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Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law

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## TOP ALUMNI HONORED AT ALUMNI ASSOCIATION DINNER



January 23, 2013

*From left, Jonathan S. Henes, Randi Weingarten, and Dean Matthew Diller*

January 23, 2013 - Cardozo's Sixth Annual Alumni Association Dinner took place in the Mandarin Oriental Hotel on Tuesday, January 15. Over 500 alumni, board members, parents, students and friends jam-packed the ballroom to honor alumni of the year Jonathan S. Henes '96 and Randi Weingarten '83.

By awarding remarkable alumni while raising funds for Cardozo scholarships, the dinner is both a celebration of past achievement and a springboard for future accomplishments. Two scholarship winners kicked off the event, Jerry Goldfeder '79, a graduate of Cardozo's first class and now a successful election lawyer, and Jil Simon '13, who said that coming to Cardozo after six years in the workplace was a scary career move, but one made easier by coming to it "debt free."

### RELATED NEWS

March 22, 2019

[Randi Weingarten '83, a Crusader in the Fight for Worker's Rights and President of the 1.7 million member American Federation of Teachers, Talks of Her Passion for Public Service \(/news/randi-weingarten-%E2%80%9983-crusader-fight-worker%E2%80%99s-rights-and-president-17-million-member-american\)](#)

Dean Melanie Leslie interviewed Randi Weingarten '83, President of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), in front of an audience of students, faculty and staff on March 20. "Having a law degree is an opportunity that opens a bunch of doors," said Weingarten.

Before introducing honorees Henes and Weingarten, Dean Matthew Diller acknowledged the recent death of former Cardozo dean and professor Frank Macchiarola, saying “Frank helped build the idea of community deeply into the DNA of Cardozo, that a law school can be rigorous and excellent, but at the same time have a warm, supportive community.” Henes began his speech by referencing “Dean Mack’s” profound influence on him, and said, “He taught us the importance of integrity, community, and standing up for what you believe in.” A partner at the 1,500-plus attorney firm of Kirkland & Ellis LLP in New York, Henes is one of the nation’s top restructuring lawyers who also takes his civic duties seriously. He is a board member of the Michael Lynch Memorial Foundation, which offers educational grants for children of firefighters and victims of 9/11 and other disasters. At Cardozo Henes adjuncts and is chairman of the advisory committee for the Samuel and Ronnie Heyman Center on Corporate Governance.

Randi Weingarten, whom Diller called, “a brilliant and tireless advocate for teachers,” is president of the American Federation of Teachers, a 1.5 million member national union. For two decades Weingarten has been an outspoken policy expert and labor lawyer, launching major efforts in educational reform and innovation. Prior to heading the AFT in 2010, Weingarten ran the United Federation of Teachers for 12 years. Like Henes, her involvement with Cardozo runs deep; she is a member of the Cardozo Public Service Advisory Council and has been a keynote speaker at the annual Public Service Law Advocacy Week (P\*LAW), as well as at student orientation. She has also been an adjunct professor at the school.

“Gratitude” was the thread running through both Henes and Weingarten’s speeches. Henes, whom many would be surprised to learn spent months after college “lying on the couch and watching TV,” called Cardozo a “transformative experience,” and expressed his gratitude to his father (who turned off the TV and pushed him off the couch); Dean Mack; the professors who “pushed me and challenged me;” and his fellow students, one of whom became his wife and mother of their four children. “Pam taught me that there is a correlation between hard, focused work and success,” Henes said.

Randi Weingarten spoke in the context of recent events—the devastation wreaked by Superstorm Sandy and the massacre in Newtown, Connecticut, both of which intimately affected her union members. “When you see what happened at Sandy Hook as I have now seen...You feel a sense of gratitude for that which we have and

that which we are at Cardozo.”

After acknowledging her partner Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum and dear friends and mentors, Weingarten said she drew inspiration from Martin Luther King Jr., whose birthday coincided with the alumni dinner. “I always believed the arc of history, as Martin Luther King said, bends toward justice. Cardozo helped me believe in the art of the possible, not just in the rhetorical, but that we could use the law to make a difference in other people’s lives.”

As the speeches ended and alumni schmoozed with each other over dessert and coffee or headed out into the icy evening, one imagines they would heed Dean Diller’s exhortation: “You are our ambassadors and we need you to tell our stories out in the world...We need you to look out for our students and graduates.”

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