

**Ann Corkery – Chairman of 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Canterbury Medal Dinner –  
presenting Canterbury Medal to Gov. and Mrs. Mitt Romney – Delivered  
May 8, 2008 at Metropolitan Club, New York City**

May 09, 2008, 8:25 a.m.

## **Braveheart**

An appreciation.

An NRO Primary Document

Editor's note: On Thursday night, Governor Mitt and Mrs. Ann Romney received the Canterbury Medal from the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty. Ann Corkery, who directs philanthropy at Security National Servicing Corporation, introduced the Romneys, reflecting on their contributions to religious liberty in America:

**T**hank you, Seamus [Hasson, president of the Becket Fund] and thank you all very much. I'm honored to join you in this lovely evening in tribute to our friends Mitt and Ann Romney. Many other friends are here, and I especially want to recognize the movie producer Steve McEveety. Steve runs what you might call the Hollywood office of the Becket Fund. He is the producer of many films including the Oscar-winning film *Braveheart*. Another movie title to Steve's credit caused a slightly awkward moment this evening, when he had to correct our guest of honor on a point of fact. It turns out that on the campaign trail, Mitt had long insisted he was the inspiration for *What Women Want*. For the governor's admirers, though, *Braveheart* captures the more courageous qualities of the man. And it's not just the strength of heart that we admire in both Mitt and Ann Romney, and recognize with tonight's award. It's their goodness of heart that commands both our respect and our affection. In the work of the Becket Fund, often you defend the right of worship in faraway places, on behalf of oppressed people whose afflictions are hidden from the eyes of the world. But of course the attitudes and methods of religious prejudice are not always hidden, and they are not always far away. Sometimes they are right in front of us, even in the national drama of a presidential campaign. A couple of years ago, as the campaign neared, attention turned to the governor of Massachusetts, and

everybody noticed the obvious strengths of the man, his life, his career, and his record. There was just that one problem, as many people thought — that one question that wouldn't go away. And sooner or later, it would have to be addressed. As it turned out, the governor's speech of December 6th last year was the high point of the entire primary season. It was one of those moments when a serious thought managed to break through the noise. What left an impression was not just the power of the words, but also the qualities of the man, and of the wife beside him. One quality of note is surely their forbearance, at that moment and throughout the campaign. If you wonder exactly what it was like for Catholics, in other places and other times, Mitt and Ann could share some details from their own experience. At every turn, they had to explain their faith — to defend the good and venerable teachings of the Mormon Church. They were constantly called to account, even by people not usually interested in spiritual matters ... and by others with creeds and churches of their own, but a lot less to show for it than Mitt and Ann Romney. The reality is that when we meet people of their quality, the most relevant questions are the ones we ask ourselves — about our own beliefs ... and whether we reflect nearly as well on our churches as they do on theirs. Yet somehow the governor always remained calm and patient. And this was not just a political instinct. It was the humility of the man, a trait that has somehow survived all his success. Listening to his remarks in College Station, Texas, it wasn't hard to picture the young missionary who years before has gone door to door in Paris, explaining his beliefs and offering the hope of a better way. "I'm not sure," as the governor said in Texas, "that we fully appreciate the profound implications of our tradition of religious liberty. I have visited many of the magnificent cathedrals in Europe. They are so inspired ... so grand ... so empty. Raised up over generations, long ago, so many of the cathedrals now stand as the postcard backdrop to societies just too busy or too 'enlightened' to venture inside and kneel in prayer." He concluded with a reminder that we live in the age of jihad, the creed of "conversion by conquest" and "murder as martyrdom." "In such a world," said the governor, "we can be deeply thankful that we live in a land where reason and religion are friends and allies in the cause of liberty." Tonight, we do give thanks for that, and for even more. We are grateful for the wise and inspiring example of our two guests of

honor. The Canterbury Medal is awarded to those who refuse to compromise their principles and faith, and do so “resolutely.” If there were additional honors for graciousness in defense of faith, for modesty and for sheer decency, we would be conferring those medals as well on Mitt and Anne Romney. I am blessed to know them, and to present them with this honor. May I ask the governor and Mrs. Romney to please come forward now. And I ask all of you to welcome to the podium the recipients of the 2008 Canterbury Medal , our dear friends Governor and Mrs. Mitt Romney.