote, listening to them ask the question why they should vote. Would it make a difference? Offering the argument that voting didn't make a difference because nothing had changed in their lives.

(01:09): And so, I recognize that the voting process is a part of the democratic process, not the whole of the democratic process. It's not as if we vote, and that alone makes a difference. We have to be active and persistent in our causes. And that's what I've sought to do.

(01:32): If you don't raise your voice, no one hears you. If you raise your voice, perhaps someone hears you. If you raise your voice often enough, it does get heard. There is a famous biblical story about the stern judge and the widow. The widow came to him every day asking for the judge to render a verdict for her. He persistently refused and she persistently came. And one day he said, "Listen, let me render a verdict for this woman so that she will stop bothering me."

(02:10): And I think that the history of protest in the United States, in part, demonstrates the need for persistence and the power of persistence, that if you speak long enough and persist, someone does eventually hear you. It also reminds me of the fact that people in the political process in the United States who are losers at one point in time, are not necessarily losers over time. As someone who does constitutional law and history, I'm always reminded that when you look at Supreme Court decisions, you have dissenters people who are not in the majority, who don't win on a particular case.

(02:54): But in time, that dissent may well come to be the majority opinion, so that we all have a role to play. And again, persistence is important in that role. Democracy is not a given at any point. It's a process. It's a process in which we all participate. In a sense, it's like a school of fish. They're always moving. They're always going someplace. They might not ever get to the place. In that sense, it's like the mathematical notion of equilibrium. We're never at equilibrium. The pendulum swings one way or another, but it doesn't stop in the middle. And I think we individually, as American citizens with the responsibility and duty to participate, have to remember that it's an ongoing and continuous process.