

YALE LAW
COMMENCEMENT
2021

RESILIENCE & PERSEVERANCE

PHOTOS BY MARA LAVITT



Commencement in a pandemic brought some differences: masks, social distancing, the absence of families or guests. But even these changes and limitations could not dampen the joy of the day. In perfect spring weather, nearly 200 graduates gathered in the Sol Goldman Courtyard, while other students joined by Zoom. Families watched the livestream and sent messages of support and congratulations. Faculty saluted the grads on social media. After more than a year of separation, the Yale Law School community gathered to send the latest class off into the world.

On Monday, May 24, 2021, the Class of 2021 was celebrated for its perseverance during a year of tremendous obstacles and recognized for its remarkable academic and clinical achievements.







The Law School returned to the Courtyard for the Commencement ceremony, this year with no guests or faculty, but rows of socially distanced students and a large video screen in accordance with University public health protocols. The Law School's ceremony was livestreamed for remote students, families, and loved ones.

The event included a video message from faculty including Professors Monica C. Bell '09, Lea Brilmayer, Paul Kahn '80, Yair Listokin '05, Daniel Markovits '00, Samuel Moyn, Claire Priest '00, and Cristina Rodríguez '00.

"Adversity can bring out the best in people, and that's certainly true of the class of 2021," said Moyn.

"You have big ideas, you have deep ideas. You have contributed to the world through the work that you've done on the ground, through the advocacy in which you've already engaged," Rodríguez said. "This experience no doubt has made you extraordinarily resilient, adaptable, and committed to making the world a place where we can all accomplish our goals and objectives."

Following the remarks from faculty, Dean Heather K. Gerken introduced the guest speaker, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court Sonia Sotomayor '79, who addressed the graduating class in remarks via video.

"You have finished a remarkable journey during especially difficult times," she said.

Sotomayor spoke of the difficulties of the legal profession and the power of the Class of 2021 to effect change in the world.

"You are a new generation of talented, caring, and courageous people who will take the reins of our profession and continue the drive toward progress," she said. "The thought of all of you and everything you are poised to achieve buoys my spirits and renews my faith."

In her remarks to the class, Dean Gerken spoke about the class's ability to thrive while helping others.

"This class includes students who possess the imagination not only to succeed at the goals they've been given, but also to set their own," Gerken said. "The resilience not only to care for themselves, but also to advocate for others. And the empathy necessary to be good thinkers, good lawyers, and — above all — good people. Imagination, resilience, and kindness — those are the qualities that the world needs right now."

Two hundred and twenty-seven degree candidates were honored, including 218 J.D. candidates, five LL.M. candidates, one M.S.L. candidate, and three J.S.D. candidates. 🍷





Kathleen "K.P." Pierre '21

I am fortunate to be starting at Kirkland & Ellis this September. Between now and then, I look forward to taking an extended break from Zoom, catching up with family and friends who have helped me get this far, and rediscovering my favorite hobbies.



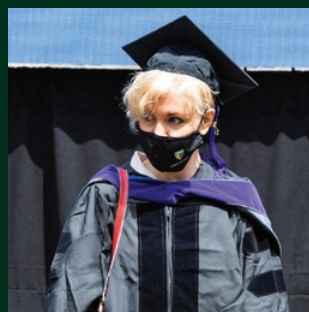
Pat Reidy '21

My religious community serves at Notre Dame, where I'm grateful to return after clerking in Pittsburgh next year. I hope to teach law, focusing on questions of religion and property, while offering pastoral care to students on campus. Our Yale Law School faculty offers me tremendous models to emulate in my own academic vocation.



TJ Grayson '21

After graduating from YLS, I'll be working as a Justice Catalyst Fellow/ Staff Attorney at the Advancement Project. There, I'll be supporting the work of abolitionist organizers looking to create, implement, and sustain non-policing responses to community-based harm.



Ellen Nohle '21 LLM

The law is one of many important social influences, not the only one, but it is the one that I have chosen to specialize in and where I want to make my impact on the world.



Tristan Hood '21

I will be joining the Tax Group of Sullivan & Cromwell LLP, in N.Y.C. In between my bar prep and starting at the firm, I intend to do as much touristy stuff as possible in the city. My goal is to become as familiar with the city as a Frommer's Guide.



Dianne Lake '21

YLS has taught me that the rule of law is an ever-evolving vehicle for the promotion and protection of human rights and human dignity and is one that can and should always evolve towards justice and fairness.



Yuvraj Joshi '21 JSD

Many of my peers and I are grappling with the endemic violence against Black people and the racialized impact of COVID-19, mindful of law's many harms. My research moving forward will focus as much on reducing and redressing law's harms as it will on realizing law's emancipatory potential.





ASSOCIATE JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT SONIA SOTOMAYOR '79:

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