



# The Tsai Leadership Program

YALE LAW SCHOOL



Photos by (top) Harold Shapiro and (bottom row) Mara Lavitt

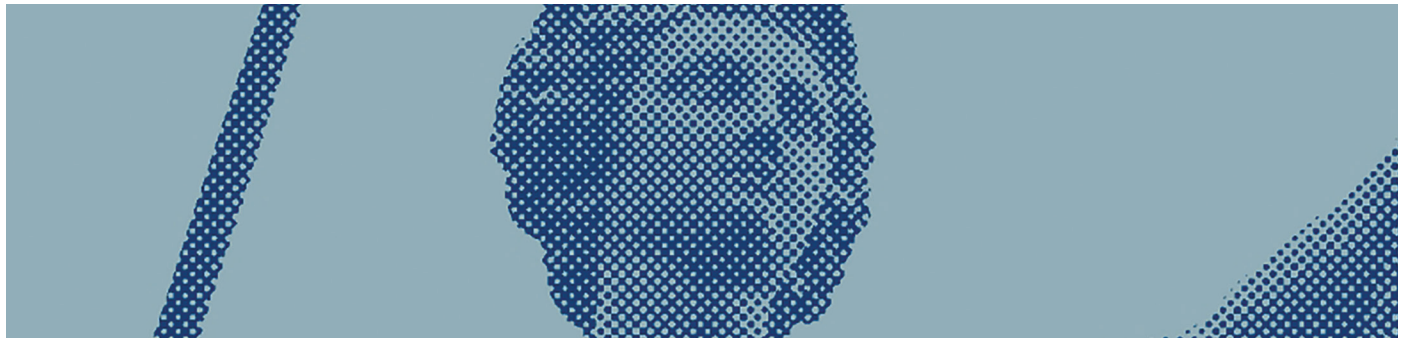


# Redefining the Future of Legal Education

Countless conversations with alumni, faculty, and students culminated in the launch of The Joseph C. Tsai Leadership Program at Yale Law School in November 2021.

The innovative new program seeks to empower the next generation of leaders to effect powerful change in any career path they choose.

by Alden Ferro



A few months after starting her new role at the helm of Yale Law School, Dean Heather K. Gerken hit the road to listen. During the first half of 2018, Gerken traveled the country, holding 17 regional events and hundreds of individual meetings in order to converse with more than 3,000 Law School alumni from a wide variety of backgrounds and professional fields. At the same time, she consulted with the faculty and held meetings with students about how to better prepare the next generation of leaders and light up the many career paths available to Yale Law School graduates.

Just three years later, the bold vision that was developed through these informative conversations came to fruition with the launch of The Tsai Leadership Program at Yale Law School.

“For nearly 200 years, Yale Law School has graduated leaders who blaze their own paths and make a difference in every sector of society. The Tsai Leadership Program builds on our best traditions even as we reinvent them,” said Gerken. “We hope the program will support a new generation of changemakers, equipping them to meet the challenges to come while carrying forward the highest ideals of the Law School.”

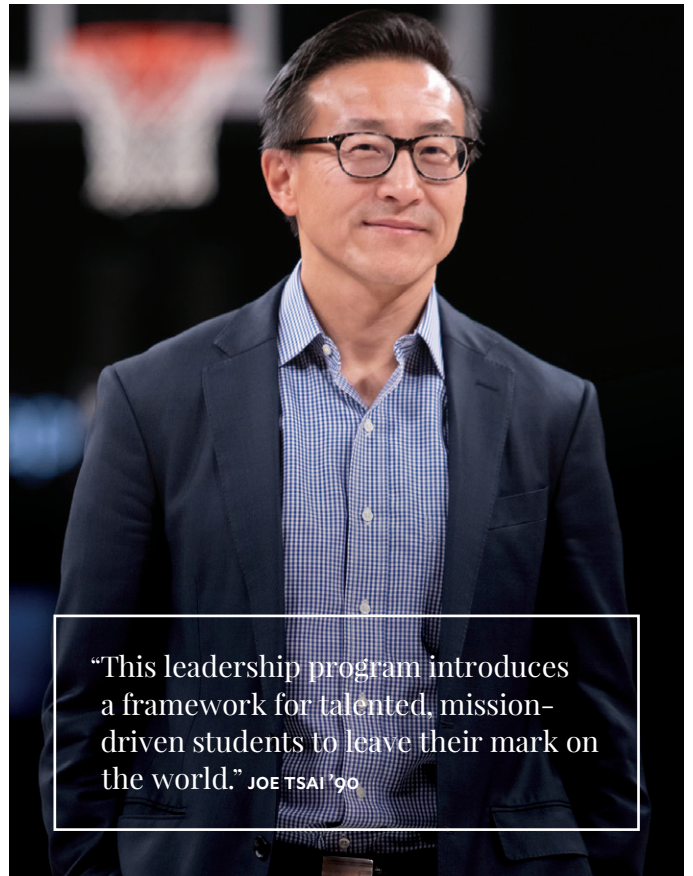
The establishment of the program comes at a crucial moment, launching amid a global pandemic, and with critical issues like racial inequality and climate change demanding urgent action. It is designed to empower every student to chart their own unique course and develop the versatile skill set needed to tackle the most vexing challenges of the 21st century.

“This leadership program introduces a framework for talented, mission-driven students to leave their mark on the world, while also affording space for them to define their own style of leadership,” explained program founder and philanthropist Joseph C. Tsai ’90, Executive Vice Chairman and co-founder of Alibaba Group. “I am honored to give back to an institution that represents the confluence of experiences that shaped who I am, and to empower others to find their path to a meaningful career.”

## Building a Curriculum for the Next Century

The vision for The Tsai Leadership Program is simple at its core — to prepare every student for their last job, not just their first. To do that, the Law School is expanding and modernizing the curriculum, rolling out a variety of professional skills workshops, and mobilizing an expansive alumni network to open up a myriad of new opportunities for students. All of these concepts took shape when graduates offered their ideas about how the Law School could further innovate and adapt to help students succeed in a complex and ever-evolving world.

“There was a striking through line in all of my conversations with alumni, regardless of industry, background, or generation,”



“This leadership program introduces a framework for talented, mission-driven students to leave their mark on the world.” JOE TSAI '90

explained Gerken. “Everyone celebrated our incredible record of training broad-gauged thinkers and thoughtful leaders while recognizing that this was a moment to look to the future. Everyone understood we needed to change in order for Yale Law School to continue its best traditions.”

Conchita Cruz ’16 participated in some of those early conversations with Dean Gerken. While still at the Law School, Cruz founded the Asylum Seeker Advocacy Project in the summer of 2015 with three other Yale Law students to provide assistance to those seeking asylum at the border. Since then, the project has served more than 200,000 clients.

“I am so grateful to Yale Law School for making me feel like anything was possible in my career — both within the law and outside of it,” said Cruz. Reflecting on what it took to successfully scale up a national nonprofit, Cruz noted that by the time she was in her third year of law school, she knew she needed to learn the basics of budgeting, accounting, and fundraising, topics not traditionally covered.

“I’m excited that opportunities like these will be available to students moving forward who are focused on innovation, whether that means starting a nonprofit or business following graduation,” said Cruz.

From the public interest to the private sector, alumni across the spectrum agreed that Yale Law School was uniquely equipped to lead the charge in redefining the future of legal education.

“My view is that the education we get at Yale Law School prepares one to do many different things in life and can lead to leadership in lots of different areas,” said Gregory Fleming ’88, Chief Executive Officer of Rockefeller Capital Management and one of the founders of the program. “That’s really one of the notions behind this effort. With the training at Yale Law School, you can be a leader in the not-for-profit space, in the legal profession, teaching, as a judge, as a practitioner. You can lead a corporation; you can lead the country.”

“We need diverse, creative, mindful, courageous, and emotionally intelligent leaders to address the complex challenges of our nation and the global community,” said Rhonda Joy McLean ’83, President and CEO of the leadership consulting company RJMLEADS and former Deputy General Counsel of Time Inc. “I hope that our students will avail themselves of the remarkable resources, people, information, and experiences provided through The Tsai Leadership Program, and cultivate their own unique leadership styles and pathways.”

As part of a broadened curriculum, numeracy courses such as accounting, corporate finance, and statistics will be offered, alongside courses in ethical decision-making and organizational leadership, and in emerging areas related to technological change, big data, and globalization.

These new courses will be taught by world-class professionals from around the country. Intensives, bootcamps, and workshops will further enhance the intellectual experience, offering students the chance to sharpen their professional management skills.

Helping students see the limitless career avenues available to them is a central aim of the program, according to Tsai, who experienced firsthand how his legal training provided an advantage in his entrepreneurial career.

“What we can do is teach students to think about their career not as a straight path,” said Tsai, noting that having a range of professional experiences and interests makes one a better, more well-rounded leader.

“Maybe it’s not about getting the clerkship and then the law firm and then to partnership in a firm,” Tsai said. “Perhaps it’s about a very jagged path, doing something here, doing something there. What happens after that is you have a diversity of experience. Then you can actually have better information to choose what you really want to do when you grow up.”

B. Marc Allen ’02, Chief Strategy Officer and Senior Vice President of Strategy and Corporate Development at The Boeing Company, also participated in Dean Gerken’s listening tour and agreed that expanded opportunities through The Tsai Leadership Program will help Law School students learn how to navigate obstacles leaders in every sector face.

Allen emphasized that leadership demands mastery of interpersonal challenges. “It’s easy to miss the people and collaboration challenges when the caseload is front and center — as it should be — during the law school years. This program will create great learning by highlighting the very real ways that institutions and the people who lead them operate, decide, succeed, and fail in collective undertakings,” he said.

“I am so grateful to Yale Law School for making me feel like anything was possible in my career — both within the law and outside of it.”

CONCHITA CRUZ ’16



Conchita Cruz '16



“With the training at Yale Law School, you can be a leader in the not-for-profit space, in the legal profession, teaching, as a judge, as a practitioner. You can lead a corporation; you can lead the country.” **GREGORY FLEMING '88**



Gregory Fleming '88

### Harnessing the Power of a Dynamic Alumni Community

One of the most critical elements of The Tsai Leadership Program is the power of the more than 13,000 alumni around the world, spanning an incredible range of careers, backgrounds, and areas of expertise. The program seeks to harness the diverse and dynamic Yale Law School alumni community through impactful mentorship connections between students and graduates from an array of industries, both within traditional legal practice and in unconventional careers.

“There is no better way to illustrate the infinite career pathways available to our students than through the inspiring examples of our remarkable alumni around the world,” said Gerken.

Alumni leaders were also the driving force that moved the program from an idea to a reality that is already enhancing the student experience. The Tsai Leadership Program was created thanks to the generosity of Joe Tsai '90 and Clara Wu Tsai, Michael Chae '97 and Alexa Chae '97, Gene Ludwig '73 and Carol Ludwig, along with several other founding donors.

“Our program founders exemplify what it means to be a leader today, and they have chosen to make a bold investment in the leaders of tomorrow,” said Gerken. “The impact of their vision and generosity will be felt for generations to come as our students go out into the world and use their skills for the greater good.”

Two initiatives serve as core pillars for The Tsai Leadership Program — the Carol and Gene Ludwig Program in Public Sector Leadership (see page 34) and the Michael S. and Alexa B. Chae Initiative in Private Sector Leadership (see page 36). Each center provides focused educational and professional support as well as fellowship opportunities to students who aspire to nontraditional careers and leadership roles in those sectors.

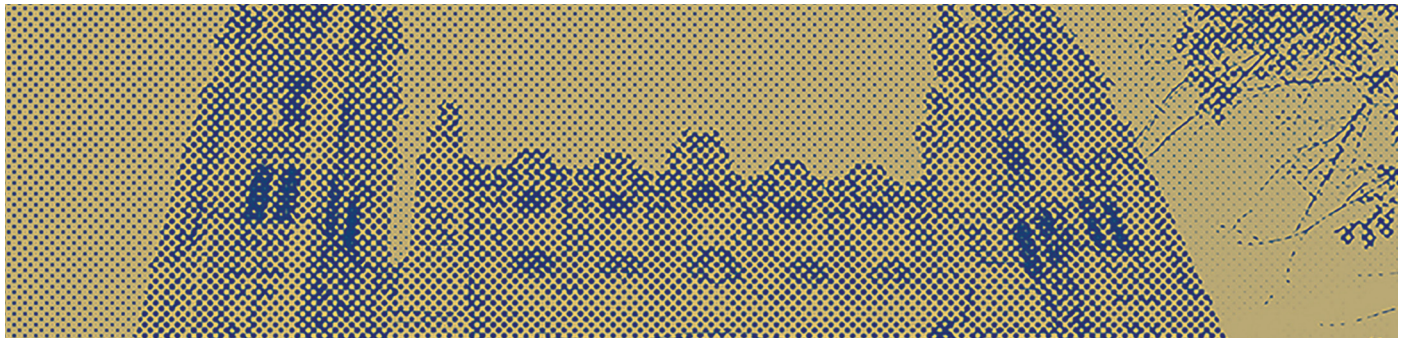
Professor of Law John Morley '06 directs the Chae Initiative, and Leighton Homer Surbeck Professor of Law Cristina Rodríguez '00 and Jacob Hacker, Stanley B. Resor Professor of Political Science in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Yale University, co-direct the Ludwig Program.

“We need diverse, creative, mindful, courageous, and emotionally intelligent leaders to address the complex challenges of our nation and the global community.”

**RHONDA JOY MCLEAN '83**



Rhonda Joy McLean '83



“This program will create great learning by highlighting the very real ways that institutions and the people who lead them operate, decide, succeed, and fail in collective undertakings.”

B. MARC ALLEN '02



In addition, an expansive group of alumni serve on The Tsai Leadership Program’s Alumni Advisory Council, acting as a resource to the Dean and faculty as the program develops over time. They are particularly focused on how to build connections between alumni and students.

“The Dean has been great from the start at sitting down with the Law School’s alumni and integrating the diverse perspectives she has been hearing from across the spectrum,” said Allen, who serves on the advisory council.

“We need a great education that speaks to both our minds and hearts, transforming us into better listeners, with attributes of openness and humility,” added Allen. “That prepares us to stumble upon

the great ideas of others and to join in, pursuing great things in our communities, companies, governments, and institutions.”

McLean said the resources and opportunities offered through the program will greatly benefit students, and she is excited to see the potential for an even stronger mentorship component connecting students and alumni.

“The Tsai Leadership Program will exponentially expand the opportunities for our remarkable students to learn about the challenges and rewards of leadership firsthand, from our amazing alumni,” said McLean. “I feel certain that our alumni will learn from our students as well.”

Taken together, these elements — an enriched curriculum, enhanced alumni and mentorship connections, and a codification of what Yale Law School has always done implicitly — will ensure that future graduates of Yale Law School are well prepared to take on the challenges that await them in the courtroom, the boardroom, and beyond.

“Yale Law students across the board are inquisitive, bright, eclectic, and looking to have an impact in life,” said Fleming. “I think this leadership program can take that and turbocharge it. Yale Law School graduates can go out into the world and change it for the better no matter what they do.”

*Learn more about The Tsai Leadership Program at [law.yale.edu/leadership](http://law.yale.edu/leadership).*

## Additional Founders

Roger L. Barnett '89

Steven A. Baronoff '84

Michael A. Doyle '62 and Bunny Winter

Gregory J. Fleming '88 and Melissa S. Fleming

Thomas Glocer '84

Benjamin Heineman '71

David A. Jones Sr. '60

Alfred Rankin '66



# The Carol and Gene Ludwig Program in Public Sector Leadership

## Empowering Students to Serve Others



“We have an obligation...to leave  
the world just a little bit better  
than we found it.” GENE LUDWIG '73

**Through careers spent** in government service, public health, and work within individual philanthropic efforts, Gene and Carol Ludwig have always been focused on giving back to others. Their mission now is to develop public sector leaders of the future who are driven by a shared sense of compassion and determination to make the world a better place.

In keeping with that vision, they launched the Ludwig Program in Public Sector Leadership, which is designed to nurture and develop the next generation of public sector and nonprofit leaders. Through the program — which is a core pillar of The Tsai Leadership Program at Yale Law School — students will engage deeply with policy work and ethics and emerge equipped to solve some of society’s most difficult problems.

“Serving our country and its people, particularly those in need, is one of the most rewarding and important professional experiences we can have, and we need to give our most talented young people a clear path to do so successfully and with compassion,” said Gene Ludwig '73. “This one-of-a-kind law school program is designed to give YLS graduates the specialized policy and technical skills to serve effectively in government or other venues where they can make a powerful, positive difference for their fellow citizens.”

“Now more than ever we need to prepare a new generation of students for careers in public service,” added Carol Ludwig. “There is no better institution to serve as a home for this center of learning. We are excited to see the difference these students will make for our country and our global community.”

Gene Ludwig is former Comptroller of the Currency, founder and CEO of Promontory MortgagePath, Co-managing Partner of Canapi Ventures, and Chair of the Ludwig Institute for Shared Economic Prosperity. Carol Ludwig is a neurologist and the President of the Carol and Gene Ludwig Family Foundation, which supports medical research and educational opportunities for low- and moderate-income students.

“Thanks to the extraordinary generosity of Carol and Gene Ludwig, our students will be immersed in programming that prepares them to be change agents, all the while focusing on

the ethics of public service and the importance of helping those in greatest need,” said Dean Heather K. Gerken. “The Ludwig Program in Public Sector Leadership will benefit generations of students and make a profound difference in the lives of others. The program fully embodies the spirit and commitments of Gene and Carol.”

Leighton Homer Surbeck Professor of Law Cristina Rodríguez '00 and Jacob Hacker, Stanley B. Resor Professor of Political Science in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Yale University, will serve as Faculty Directors of the Ludwig Program.

“We are excited to launch this new program at a moment when dedicated and talented public servants are needed more than ever,” said Rodríguez.

To enhance Law School students’ exposure to leaders who are deeply committed to public service, a vibrant democracy, and the well-being of others, the program also includes the Ludwig Citizenship and Equality Lecture Series. Speakers in the series will address pressing issues and discuss how to navigate obstacles. The program will also offer fellowships starting in the spring of 2022.

“Informed leadership in the public and nonprofit sectors is more vital than ever, and Ludwig Fellows will receive the support, training, mentoring, and social ties that make the difference — for them and for our nation,” said Hacker.

For Gene Ludwig, the creation of the Ludwig Program helps pay forward the education he received at the Law School with the goal of ensuring generations to come have the same opportunities to give back in the future.

“An excellent education, importantly at YLS, has been the cornerstone that has allowed me to do everything I’ve done in life, from becoming a lawyer to government service to building businesses and pushing for positive change for low- and moderate-income communities,” Ludwig said. “We have an obligation, particularly as Yale Law grads, who have benefitted from so much time, effort, and national resources, to leave the world just a little bit better than we found it.” 🍷



*Learn more about the Carol and Gene Ludwig Program in Public Sector Leadership at [law.yale.edu/ludwigprogram](http://law.yale.edu/ludwigprogram).*



## The Michael S. and Alexa B. Chae Initiative in Private Sector Leadership

### Preparing Business Leaders of the Future



“A Yale Law degree is a versatile thinking and problem-solving degree and represents a crucial foundation for so many business leadership roles.”

MICHAEL S. CHAE '97

**Michael S. Chae '97** has seen firsthand how the global business world evolves and how a Yale Law education prepares graduates to be dynamic leaders across the business, finance, investing, and entrepreneurship spheres.

Now, Chae and his wife Alexa Bator Chae '97 are hoping to impart that knowledge to future business leaders with the launch of the Chae Initiative in Private Sector Leadership, a core pillar of The Tsai Leadership Program at Yale Law School.

“Yale Law School has always been uniquely successful in preparing its graduates for careers in business and entrepreneurship,” Chae said. “The Chae Initiative provides students with a strong and practical grounding in business and financial skills and prepares them to engage in effective and ethical decision-making in a global business environment.”

Michael Chae’s own leadership path is an example of how a leader evolves over time. Shortly after graduating from the Law School, Chae began working at Blackstone, the global investment firm where he remains today as Senior Managing Director and Chief Financial Officer.

“I think leaders are made, not born, and most often they are best made through learning by doing, from the bottom up,” Chae said. “That means developing sound judgment by making decisions on behalf of increasingly larger groups of people and regarding continually broader and more complex sets of issues.”

Chae also understands the power of the Yale Law School degree and hopes that the launch of the Chae Initiative will bolster the resources available to students interested in private sector careers.

“A Yale Law degree is a versatile thinking and problem-solving degree and represents a crucial foundation for so many business leadership roles,” Chae said. “Uncompromising rigor and honesty — intellectual and personal — are the essential qualities demanded of the best leaders and best professionals.”



Dean Heather K. Gerken said the Chae Initiative will build on the Law School's tradition of training multidimensional leaders by providing further opportunities to equip students with a firm grasp of business principles and ethics.

"The Chae Initiative will transform the way our students engage within a global business environment and light up the many pathways available in the private sector," said Gerken. "We are incredibly grateful to Michael and Alexa Chae for their vision and support. This initiative will have a lasting impact on the next generation of private sector leaders who will take the skills they learn to pursue bold, innovative work around the world."

Professor John Morley '06 will serve as Faculty Director of the Chae Initiative. Morley said students will learn to combine their legal skills with leadership ability by learning quantitative reasoning, management insights, ethical courage, and entrepreneurial thinking. The program will also offer fellowships in the spring of 2022.

"The Chae Initiative will focus on mentorship, career- and academic-advising, and the development of an extraordinary classroom experience with world-class intellectuals and active leaders," Morley said. "In five years, we hope to have a solid group of alumni fellows who have completed the program and who will continue to contribute to its success."

Ultimately, Chae said he hopes the initiative will inspire business leaders of the future to never stop learning and evolving as they pursue wide-ranging, impactful careers.

"If you are fortunate, your career journey is long and never-ending, which means you are always learning and growing," he said. 🍀

*Learn more about the Michael S. and Alexa B. Chae Initiative in Private Sector Leadership at [law.yale.edu/chaeinitiative](http://law.yale.edu/chaeinitiative).*