

Dean Magill, distinguished faculty and staff (among the best in the world), our loving families who are here and those watching us from afar, our friends who are family, fellow graduates – JDs, JSMs, JSDs and LLMS – collectively referred to hereinafter as the Rock Stars of the Class of 2018! – welcome and good morning!

How do you capture into minutes of spoken words a part of our lives that was so etched into memory, shared with awe-inspiring people from 33 countries speaking 21 languages and more, if we include dialects? How do you capture 10 months of engaging discussions on the various exquisite teas over quiet and melodious rhapsody of the Japanese tea ceremony with Chinese or Taiwanese tea leaves. Or reflections over classmates' family traditions and history -- some as old as 1000 years -- over hot and spicy Korean ram-yeon noodles. Or the limitless fun nights of singing over karaoke (with bickering on who ought to have the mic next because their song is still no. 8 on the queue) or the dancing Fiesta Latina-style part 1, 2 and 3? How do you capture months of seemingly ordinary meal time and culinary adventures with home-cooked North African delights one day to Thai basil chicken the next, to Indian curries to Chinese dumplings to Singaporean chicken rice – the list could go on and on...and all these downed with the best pisco in the world– Chilean or Peruvian (that still remains controversial) or downed with, as the Europeans would have it, any European wine? How do you capture the many memories shared with people you thought were strangers but now have become your family? There is simply nothing like it.

I tried to be poetic about it, go somewhere, face nothing but the vastness of the Pacific Ocean but words did not seem to flow easily. Nothing. I went some other place surrounded by trees to organize my thoughts. Nada. One very early morning, I decided to go alone around the campus and I understood why I could not put something into words at any other place. I had to

be at a place where for us, time stood still – committing 10 months of it - when we forgot all worries from our home countries or how much we miss our loved ones and where the warmest of memories were made and shared with you, Rock Stars of the Class of 2018!

Many amazing stories have already been told and enshrined in the history of this university, one of the best universities in the world with a top-tier law school. But the school, the physical structure, while one of the most beautiful campuses I have ever been is just that, physical structure. Stripped off of its students biking around, studying under the California sun, laughing or engaging in deep conversations about religion, cultural differences, legal traditions to the seemingly mundane question of where to have our next meal outside of the usual Tresidder or meal plan fare – it simply is a collection of buildings with well-manicured lawns, physically beautiful but empty - no soul.

To me, what gives this university its soul is the people and the relationships (not just ‘networks’) that were built that made this experience nothing short of our favorite, overused descriptive word – amazing! At the outset, we knew we only have 10 precious months together. Because of the short time we knew we could spend together, something wonderful was bound to happen; no time ought to be wasted. I’d like to call it, in all child-like wonder, “magic”. Magic not in the sense of turning ribbons into bunnies. But that sense of magic that we feel when we fall in love, not necessarily in a romantic way. It’s the kind of falling in love when new worlds are opened to us as we also open our own to others, as we build new friendships with people with vastly different culture from the one we are accustomed to, and nurtured them as much as we can, with as much as what we can muster to give, with time spent over what must have already been hundreds of cups of coffee, hundreds of kilos of barbecue-ables, thousands of miles spent on road trips or air miles flown crossing the Atlantic, the Pacific, the Mediterranean, and across

the Americas during term breaks. *If that is not the beauty of diversity, I don't know what is. If magic is not what happens when we take inclusion of various cultures as a natural course of things, I do not know what will.*

So many things have happened in 10 months –babies were born, degrees are earned, and 60 kilos of rolled pork bellies were roasted. We acknowledge we could not have accomplished much by ourselves. It takes a village to understand living with someone in the legal profession. With that, I wish to honor on behalf of the Rock Stars of the Class of 2018 our parents, partners and spouses and friends who are family. To our spouses and partners who cross the Pacific (my husband nonetheless), the Atlantic, from East to West Coast, almost on a monthly basis or the spouses and partners who took a year-long leave at their jobs to support their (not necessarily) better halves or the spouses and partners who at the same time took their own graduate studies in other law schools and had to commute an hour every day to the other school or traverse the east coast school to the west coast every month just so you could show support to your spouse: thank you. Thank you for everything.

It also takes a village to nurture someone who attempts to enter or to stay in the legal profession. With that, I wish to honor on behalf of the Rock Stars of the Class of 2018 our highly-esteemed professors. You may have no idea how we, every time Axess is open for class registration, are in nothing short of agony when choosing classes to take for the quarter. Almost always, we'd end up 25 – 30 units per quarter in our initial study plans in between moments of quiet reflection whether to register for the maximum (and even beyond) what is permitted and hope for the best to still have a life outside the classroom. We are grateful of how accommodating our professors are when we reach out to them to speak of a new idea, a new

project or simply to chat about anything over cookies in your offices, or buffet spreads in your lovely homes.

Most especially, I also wish to honor our Advanced Degree program directors and teaching fellows. Most of us are from outside the U.S. navigating the intricacies of a legal education system that may not be at all familiar to some of us. Yet, you guided us in our studies and even went beyond the call of duty to extend your personal care for our well-being, when the occasion calls for it. Thank you very much.

I end with much sadness knowing that this will be the last time we may see each other in one place together. Some of you are already leaving next week. At the risk of any copyright infringement, let me end with a little something from Ms Morissette: “Well, life has a funny way of sneaking up on you when you think everything's okay and everything's going right. And life has a funny way of helping you out when you think everything's gone wrong and everything blows up in your face.” Things may not be the way you planned them to be today, but it will be tomorrow. Things may be how exactly you wanted them to be today, it may not be tomorrow. It's day time today here in California, it's nighttime on the other side of the world. Your career or your plans may be slow to progress today, but you'll be surprised of its quick pace tomorrow. Respect your own pace in life - whether it be quick, slow, or in utter glorious stillness.

And when you reach that stage when you are in a position to give back and lift other people up, please do so without hesitation. We are remembered not so much by our accomplishments, or by what we have set out in our CVs but by how we let other people feel at that moment when they open their world to us. You'll be surprised how much you will receive in return in whatever form or substance. Be a giver – of your time, of your resources, of your efforts, of a kind gesture, of compliments, of praise, of a smile – and give when it hurts, even

when it hurts, despite that it hurts. You'll be surprised just how much you reap will certainly be more than what you have sown.

And while you continue to figure out things on your way to be in that position, keep calm and rock on!