



2010

Commencement

222 DEGREE CANDIDATES HONORED

TEXT BY KATHY COLELLO

PHOTOS BY WILLIAM K. SACCO, YALE UNIVERSITY MEDIA SERVICES, AND TYSON STREETER

Yale Law School changed my life. This great Law School inspired me, inspired me to devote my professional life to searching for the elusive goal of justice. And the pursuit of justice is a serious matter.

*Margaret H. Marshall '76,
Chief Justice of the Supreme
Judicial Court of Massachusetts*



Our wish for you is that you may possess the self-respect to fashion extraordinary things out of your ordinary lives. To do this, you need not be confident about what events might bring, but you need to be confident in your own capacity to master events and to respond to them with grace and intelligence.

Dean Robert Post '77



Each of you has the talent, skill, and determination necessary to make a difference. It is what brought you here. With the relationships that you have forged and the tools you have developed while on Planet Eli, we send you forth to do just that.

*Clinical Professor of Law and
Supervising Attorney Brett Dignam*



*Now, Yale Law class of two-aught-ten
Wondrous women, mighty men
Go ye forth to live full lives
Not just things on which fame thrives
Lawyers, yes, but also souls
Distill the essence of your roles.*

Those gathered for Commencement ceremonies at Yale Law School on May 24 were treated to a twist on traditional commencement oratory when faculty speaker Peter Schuck delivered his good wishes in rhyming couplets. Schuck, the Simeon E. Baldwin Professor Emeritus of Law, was one of several speakers addressing the 222 gleeful degree candidates who were joined by family, friends and faculty members in a sunny and comfortable Law School courtyard.

Dean Robert Post '77 opened the festivities after Sterling Professor Emeritus of Law Guido Calabresi '58 officially presented him with the traditional maces signifying his new deanship of the Law School.

Dean Post welcomed those assembled and honored all who “nourished and sacrificed, supported and sustained,” to bring

the graduates to where they were on this day. He paid special tribute to the late Joey Hanzich '10, who tragically passed away in September 2007. He noted that the Class of 2010 “came of age in the fires of 9/11” and entered law school just before “the stock market collapsed, Lehman Brothers went bankrupt, credit froze, our economy went into free-fall, and legal institutions were swept into this maelstrom.” He urged them to face down reality and the “vivid but stubborn facts of life” but still remain alive to the “immanent possibility of transforming reality.”

“Your future is without doubt bright,” he said. “You are now equipped with one of the great degrees in legal education anywhere in the world...You have been trained by masters. And you have earned the support of a school that will stand by you throughout your careers.”

Dean Post was followed by Professor Schuck, who waxed eloquent on his decision to join the Yale Law School faculty after having rejected Yale Law as a student in favor of the big-city benefits of Harvard. But, he said, in 1979:

*I made amends
And joined a feast that never ends.*

He encouraged graduates to keep on learning, to remain flexible and open-minded, and to never forget those less fortunate.

*There but for God's grace go we
Our DNA we got for free
Most lavished love we did not earn
So we must love the world in turn*

Next came the presentation of degree candidates by Associate Deans Toni Davis '92 LLM and Sharon Brooks '00. The students were to officially receive their degrees—196 Juris Doctor (JD), 23 Master of Laws (LLM), 2 Doctor of the Science of Law (JSD), and 1 Master of Studies in Law (MSL)—when the Law School faculty voted on June 2.

The commencement speaker, specially chosen by the graduating students, was Clinical Professor of Law and Supervising Attorney Brett Dignam. She told the students that character will play an essential role in their future lives as legal professionals and that in order to remain grounded in character, they would need to re-examine it periodically.

“Are you living your life, your professional life, in a way that

reflects your core beliefs? If you are, revel in that. If you are not, make a change,” she said.

Professor Dignam advised the graduates to look for joy and celebrate it. “Your positive beliefs will sustain you,” she said, citing as examples the election of Barack Obama, the heroism of Captain Chesley Sullenberger in the Hudson River plane landing, and the unlikely triumph of singer Susan Boyle in the British version of American Idol.

Also addressing the graduates was Margaret H. Marshall '76, Chief Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts, who grew up in apartheid South Africa. She said she was fortunate her graduate studies brought her to the United States, where she learned that an alternative existed to the rule of brute power she had observed in her homeland.

“What I learned here gave voice, gave structure, to the ideals I had yearned for in South Africa: a just society, a society founded on the rule of law.”

She added, “Each new generation must decide, each of you must decide, whether to embrace, to protect the rule of law or to repudiate it. And make no mistake; inaction and indifference are acts of repudiation.”

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Peter Schuck, Simeon E. Baldwin Professor Emeritus of Law and Professor (Adjunct) of Law