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Cardozo's Class of 2020 Comes Together for an In-Person Celebration at Yeshiva University



After nearly 2 years of a global pandemic, Cardozo was finally able to celebrate the class of 2020 with an in-person ceremony at Yeshiva University's Lampton Auditorium. "Finally, we are all together," Dean Melanie Leslie told the class. "We are here today to celebrate your tenacity and goodwill amidst the most significant hardship in our school's history."

In a spirit of celebration and pride, Cardozo administrators and faculty took to the decorated stage to commemorate and mark the class of 2020's law school graduation. This was the first recognition of this milestone in person, with all attendees required to be fully vaccinated and don masks throughout the ceremony. Professor Christopher Buccafusco served as the herald for the ceremony and welcomed the class and their guests.

In her remarks, Dean Leslie lauded the class for their ability to persevere and overcome the myriad challenges they faced due to the pandemic. "You made it through online classes, virtual moot court and clinics, the bar exam and job searches," she said. "You could not have imagined the challenges you would take on during your final months of law school, but as a result of your experience you have become better lawyers and better people."

Dean Leslie highlighted the class's commitment to helping each other through this difficult period and speaking out about racial injustice and antisemitism in their communities. "You have shown us nothing but fearlessness, compassion and grit. You have already succeeded in so many ways. This is only the beginning. We cannot wait to see what comes next!"

Following Dean Leslie's remarks, David Huntley '90, Senior Executive Vice President and Chief Compliance Officer at AT&T Inc., gave the keynote address.

Huntley called on the class of 2020 to always choose a path of continuous learning. "After three years of learning how to think, I'm here to tell you that the thinking process is just beginning," he said. "Remember to rethink what you think you know. The one who stays curious about the world will be the one to change it."

Huntley also advised the class of 2020 to make decisions in their profession that are not only legally sound, but also the honorable thing to do. "I challenge you all to do what you do with compassion. You're leaving Cardozo prepared for what lies ahead. We know you will go out and make a difference in this world."

LL.M. class speaker Simone Morabito addressed the audience and thanked Cardozo for arming his class, whose graduates come from all over the globe, with the power to believe, endure and shine. J.D. class speaker Monique Gillum commended her classmates for their resiliency over the past 20 months and encouraged each graduate to build a better future for themselves and those to follow.

Student Bar Association (SBA) President Hallelujah Lewis led the class of 2020 in presenting the SBA Awards. "Today we celebrate these individuals who have contributed to our time at Cardozo in unique ways," said Lewis. Awardees included Professor Best First Year Professor Michael Pollack, Best Professor Alex Reinert, Best Adjunct Professor Gary Galperin, Best Administrator Dean Jenn Kim and Outstanding Assistance to the Student Body, former Director of Diversity & Inclusion Nicole Seawright.

Following the conferring of LL.M., M.S.L. and J.D. degrees, Shoshana Bookson '82, member of the Cardozo Board of Overseers, delivered the alumni remarks. "I know from my own experience that everyone sitting here today has achieved the great measure of success in graduating, but you did it standing on the shoulders of giants. The giants in your lives, parents, brothers, sisters, caregivers, dear friends and family, and others who encouraged, supported, and cheered you on," she said as the crowd cheered. "They did not let you down, and I know you will want to thank them as you now join a family of over 14,000 Cardozo graduates."

Dean Leslie thanked Bookson for her remarks and closed out the ceremony: "Thank you to all who made this day so special. It has been an honor to be with you to mark this special occasion."





