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Student Remarks, J.D. Class Speaker

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Good afternoon, everyone and thank you Dean Kim for that warm introduction. My name is Madison Chajson, and I am so honored to be speaking on behalf of this incredible class.

Before I begin, I want to acknowledge all of the people who helped us get to this moment...

To the faculty – thank you for sharing your wisdom with us – it has been an absolute privilege to learn from you.

To our families, friends – loved ones, and lost ones. If not for you, we wouldn't be here –so thank you, for, well, for everything. For your patience, your support. We are so very lucky to have you. I know I am...

When I sat down to write this speech, I had no idea where to begin.

So, I turned to a few of our classmates for advice...

Of course, they all had different suggestions.

One said, “tell a joke,” – another insisted I tell a story about our favorite professor.

Then, one mentioned a quote by Justice Cardozo.

Apparently, it's one of the very first things you see when you walk into our school... it reads, “Law never is, but is always about to be...”

Now, at first, I was a little confused. I mean, didn't we just spend the last three years of our lives learning all about what the law is...?

But, as I thought about all that black-letter law, I couldn't help but remember all of the other things that had been happening simultaneously.

Because while I was studying the impeachment clause of the Constitution, the President's actual impeachment trial was all over the news...

And, at the same time I was reading *Brown v. Board*, a movement for racial justice was sweeping the nation.

During our three years of law school we saw, among other things, a global pandemic, a female vice president; protests against police brutality and white supremacy; protests against anti-Semitism; the confirmation of the first black, female Supreme Court Justice...

We saw #MeToo victories, celebrity guardianship cases, celebrity defamation cases, spotlights on immigration reform and fundamental privacy rights; invasions in the Ukraine...

All of these critical moments in history were happening at the exact same time that we were learning about the laws behind them.

And so suddenly, I began to realize the truth in that statement – “law never is, but is always about to be.”

We are living in interesting times – and as aspiring lawyers, it is both our privilege, and our responsibility, to balance precedent with progress; to change the law, in the face of a changing world.

Which brings me to today. Today is not only a celebration of our futures, but also a testament to how far we've come.

Our class has accomplished a lot these last few years. Among us are individuals who have assisted on amicus briefs; teams who competed nationally in dispute resolution and moot court; scholars who had their writings published.

We made life-long friendships; resurrected barrister's ball; We survived the Blue-booking and the cold calls; the exams, the masks, the Cardozo elevators – or rather, lack thereof...

We found mentors in our professors and confidantes in our classmates.

We came to law school to learn the law – Now, three years later, it is quite clear we learned far more than that.

Congratulations Class of 2022!

Thank you.