

Suffolk University Law School Commencement
Sunday, May 19, 2019
Rockland Trust Bank Pavilion, Boston
Student Commencement Speaker
Sara Wilson

Hello. First off, thank you Representative Kennedy for that address. Strangely, somebody put my resume in your commencement booklet, so. No pressure. So, I was going to just get up here and give my speech as you all expected, but I've been sitting up here, and I realized if Ellen can do it, so can I. So, quickly I'm going to need a class selfie. I mean, OK. We're professionals here, get it together. OK.

Good evening Class of 2019. Thank you for being here tonight and bringing your designated lay people. Someone must have spread the word that there's an attendance sheet going around though, because these seats are actually looking a bit full, so. But then again, my vision has regressed from reading so much case law, so don't take my word for it, it would just be hearsay. So, I promise I will keep my speech short because I have to be in court tomorrow morning. For anyone who has had Chris Dearborn as a professor, or knew any Suffolk Defender or clinical student from this past year, you'll know that even a graduation cannot end your duty to your clients. [APPLAUSE] So, thank you for that.

It makes sense for us to be the Class of 2019. We don't deserve to be 2020 with the lack of hindsight we started with, so. It's as if our graduation year was even placed on a curve. You know, where you're close, but not quite there. It must have been a 1L curve. However, it is the hindsight we now have after attending Suffolk that will allow us to be zealous attorneys.

I know we all often talk about how hard our first year was, but come on. We were warned. You know you're signing up for something difficult when the orientation leading up to it already gives you homework. Yet, here we are. We made it to the end. [APPLAUSE] I'm just kidding. Bar prep begins this week, so do you regret it yet? I don't. Yeah.

I'm not sure how many literature buffs we have here, but I do know we all share a keen interest in reading old text. In Dante's *Inferno*, he placed the gloomy, somber, and ill-humored individuals in the fifth level of hell. Now, I'm, infer what you may. I'm not going to say he was describing law students. All I will say is that I don't find the fifth floor to be all that bad. I personally preferred to go there where I could maybe nap, seek free food, pose as a business student, or escape my reality from time to time.

When writing this I wanted to be attentive and make sure it was not only from the perspective of a day student, but then I remembered not to worry. By the end, our course availability allowed us all to experience what it was like to be an evening student. Now, I'm forgiving, though. I know time really isn't our thing, unless it's billable.

Math is also not really our thing. Because something doesn't quite add up when you learn your bar exam topics three or four years ahead of time. As I'm sure all of our friends and family have heard that your first year. It was a solid best year. Strongest one for us all. But then to do it years later and a mini version, intense, when you're less enthusiastic, when you've already decided that if there's a question on the rule against perpetuities, you're going to put B and move on. I'm so sorry Professor Rounds. I don't mean it. But I do. However, candidly, there is some gratification when revisiting topics from our first year, when you realize you actually know things. For instance consideration is more than simply being thoughtful to your peers. Who knew it had nothing to do with being nice and had everything to do with a peppercorn?

Law school truly was an experience of its own. An experience where we all at some point played ourselves. Don't worry. For those in attendance who may be unsure of what playing yourself means, the New Yorker has helped describe this phenomenon. The acts of playing yourself can be loosely defined as working against your conscious intentions. It's what you do when you think you're serving your own interests, but you're actually betraying them— often through significant effort and often in a spectacularly public way.

I mean, let's get real for a moment. In the beginning we all at some point were concerned about our progress compared to our peers. We were playing ourselves. A time where we stressed over outlines, collecting and hoarding them to create the perfect safety blanket made from WB Mason paper. Because, let's face it, if you didn't make the outline, did you really read it? Don't you lie to me. You didn't. We were playing ourselves. Spending a year tabbing the ALWD guide to learn that the book you will later use is blue. We played ourselves. Working for free every summer. We played ourselves. Giving up our weekends. We were playing ourselves. Waiting until the very end to complete our CLE requirements. We played ourselves. Honestly, with this level of carelessness, I'm not sure if any of us could re-meet the standard of "that of a reasonable person."

However, for these reasons we are the best. That's right. We compared ourselves to others because we strived to be great. We gathered outlines because we fought to be knowledgeable. We dedicated ourselves to citations because we understand the importance of recognizing precedent. We worked for free because we understand we are all public servants first. We gave up weekends because we are committed to our line of work. We waited until the end to complete our CLE's because we chose selectively to attend topics of our passions.

Take these remaining moments of law school to think back to who you were when you began and who you are now as you sit here today. Law school was more than academia. It was more than assignments, late nights, or too much caffeine. For some of us it was during our time here when we met our best friend, met our significant other, proposed, had a child, wed, found a mentor, or even came out to our friends and family.

These are the moments that revealed who we really are. The moments when we chose to flourish in an environment that felt as if it were trying to break us. We are all aware of the difficult time we have gone through to accomplish what we have. I, of all people, do not need to stand before you today and tell you how far you have come or how much you have sacrificed to be here. However, I do urge you to pause, reflect, and acknowledge how far it is you have truly come. For each of us that may mean something different, yet for all of us, we are not the same people we were when we began.

Although it may be amusing to reflect on our struggle, it is important to recognize that the law changed us. It changed us for the better so that we may set forth in our endeavors and change it for the better. Because it is about the client, always and forever. [APPLAUSE]

Although you may have begun as an evening student, a Section A student, Section B, or C, we are no longer divided by our sections. As of today we are unified as a family, as a class. Congratulations Class of 2019. Go forward and make your family proud. [APPLAUSE]