



# “Our Past and Our Future” Alumni Reunite During Bicentennial Year

BY ERIN SHANLEY

PHOTOS BY HAROLD SHAPIRO AND MARA LAVITT

# Alumni Weekend 2024



**The occasion of the Law School’s bicentennial** called for an extraordinary Alumni Weekend. Capping off a year of events, Alumni Weekend 2024 brought together more than 1,300 alumni and guests Oct. 18–20 in New Haven.

In addition to connecting with friends and hearing from distinguished alumni, the weekend was an opportunity to collectively celebrate the School’s extraordinary history. In her State of the School address, Dean Heather K. Gerken outlined how the School has been able to remain innovative throughout the years and bring in a wide-ranging, talented class of students from around the world.

“As we look towards the future, we will continue our tradition of leading the charge for change across legal education,” said Gerken. “This is a unique moment in time — one in which we must push for all of our peers to join us in kicking open the doors to this profession.”

Gerken credited alumni for carrying on the best traditions of the Law School and upholding its excellence through their mentorship, service, and philanthropy.

“You are not just our past; you are integral to our present and future,” said Gerken.



Events on Friday included a celebration of the generosity of David Nierenberg '78 and Patricia Nierenberg and an announcement that the dean's office would be renamed in honor of the couple. The Nierenbergs have long supported initiatives at the Law School and at Yale. Among their extensive philanthropy, the Nierenbergs gave the first gift to the Hurst Horizon Scholarship Program to break down barriers to access in legal education. This year, 88 students at the Law School receive the need-based scholarship, which provides full tuition for students with significant financial need.

The weekend was full of a series of lively panel events, discussions, and gatherings for the alumni community.



(clockwise from top left) Friday dinner in Commons; the "Women on the Bench" panel; former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton '73 and Dean Heather K. Gerken; John Mulaney; Justice Sonia Sotomayor '79 and Rudy Aragon '79; Dean Gerken and David Nierenberg; the deans' panel





On Friday evening, a deans' panel in Woolsey Hall featured Gerken and former deans Guido Calabresi '58, Harold Hongju Koh, and Anthony Kronman '75.

Saturday's activities started with the dean's annual State of the School address — with Chief Justice Margaret H. Marshall '76 delivering introductory remarks — in which Gerken highlighted the Law School's remarkable accomplishments of the last decade and emphasized the importance of continuing the School's tradition of excellence as it looks toward the next 200 years.

Following the State of the School address, three alumni were presented with the Award of Merit, the Yale Law School Association's highest honor.

This year's recipients were José A. Cabranes '65, Senior Judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 2nd Circuit; Randall Kennedy '82, Michael R. Klein Professor at Harvard Law School; and Barrington "Danny" Parker '69, Senior Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the 2nd Circuit. (see page 50)

The weekend was enlivened by a series of vibrant panel discussions with alumni.

A Saturday morning panel, "Women on the Bench: A Judicial Legacy," featured Justice Sonia Sotomayor '79, California Supreme

Court Justice Leandra Kruger '01, Judge Pamela Harris '90, and Judge Dabney Friedrich '92. Guests reconvened in Woolsey Hall on Saturday afternoon for a conversation between Gerken and former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton '73. In the weekend's grand finale event, John Mulaney, the comedian and son of Charles Mulaney '74 and Ellen Mulaney '74, moderated a "Conversation on Textualist Approaches of Constitutional Interpretation" with Sterling Professor of Law and Political Science Akhil Reed Amar '84 and former Acting Solicitor General of the United States Neal Katyal '95.

Individual class activities and dinners followed the Woolsey Hall events. The weekend concluded on Sunday with an all-alumni farewell brunch in the Derald H. Ruttenberg Dining Hall of Sterling Law Building. 📍



## Yale Law School Association Recognizes Three Alumni with Award of Merit

During this year's Alumni Weekend celebration, Dean Heather K. Gerken presented the 2024 Award of Merit honorees in the Levinson Auditorium following her annual State of the School address. This year's recipients were José A. Cabranes '65, Randall Kennedy '82, and Barrington "Danny" Parker '69.

José A. Cabranes '65

"José is more than a judge. He has made a point of supporting kids like his younger self dream big dreams, just as he did," Gerken said of Cabranes, a senior judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 2nd Circuit.



Born in Puerto Rico, Judge Cabranes did not speak any English when he moved to the South Bronx as a young child. He went on to graduate from Columbia College and Yale Law School, and then became the first general counsel of Yale University.

In 1979, he became the first Puerto Rican to serve as a federal judge in the continental United States when President Jimmy Carter nominated him to the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. In this role, he became a mentor to one of his first research assistants — Justice Sonia Sotomayor '79, the first Latina to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court. President Bill Clinton '73 nominated him to the 2nd Circuit in 1994.



### Randall L. Kennedy '82

"Association with Yale Law School has been one of the great privileges and enrichments of my life," said Kennedy, the Michael R. Klein Professor at Harvard Law School.

Kennedy, a Rhodes Scholar and Princeton University graduate, clerked for Judge J. Skelly Wright on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia and Justice Thurgood Marshall on the U.S. Supreme Court. He joined the faculty of Harvard Law School in 1984, where he teaches courses on contracts, criminal law, and the regulation of race relations. He is a member of the bars of the District of Columbia and the U.S. Supreme Court.

In his speech, Kennedy credited the Law School for the profound impact it has had on his life. "For 40 years, I have been debating with Owen Fiss," said Kennedy. "Sometimes it was in person, sometimes it was in print, often it was in my imagination." He went on to describe his discourse with Fiss as "quite formative."



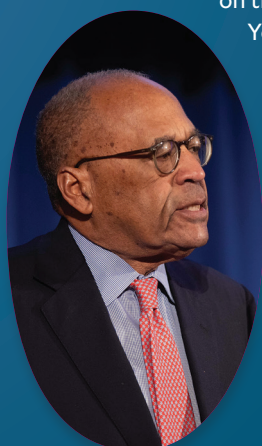
### Barrington "Danny" Parker '69

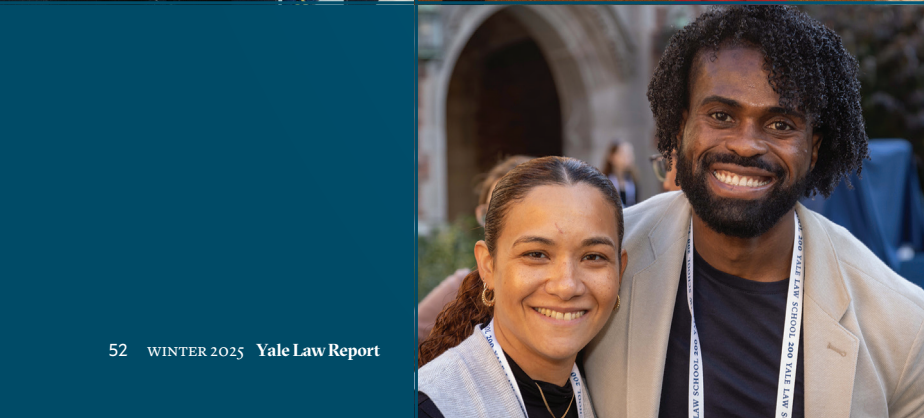
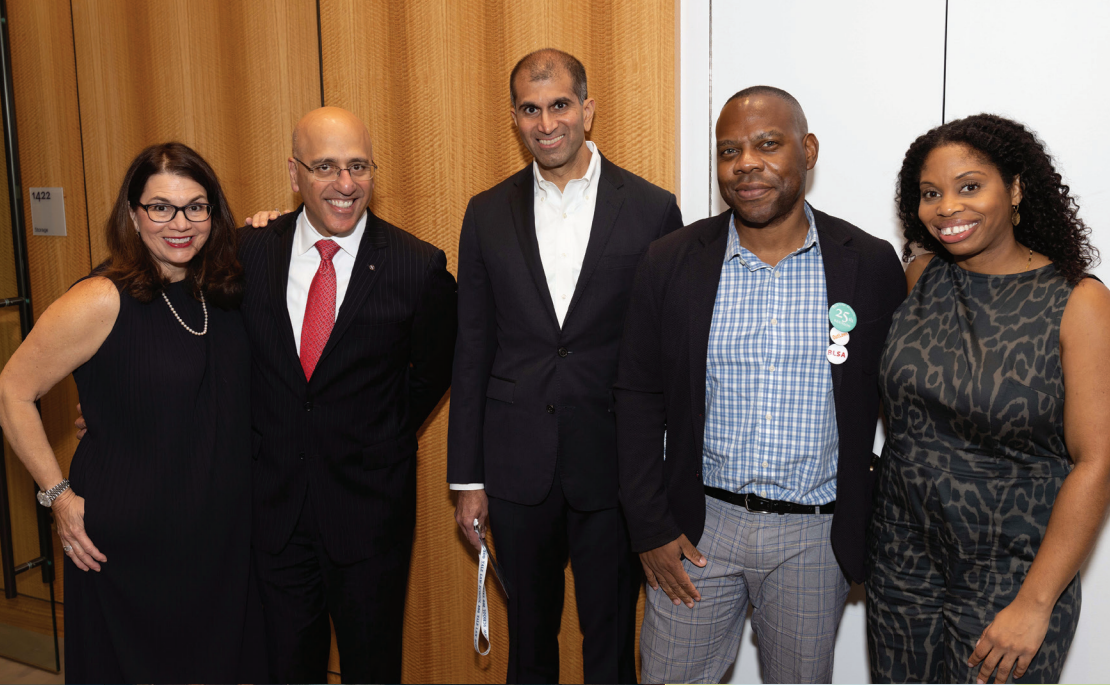
Judge Parker was nominated by President George Bush in 2001 to succeed Judge Ralph K. Winter Jr. '60 on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 2nd Circuit, where he is now a senior judge.

Prior to his elevation to the appeals court, Judge Parker served on the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York from 1994 to 2001, where he presided over nearly 50 jury trials involving complex and high-profile cases. Prior to his role on the bench, Judge Parker worked in commercial litigation for 24 years.

"From matters of life and death in capital punishment cases, to intricate questions of employment discrimination and affirmative action, Judge Parker has shown a remarkable ability to navigate these sensitive and often controversial topics with clarity and fairness," Gerken said. "What sets Judge Parker apart is not just his legal acumen, but his courage in bridging ideological divides."

A native of Washington, D.C., Judge Parker is a 1965 graduate of Yale College, spent 12 years as a fellow of the Yale Corporation, and was a trustee of Yale-New Haven Hospital. 📍





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