Pocket
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In Memory

Professor Eugene M. Wypyski
Congratulations to the Hofstra University School of Law, Class of 1997. As the representative of the third year class I would like to welcome Dean Rabinowitz, Dean Adamski, Dean Pace, Faculty, Administration, Parents, Friends and most importantly the graduating students from the Class of 1997. My name is Cynthia Parache, the Class of 1997 Graduation Speaker.

These three years have been long, but, in hindsight, a seemingly short period in our lives. As a first year law student we entered with fear, but also with big ideas, dreams and goals. Our lofty goals were to graduate at the top of our class, make law review, and ride off into the sunset with an exciting career ahead. But once first year began and then we took our mid-semester exams and received our grades, our goals were modified to include being content with graduating in the top half of the class. First year seemed to take forever to end, we briefed and we read about 300 plus pages a night. On our first day of class we all sat quietly with our assignments read, cases briefed and indexed and ready for the professor. We sat in class secretly hoping, that the professor would not call on us. We dared not be unprepared for class, especially for classes like Prof. Charlow’s Criminal Law Class. In my case, I made sure I was never unprepared for her class and I, literally, lived in fear. Although it was difficult we did learn important habits that are beneficial to us as future attorneys. For example, if you walked into Prof. Charlow’s class late you would suffer the consequences of humiliation and being called on during the entire hour. In our own legal practice, it is an important habit to make all appearances on time because a failure to appear in court at the required hour can result in sanctions or dismissal of a case. Also, it is the norm to have one exam at the end of a school year determine the grade for the entire course. Although this is very disturbing, in our future practice, we have the opportunity to file one brief after maybe a year or more of preparation in a case. It is only now that we can appreciate the purpose for this Socratic method in the classroom.

As a second year law student, we were inundated with work. We researched, wrote and submitted appellate briefs and had to stand in front of a panel of judges and make our oral arguments. We had a heavy course load and most students also had internships, journal notes and legal employment. I, for example, was employed with a solo practitioner and also, was involved as President of a student organization, LALSA. I, like other law students in our second year, juggled it all and completed the year successfully.

When third year came along, we were confident and secure in our abilities to successfully complete our education. In fact, I like many, have been very eager to graduate and put to use what I have learned here at Hofstra Law School. To try to alleviate my third year boredom, I applied and was accepted into the Hofstra Housing Rights Clinic, one of the clinics the law school offers besides the Criminal Law and Disabilities clinics. Any student who has completed a clinic or knows of someone who has, will know that it is very hard to get bored. I finally had the opportunity to experience my goal--to be an advocate. My first week at the clinic, I appeared, in District Court, on behalf of a client, I negotiated stipulations of settlement and I spent many weekends and nights until 2:00 a.m. writing briefs.

As a class, we third years, were very vocal and active in school activities, pro-bono/community service, local bar associations, and local bars. We were bound to run into each other in the Office of Career Services, faxing resumes, looking at the job binders, and looking to see if we were one of the lucky one on the interview lists. Our class is full of talent. Not just outstanding capabilities in the law, but also talent in business, communications, art and literature. Today our talents are being rewarded with well-deserved awards.

Many of us have different inspirations and reasons why we decided to attend Hofstra Law School. Today, I am here because of two special people who have struggled on my behalf. These people are my mother and my father who both still work sixteen hours a day to give their children a better life. Their only expectation, like that of all parents, is that we study hard and try to be the best at what we do. Their formula has worked because, this year, my parents are proudly attending two graduations--my graduation this evening from Hofstra Law School and the graduation of my younger brother, Felix, who is receiving his Bachelor’s degree, this very second, at St. John’s University. Each one of us, in the Class of 1997, have our own inspirations and support systems in our family and friends whom we are proud and grateful for. They are a part of us and we all need to remember our varied cultures, experiences and backgrounds as an indispensable asset in becoming attorneys. In the journey that is commencing today, please remember, along the way, that this world is getting smaller and smaller. A basic respect and understanding of our own individual identities, as well as that for other cultures and peoples who may very well, someday, be our clients, supervisors or colleagues, is vital to make us successful attorneys. Take the opportunity, today at graduation, to think about what is important to you because, today is a time to look beyond the four walls of the law school and towards the world at large. We have to remember who we were before we entered the law school, how these three years have altered our psyche and what we will try to become after today. I am sure that sitting here today are future prominent judges, politicians, lawyers, and executives.

Finally, I would like to congratulate the students who are receiving awards for their outstanding accomplishment while attending Hofstra Law. I wish everyone luck on the bar and much success in the future. Believe me I am ready to go out there and show the world who I am and what I have to offer. I want to say thanks to Alexander Sepulveda, Maryann Turco, Marcia Roman, and Michael Kneis for making my law school experience very special. My name is Cynthia Parache. Congratulations to the Class of 1997.