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**Stanford Law School**

**Charge to the Class of 2002**  
**May 19, 2002**  
**Memorial Auditorium**

Graduates of the class of 2002, mothers, fathers, spouses, partners, stepmothers, stepfathers, grandmothers, grandfathers, sisters, brothers, aunts, uncles, sons and daughters, and all other family members and friends of graduates, welcome to our Law School graduation ceremony. Or, I should say, virtual graduation ceremony, true to our Silicon Valley nature, for today we send you off to jobs, clerkships and bar review in anticipation that your diplomas will not be far behind.

This weekend is an occasion for great joy and celebration. We were delighted when you chose so wisely to come here three years ago -- who could resist a world-class law school in paradise? You are distinguished today by what distinguished you then: a unique combination of intellectual curiosity and passion with remarkable bonhomie and camaraderie, a spirit that led you to collaborate more than compete, to learn from one another as much as you did from us. At last night's beautiful graduation party amidst the sculptures of Cantor Arts Center, countless parents told me that you'd said you were sorry the three years were up, and wished you could stay longer--not, I assure you, the typical comment at graduation time at other law schools! We have something very special and precious at Stanford Law School, a unique combination of excellence with civility and decency, and you have both sustained and shaped that spirit in your three years here.

Today is the turning point when you will cease studying law and start practicing it, stop simulating problems and start solving them, and stop paying for the law and having the law pay you. You didn't get here by yourselves. Please turn around and join me in thanking the people who have supported and borne with you all these years of your education--your parents, your families, your partners and friends.

It's now my pleasure to introduce the class presidents, Barbara Merz and Carlos Bermudez, to present this year's staff appreciation and teaching excellence awards, and let me thank them and their fellow class officers for their leadership of this class.

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**KS charge to class**

I began our proceedings today by noting how much you are today as you were when you arrived here--a class with a unique personality characterized by the wit and solidarity we all witnessed again in your opening film. Of course, not everything is the same for you as it was three years ago. Let's turn the kaleidoscope and look back. For one thing, you know a great deal more law, for we care a great deal about what we teach you, and we want you to leave here with a running start on the jobs in law firms, judicial chambers, government offices, impact advocacy organizations, businesses and investment banks you're going to. You also inhabit a law school that's brimming with more energy and activity than it has ever had, with every week an intellectual feast of events organized by student groups, from high-tech brown-bags by Slatra to symposia by the Law Review to roundtables by the American Constitution and Federalist

Societies to evenings with judges by BLSA to the finest ever Kirkwood moot court rounds. And you were the first graduating class at SLS ever to sit in Aeron chairs in high-tech classrooms, and to resolve the difficult jurisprudential question, what exactly do you mean by "food"?

For another, you face a world that's changed since your arrival. You belong to a generation that didn't know, until the last few years, that markets were things that ever went down. You grew up under a series of administrations, Republican and later Democrat alike, that declared that the era of "big government" is over. And you belong to a generation that, unlike the great generation that lived through the bombing of Pearl Harbor, as did many of your grandparents here today, didn't know that Americans could become vulnerable to attack on our own soil.

Now, one academic year out from September 11, and two summers since the burst of the dot.com bubble, you graduate as law students with a new sense of sobriety and purpose. You know better than those who graduated just before you how important the balance between public and private values is. You know that men and women in blue uniforms, white helmets and gold badges are not some anonymous face of invisible government but heroes whose sense of public duty saved lives as it cost them theirs. You know that markets need regulators and accountants need standards lest irrational exuberance be revealed as resting on foundations fit only for the paper shredder. You know that the privacy we enjoy in a newly digitized world interacts with concerns about national security.

In short, you know why it is that we teach both private law and public law and urge you all to steep yourself in both aspects—a bird cannot fly on one wing. And you know why it is not hyperbole but aspiration that we run our exciting and happily well-attended series called Lawyer Heroes.

Now let's turn the kaleidoscope once more and look forward. Right now it's hard to imagine yourself some years from now, focused as you are upon the immediate issues of packing, moving, studying for the bar, leaving paradise, and starting new jobs. Among the JD's, 112 of you are going first to law firms, 45 of you (an all-time SLS record) to judicial clerkships (with 7 of you scheduled to be clerking year after next), 5 of you directly into government, 5 of you directly into public interest jobs, 9 of you directly into business, and 3 of you finishing other advanced degrees. Among our distinguished JSM students, hailing from nations around the world from Austria and Australia to Korea, Japan and Nigeria, many of you are returning to your homes to practice, lead and teach, while others of you are staying to sample work in the American legal system.

But 25 years from now you'll be back, I hope, for your 25<sup>th</sup> reunion. What will you have done in the meantime? You have multiplicity of backgrounds, talents and ambitions, and lying before you is a diversity of marvelous opportunities a degree from SLS opens up. I know of no better source of inspiration than a canvass of our own remarkable alumni:

You might be serving in elective office, like our alumnus US Senator Max Baucus, or high appointive office, like our alumnus Warren Christopher who served as President Clinton's Secretary of State or our graduate Josh Bolten who serves as President Bush's White House deputy chief of staff.

You might be teaching law like Professors Grundfest, Barton, Thompson and Weisberg, all graduates of SLS, or our graduates that last year alone became new professors at BU and Penn, Vanderbilt and Northwestern.

You might chair a multinational law firm practice, like our alumna Mary Cranston does

at Pillsbury Winthrop and our alumnus Steve Neal does at Cooley Godward and our alumnus Duane Quaini does at Sonnenschein Nath & Rosenthal.

If not a whole firm, you might be chairing a department, as does our graduate Chuck Koob the Simpson Thacher litigation department and our alumnus Fred Alvarez the employment department at Wilson Sonsini.

You might have moved from transactional law practice to venture capital, like our alumni Jim Gaither did from Cooley Godward to Sutter Hill or Alan Austin from Wilson Sonsini to Accel. (Actually, in this market, you might be more likely to be making the transition from venture capital to law practice. Be sure to take the bar.)

You might be serving on the bench as are the 200 graduates whose photos we hang proudly on the first floor wall of our classroom building in tribute to their public service, from Chief Justice Rehnquist and Justice O'Connor, who celebrate their 50<sup>th</sup> SLS reunion next year, to Justice Carlos Moreno, our alumnus who moved from federal district court to the California Supreme Court this past year, to Judge Paul Cassell, just confirmed to federal district court in Utah in a Senate vote last week.

You might be starting your own company, as our graduate Christy Haubegger did *Latina* magazine or Carlos Watson his educational placement service.

You might be heading an impact advocacy practice, like our graduate Anthony Romero, the prominent and eloquent executive director of the ACLU.

You might give your talents directly to the poorest of the poor, as does our graduate Father Rufus Whitley as an oblate priest soldiering on in his work despite the troubles of the Roman Catholic Church.

Or, better still, you might create your own unique career path, and go where no Stanford Law graduate has ever gone before.

Whatever you do, we hope we have prepared you to do it with intelligence, wisdom, judgment and panache, with fearlessness and generosity, with grace, integrity, civility and tact. We hope we have given you a set of tools, intellectual, rhetorical and practical, to solve problems that urgently need, now more than ever, superb lawyers' sense of balance between private gain and public values. We hope that you will continue to inspire in those of us who had the pleasure of teaching you here the pride in you as lawyers we have felt in you as students. We hope you will stay in touch with the school as faithful alumni and help to support and guide and inspire the students who come after you. We hope you will do well, and we hope you will do good. And we hope that whatever you do, you'll look back from that 25<sup>th</sup> reunion with a feeling of a life well spent. Congratulations, and warmest wishes.