

ADVANCING THE CAUSE OF JUSTICE

*Commencement
2023*


PHOTOS BY MARA LAVITT





Guido Calabresi '58:

WHEN YOU FEEL GOOD,
WATCH OUT THAT YOU MAY FALL,
AND WHEN YOU FEEL BAD,
KNOW THAT YOU WILL HAVE
A CHANCE TO RESCUE YOURSELF.”



Members of the Yale Law School community, as well as family and friends of the Class of 2023, came together to celebrate the graduates during Commencement ceremonies on May 22. This year’s Commencement honored 243 degree candidates as well as the first class of Hurst Horizon scholars. (See page 47.)

Under sunny skies in New Haven, graduates were led in a procession by the Mattatuck Drum Band before attending the University-wide ceremony held on Yale’s historic Old Campus, where they were recognized by President Peter Salovey and Dean Heather K. Gerken. Sterling Professor Emeritus of Law and former Dean of the Law School Guido Calabresi ’58 was presented with an honorary Doctor of Laws for his lifetime of achievements.

Following the ceremony, Yale Law School’s ceremony was held at the Lanman Center of the Payne Whitney Gymnasium. Dean Gerken began her address to the graduates by applauding them for not only making it through law school but doing so in the midst of a global pandemic.

“We are in awe of what you’ve achieved,” said Gerken. “Graduating from Yale Law School is no mean feat, but you did it during some of the most challenging years in living memory...You navigated a period of extraordinary uncertainty with courage and determination.”

She continued, “I cannot promise that the world that awaits you is any more predictable. What I do know for sure is that your law degrees are well-earned, hard-fought, and markers of genuine achievement.”



ELIZABETH CLARKE '23:

Next year I’m going to be a Yale Liman Fellow working at the Office of the Federal Defender for the District of Connecticut. I’m going to be doing public defense with clients on federal parole. At Yale, I’ve had a lot of wonderful experiences in public interest, particularly working with a lot of former and current public defenders who have inspired me.

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Anne L. Alstott '87:

USE YOUR POWER, USE YOUR PRIVILEGE,
TO FIGHT OPPRESSION AND
TO CREATE A LEGAL COMMUNITY IN
WHICH EVERY ONE OF US STANDS
IN A RELATION OF EQUALITY TO OTHERS.



Reshma Saujani '02:

YOU ALL HOLD THE POWER
TO CREATE THIS WORLD.



The faculty speaker chosen for this year's Commencement was Jacquin D. Bierman Professor in Taxation Anne L. Alstott '87. Throughout her remarks, Alstott encouraged graduates to remember that the law is dynamic and can serve to either advance justice or impede it.

"Remember where you are from. The people who love you, the people who recognized your potential, the people who gave you a second chance also taught you about justice," Alstott said. "Use your power, use your privilege, to fight oppression and to create a legal community in which every one of us stands in a relation of equality to others."

Guest speaker Reshma Saujani '02, a leading activist and social entrepreneur, next spoke to the class. Saujani implored graduates to "make a career of care," one that focuses less on their vocation and more on their values.

"Whether you go into academia, the judiciary, private practice, or outside the field entirely, care will be the ultimate measure of success," said Saujani. "It's a world where care is not an afterthought, or a sacrifice; rather, it's the very core of who we are as lawyers and who we are as people. You all hold the power to create this world. But more than that, you have the responsibility to create it. Because in this class, there's no question whether you'll take action to make the world a better place — the only question is: How?"



TOMÁS CHURBA '23 LLM:

Next I'm doing the J.S.D. program, which is the doctoral degree program at Yale Law School. The small faculty cohort and the small size of the Law School allow you to work one-on-one with professors and to develop your research agenda with them intimately. For me, working with professors one-on-one was the richest experience from the LL.M. program.



DAPHNE PENG '23:

I will be working with a firm called Cravath in New York doing transactional law.

My favorite experience from Law School was Coker-ing.

I absolutely loved my small group, and mentorship was honestly the best thing at YLS. I gained so much from my mentors and from passing on that knowledge to mentees. Absolute best thing I did at YLS.

FERNANDO ROJAS '23:

I'll be going to a firm in Los Angeles, O'Melveny & Myers, and after that hopefully applying to a clinical teaching fellowship at UCLA. I was in WIRAC, the Worker and Immigrants Rights Advocacy Clinic, and would love to have the chance to teach students in the future.



UPASNA SAHA '23:

I'm going to be a trial attorney in the criminal defense practice at the Bronx Defenders. I came to law school really interested in doing death penalty work and criminal defense work and pursued clinics and internships that have allowed me to explore those interests. I'm from New York, so I'm returning to my home community. To serve the communities I'm from and that I stand in solidarity with is really meaningful to me.



Dean Heather K. Gerken, Robert Hurst, and Soledad Hurst '92

Horizon Scholars Celebrated

PHOTOS BY HAROLD SHAPIRO

On Sunday, May 21, the night before Commencement, graduating Hurst Horizon Scholarship recipients gathered with their families and donors Soledad Hurst '92 and Robert Hurst at the Greenberg Conference Center.

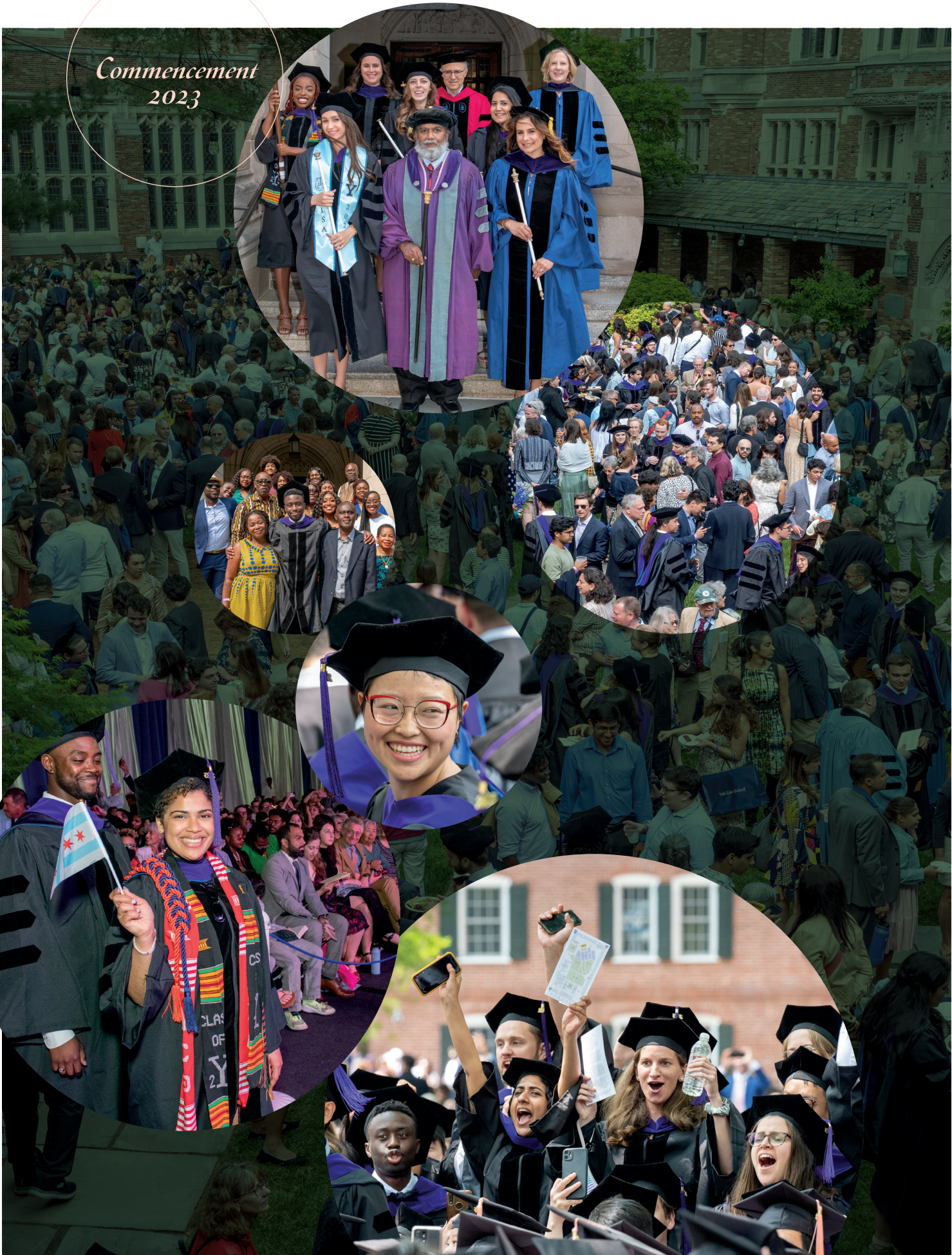
The Horizon Scholarships are designed to remove cost as a barrier to law school so that students from all backgrounds can receive a legal education. Members of the class of 2023 are among the first recipients of the scholarship to graduate. Soledad '92 and Robert Hurst, David '78 and Patricia Nierenberg, and Gene '73 and Carol Ludwig are the founding donors of the scholarship.

Dean Gerken spoke at the event, recognizing the work of the students in earning their Yale Law School degrees and the support of their families in getting them to this milestone. The Hursts were delighted to celebrate with the graduates and witness the impact of their gift. ♡



Horizon scholarship recipients and families enjoy dinner at the Greenberg Center.

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FAITH LEWIS '23:

I'll be headed to the Bay Area in California to work for Loeff Cabraser Heimann & Bernstein, a plaintiff-side organization doing public interest work.

It'll be torts, environmental work, consumer protection — it's going to be a broad range. I'm so excited for the journey.

DAN ISRAEL '23 LL.M.:

I am planning to go to New York to work for a year, then I'm going to start the J.S.D., which is the doctoral program at the Law School. The LL.M. cohort is an incredible group of people from all over the world. Getting to know them in informal conversations was a life-changing experience for me.



JESSICA QUINTER '23:

I'm going to be a Gruber Fellow at the ACLU Reproductive Freedom Project in New York. I'll be litigating in state and federal

courts around the country to challenge abortion bans and other restrictions on abortion access. I had a lot of opportunities to work on reproductive rights issues at Yale Law School, which included the Reproductive Rights and Justice Project. I'm grateful for the opportunities I had to work in this pretty niche area, which I'm now pursuing for my career.



Guido — as he is known to all — delivered the final remarks, 65 years after his own graduation from Yale Law School. In her introduction, Gerken referred to his reputation in academia and on the federal bench but also what he has meant to generations of Law School students and alumni.

"It is almost impossible to capture what Guido means to this community. He is its intellectual heart and emotional soul," Gerken said.

In addition to the four degrees he earned from Yale College, Oxford, and Yale Law School, Calabresi has been awarded some 50 honorary degrees in the United States and abroad.

Calabresi encouraged the graduates to choose pursuits that are fun and useful as they embark on their careers. He recognized that many in the crowd viewed themselves as outsiders but that their Yale Law degrees now make them insiders. "Don't ever forget where you came from, but understand that now you owe it to those who remain outsiders to bear a greater burden because you are now insiders," he said.

The former dean emphasized that good people can do bad things and that bad people can do good things, citing examples from the legal profession and his family history. "When you feel good, watch out that you may fall, and when you feel bad, know that you will have a chance to rescue yourself," he said.

This year's Commencement honored 243 degree candidates, comprising 220 J.D., 22 LL.M., and one M.S.L. 🎓