

Speech to Entering Class – Orientation – August 29, 2006

Welcome!

My name is Rita Jones. I am the Assistant Dean for Admissions and Financial Aid.

I want to start by asking you to turn to the person next to you, shake her or his hand, and loudly say “Congratulations”. You have successfully completed the application process and are about to begin your legal education with a very talented group of people.

This year, we received over 6,300 applications for our entering class. That is almost 25 candidates for every seat you now occupy. Our admissions committee, comprised of faculty and administrators as well as student readers, is the largest standing committee in the law school. That reflects the importance we place on “looking beyond the numbers” as we shaped the class of 2009. As a member of that committee, I can tell you how fulfilling it is to see you here today after having read yours and thousands of other files last winter and spring.

Let me tell you something about yourselves. Your average age is 25 but you range in age from 20 to 53. Twenty of you graduated Phi Beta Kappa. 25 of you have Masters Degrees and six of you have earned Ph.D.’s. Two of you are physicians.

You come from 38 states and the District of Columbia. MA is most represented, followed by New York, California, Connecticut, Texas, Ohio and Pennsylvania. Seven of you are international students. You attended 120 different colleges and universities. Nine of you graduated from Harvard, 15 from Cornell, 7 from NYU and 6 each from Dartmouth, Brandeis and Georgetown. Twenty three of you are Boston College graduates, so you are on your way to being double eagles, if not triple eagles.

Thirteen of you are named Michael. There are ten Daniels, nine Davids and nine Matthews. Six of you are named Thomas. Five of you are named Rachel and there are four Kristens (1 Kristin).

You were born in places such as Ecuador, Poland, China, Mexico, Ukraine, Botswana, Moldova, Japan, Nigeria, India, Canada, South Korea, Taiwan, Germany, Argentina, Belgium, Taiwan and Uzbekistan. Two of you grew up in Alaska.

Seventy-eight of you speak a foreign language including: Korean, Spanish (32), Italian, Japanese, French (24), Russian, German, Italian, Haitian Creole, Mandarin Chinese, Taiwanese/Minnanese, Polish, Samoan, Norwegian, Hindi, Urdu, Rukwangali, Yoruba, and Cantonese.

Your record of achievement is remarkable. One of you is a Fulbright scholar. Two of you are National Merit Scholars and one of you was a fellow at the National Institute for Health. You have been legislative fellows and interns for numerous members of Congress and you have helped get out the vote in many political campaigns nationwide. One of you served as aide to chambers for US Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer.

You’ve served in Americorps, the Peace Corps, Teach for America, and the Jesuit Volunteer Corps. Eight of you have volunteered with Habitat for Humanity. You have worked with Hispanic immigrants in Brownsville, Texas and one of you has been a Cystic Fibrosis Association volunteer for 15 years. Another one of your classmates volunteered for four years at the Oregon Games for Handicapped Youth.

You have taught in the Seattle public schools, you have taught preschool in Berkeley and you are a school psychologist. One of you home schooled your siblings. Your employment includes: research assistant at the Federal Reserve Board, financial analysis and planning, technology specialist, patent agent, software engineer, mutual fund accounting, IT consulting, emergency room physician, foreign affairs officer for the US Department of State and web application development.

You have military service, in the Army, the Air Force, the Navy, and the Marines.

You are athletes, participating in over thirty sports, among them, crew, ultimate Frisbee, kayaking, softball, rugby, lacrosse, basketball, kickboxing, baseball, cycling, soccer, swimming, diving, sailing, volleyball, tae kwon do, Nordic skiing, snowboarding, and football. And you've got field hockey, ice hockey and roller hockey players in your class.

You are marathon runners, triathlon competitors and competitive horseback riders. One of you completed a 30 day trip traversing a glacier in Patagonia. Another hiked from Southern California to Canada via the Pacific Crest Trail, 2000 miles in four months.

One of you is a designer and builder of contemporary steel furniture. And one of you was a staff reporter for the Korea Herald with over 200 published articles. You have worked construction in Kansas. Another spent a year as a public address announcer for the Harlem Globetrotters. One of you owns a radio station.

You're talented in other ways. We have dancers, actors, singers, songwriters and musicians. Among the latter, there are violinists and pianists. You play the flute, saxophone, jazz trumpet, viola, drums, bass (upright and electric), piccolo, gong, balalaika and guitar.

You have performed in rock bands, University chorales and orchestras, wind ensembles, chamber orchestras, percussions groups, and a cappella groups. These things matter when it comes to next Spring's Law Revue show.

...and this is not the half of it! What I've presented to you here is just a small slice of the wonderful class of 2009.