

Celebrating the Class of 2025



Leading with Integrity and Responsibility

*by Erin Shanley
Photos by Mara Lavitt*



The Yale Law School Class of 2025 was celebrated on May 19 during a Commencement ceremony in New Haven surrounded by family, friends, and members of the community. Remarks from this year's speakers to the graduates emphasized the importance of upholding the core values of the profession and leveraging their skills to bring forth positive change in the world.

The day kicked off with a procession of the graduates from Sterling Law Building to Beinecke Plaza led by the Mattatuck Drum Band. Dean Heather K. Gerken and Sterling Professor Emeritus Guido Calabresi '58 strolled arm in arm alongside the graduates as they made their way down Wall Street.

The procession continued to Old Campus, where the University's 324th Commencement ceremony was held under bright and breezy skies. Deans from each school presented their graduate candidates to Yale University President Maurie McInnis — who was inaugurated as the University's 24th president in April — and honorary degrees were conferred.



OUR GRADS



Katherine Salinas '25

I'll be clerking in the Southern District of Texas for the Hon. Keith P. Ellison. After that, I hope to begin work as a public defender. I'm a big believer in going home and going where you're needed, so I'm thrilled to be heading back to Texas — I'm confident that my time at YLS, particularly in the Challenging Mass Incarceration Clinic, has prepared me to serve members of my community caught up in the criminal legal system.



Jack Baisley '25

My favorite part of YLS (aside from the incredible people) was my clinical work in the Veterans Legal Services and Rule of Law clinics. It was working on those matters where I felt most affirmed in my decision to come to YLS and empowered to make positive change through the law.



“If you don’t like the way a legal doctrine is shifting, be the equal and opposite force that pulls the pendulum of the law back in a different direction.”

Elizabeth Barchas Prelogar, 48th Solicitor General of the United States



The University-wide Commencement was immediately followed by a diploma ceremony for the Law School in the Lanman Center of Payne Whitney Gymnasium.

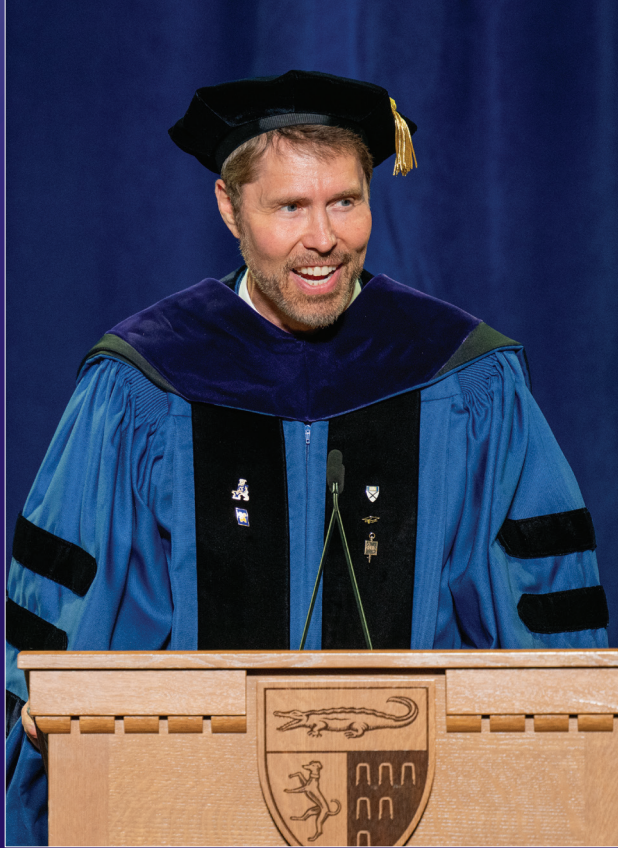
In her opening remarks, Dean Gerken credited the families and friends in the audience for their steadfast support of the graduates throughout their academic journeys to and through law school. She also emphasized the importance of the rule of law and how a functioning legal system is the bedrock of a democracy that protects everyone.

“The rule of law matters because the law is powerful,” she said. “The law’s power means you are now powerful, too. You are ready for this moment. Legal training is not a hollow power, nor a tool you should lend readily to the highest bidder. It comes with an ethical valence and a civic responsibility.”

Gerken also implored graduates to carry with them the School’s core values as they go forth in the world.

“That fundamentally noble mission of the lawyer has long held us steady. It is a mission of service that is embedded deep in the bones of this institution. As you go into the world, carry on our best traditions. Serve others. Do right by the law. Do right by yourselves. The rest will come.”





“Let your lives be inspired by your imagination and use your talents to pursue what you know to be good.”

G. Eric Brunstad Jr. '11 LLM, '14 JSD, Visiting Lecturer in Law

Visiting Lecturer in Law G. Eric Brunstad Jr. '11 LLM, '14 JSD served as this year's faculty speaker and faculty marshal. In his address, he encouraged graduates to harness the transformative power of imagination to solve problems, address failure, and become their best selves.

“Take your practiced powers and address the conflicts and contradictions you encounter,” said Brunstad. “Let your lives be inspired by your imagination and use your talents to pursue what you know to be good.”

Elizabeth Barchas Prelogar, the 48th Solicitor General of the United States and Steven and Maureen Klinsky Visiting Professor of Practice for Leadership and Progress at Harvard Law School, addressed the graduates as this year's guest speaker. Prelogar shared her five rules for oral argument — and life: take charge of what you can control, stay loose and trust your hard work, prize your integrity, distribute your quills by showing gratitude to those who support you, and always keep fighting.

“If you don't like the way a legal doctrine is shifting, be the equal and opposite force that pulls the pendulum of the law back in a different direction,” said Prelogar. “So much change happens from the bottom-up. Focus on channeling your talents toward the public good, in whatever form that might take — whether by developing a robust pro bono practice, working in public-interest roles, or helping people through direct legal services.”

“There are innumerable ways to use the privilege of your law school degree to build a society that lives up to your values,” she said.

The day concluded with a reception in the Baker Hall Courtyard where graduates celebrated with friends and family and connected with classmates and professors one more time.

This year's Commencement honored 236 degree candidates, comprising 206 J.D., 26 LL.M., two J.S.D., and two M.S.L. candidates. 🍷





Tamar Ben-Ozer '25 LLM

I'm excited to put the skills and knowledge I've acquired at Yale into action next year as a Gruber Fellow! Starting in September, I'll be contributing to policy research on partnership-based peace in Israel-Palestine with an NGO called A Land for All.



Kevin Baisden '25

After graduation, I will return to my hometown as an associate at Covington and Burling's Washington, D.C., office before clerking on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 6th Circuit in 2026. My favorite law school moments are the many Federalist Society events that I was a part of and going full circle as a former Access to Law School fellow to an Access to Law School coach through Professor James Forman's program.





Amit Singh '25 LLM

It has been remarkable to be at a place where the pursuit of knowledge is unencumbered by disciplinary boundaries and entrenched orthodoxies. I have benefitted enormously from the ways, both formal and informal, that Yale Law School helps ideas bloom.



Carolina Palacios Farfan '25 LLM

Yale Law School fosters intellectual freedom through a wide range of courses that intersect with the study of law. The opportunity to explore subjects like artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and their connection to legal frameworks sparked genuine, cutting-edge discussions that reflect the pressing issues of our time. This exposure not only broadened my understanding of the law but also inspired me to approach complex global challenges with curiosity, creativity, and a commitment to continuous learning.





Brittany Grego '25

A highlight of my time at YLS was working in the Entrepreneurship & Innovation Clinic. Since joining the clinic in my 1L spring, I've had the chance to work on transactions ranging from entity formation and corporate governance to IP strategy, while also learning how to counsel clients through complex, real-world legal issues. These hands-on experiences have been foundational in shaping my interest in transactional law and client-focused practice. It has truly been an extraordinary part of my legal education.



Will Clancy '25

I'll always remember my first cold call — possibly the first in the Class of 2025. It was in Professor Harold Hongju Koh's civil procedure class, and thankfully, he tossed me a softball. I will never forget the importance of Article 3 and that federal courts are courts of limited subject matter jurisdiction. More importantly, I learned to think on my feet. Thank you, Professor Koh!