

Good morning classmates, friends, family, faculty, staff, and Cathy Glaze.

Welcome to the last hurrah of the class of 2008.

I look around at my peers and I see diverse faces, diverse ages, different pasts and different futures. But we all have something in common. We all went to high school. And then we all went to college. Some of us did a little work in the real world. And then...we all went back to high school.

That's right, law school is a lot like high school. At least this one is. You see the same small group of people everyday, in the bathrooms, by the lockers, in the hallways, in the cafeteria. We meet our classmates for the first time in homeroom, carefully disguised as 1L legal writing. There are cliques, rumors, extracurriculars, and class officers. All of a sudden, somewhere between our mid-twenties and our mid-thirties, we find ourselves in an environment strikingly similar to the one many of us couldn't wait to leave when we were teenagers.

But this time, it's different. This time, there's no one in the back of the room throwing paper airplanes. This time, there's no one sleeping in class... riiight. This time, there isn't that one kid who's answering all the questions right, whose hand is always in the air, who always looks smart, because those kids fill our classrooms.

Somewhere between this high school and the last, my classmates dominated their universities. They got Masters degrees and Ph.D.s. They ran publishing divisions and critiqued the operations of huge corporations. They learned a foreign language or two, and grabbed a degree from Oxford. They grew up, made themselves impressive, and then tried high school all over again. And this time everyone, whether giving the right answer or throwing out a personal opinion, *everyone* sounds smart...which, on occasion, can get a little annoying.

I am consistently floored by the thoughts, the ideas, the conclusions, and the very personalities of my fellow classmates. I am honored to be surrounded by brilliant people from all over the world. I have the privilege of learning something new and interesting from my classmates almost everyday. Sure, there are fancy chairs in the library and a career services office that is second to none, world renowned faculty and landmark litigation, but it is my classmates' remarkable character and intellect that I consider to be the real windfall of Stanford Law School. Everyday, I am struck by how amazing the people around me are, whether I'm in the library, in class, at the prom or one of our many other social functions. Because yes, they're even impressive when drunk.

And tomorrow, we'll all be JDs. We'll scatter, and we'll do everything from clerking to big corporate practice to startups to management consulting to building a better legal profession. We'll live in big cities like New York, D.C., Los Angeles, London, Sydney and Hong Kong....or...much smaller cities like Biloxi, Mississippi and Billings, Montana. Soon we'll be separated, sometimes by great distances, but I will walk away from this school tomorrow connected to all of them, changed by all of them.

I will be struck my whole life by the quality, the intelligence, the diversity, and the character of my classmates here. I will always be touched by the genius who gives up \$160,000 a year to make sure the poor are not exploited, or that the environment is safe. I will always be awed by the genius who goes out to shape the future of the SEC, helps distribute groundbreaking technology, or plucks the strings to administer a multi-billion dollar hedge fund. And finally, I will always be inspired by the genius who is smart enough to realize that the law is not her passion and bold enough to blaze her own trail. This place has shown me what people can be, what the leaders of tomorrow look like today: brilliant, fascinating, breathtaking. And I am honored to have been a part of it.

Today we're putting on funny hats and flipping tassels for at least the third time. Thanks to you- to family, friends, and all manner of support systems- we are taking down another shiny new degree. But there is something new about this degree, this funny hat, this day. It just feels... different. Maybe it's because this time everyone will recognize the name of the school... or because now we're out of excuses and we finally have to get real jobs. Or perhaps it is because, tomorrow when we wake up as "doctors of jurisprudence," we will be equipped with the technical ability to do all the things they told us we could do when we graduated from high school, then from college: now, we can take the world by storm. And by now I mean in three or four months after we finish up with bar prep and ...

This isn't the end, it's the beginning. The bonds we've forged here will last a lifetime, as will the honor I feel for having worked with such incredible people. These friendships that touched us will stay with us forever, and I know we will continue to inspire one another for the rest of our careers and lives.

We'll all take the same JD. But with different pasts and different futures we will make that JD into a thousand different things, a thousand different admission tickets to a thousand different careers. But we're not just JDs and the diplomas that will soon go up on our walls will not tell the whole story. Because as prestigious as a degree from Stanford Law School is, it does not define any of us. Rather we, both as individuals and a collective, will define this degree. And with such exceptionally brilliant and passionate people writing the dictionary, I can't wait to see what these degrees will say.

Congratulations Class of 2008.