

C L A S S   O F   2 0 1 3   G R A D U A T I O N

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CANFIELD COURTYARD  
STANFORD UNIVERSITY

JUNE 15, 2013

11:00 A.M.

## A SHORT HISTORY OF SLS

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Stanford began offering a curriculum in legal studies in 1893. After undergoing rapid expansion, in 1900 the law department moved from its location in Encina Hall to the Inner Quad and for the first time offered a three-year professional law program. The law department also became one of 27 charter members of the Association of American Law Schools. During this time, the law department began to focus more on professional training than on undergraduate education. The transition from a department to a modern graduate law school was completed in 1924 when Stanford began requiring a bachelor's degree for admission to its legal program.

The Great Depression and World War II seriously disrupted the work of the law school. Enrollment dropped sharply. The law school nonetheless adhered to its high academic standards, while recognizing that academic content would need to grow to reflect national developments. The faculty correctly predicted that government would play a greater role in the regulation of private affairs and so added administrative law, taxation, trade regulation, labor law, and related subjects to the curriculum during this period.

The late 1940s and 1950s brought a tidal wave of changes, including a relocation from the Inner Quad to the Outer Quad, publication of the first edition of the *Stanford Law Review*, the construction of a law school dormitory (Crothers Hall), the successful introduction of a new moot court program, the graduation of two future U.S. Supreme Court justices, and a commitment to maintaining selective enrollment and small class size. This last decision was perhaps the most important from the standpoint of the long-term success of the law school as it established a rigorous legal program unique in the West and an intimate educational experience for a small, carefully chosen student body. In the 1970s, the law school again moved—this time to its current home in Crown Quadrangle. Speaking at the 1975 dedication ceremony for the new law campus, U.S. President Gerald Ford extolled Stanford's foundation as a "solid triad of law, learning, and liberty."

Building on this foundation, Stanford has consolidated its position as one of the nation's top law schools. Recognizing the necessity of experiential learning, the law school has developed a state-of-the-art clinical program, offering students closely

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supervised, pedagogically driven opportunities to work with clients. The law school has instituted model programs in both environmental and intellectual property law. The law school also has deepened its commitment to interdisciplinary education, working with graduate schools throughout the university to develop cooperative learning opportunities and joint degree programs.

Moreover, through the generosity of friends and alumni, the law school has been able to implement physical expansions that such programmatic changes require. In 2009, law students welcomed the addition of new housing with the opening of the Munger Graduate Residence, the housing complex adjacent to the school, designed to facilitate interdisciplinary living and learning for law and other graduate students studying throughout campus. And in 2011, the 65,000-square-foot William H. Neukom Building was officially opened in a ceremony with U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder in which he said, “The building we now dedicate is the embodiment of an idea—a vision of all that is, and can be, good in the legal profession.”

Much has changed at the law school since its founding in 1893. Originally, students were drawn mainly from California; today, they come from every region of the United States and around the world. Admission was not competitive in 1893; today, approximately 3,800 candidates typically vie for the 180 places in each entering class. In 1893, only a handful of courses were offered; today, students can choose from among hundreds of course offerings both at the law school and around the university. And today Stanford Law School continues to offer a truly unique legal education that opens up a world of opportunity to its graduates.