

Suffolk University Law School
Class of 2023 Commencement
Sunday, May 21, 2023
Leader Bank Pavilion
Student Speaker
Rachel Record, JD '23

Good evening, and welcome, family, friends, President Nelson, members of the board of trustees, faculty, deans, and staff of Suffolk Law, President Kelly, and of course, my fellow graduates. It is my absolute pleasure and honor to welcome you all the Commencement of the resilient, extraordinary, and utterly amazing Suffolk University Law School Class of 2023.
[APPLAUSE]

[00:30] Congratulations everybody. We did it. After years of long nights studying, writing LPS memos, and figuring out how to use Exemplify, to your hard work with clubs, journals, and competitions, where you represented Suffolk honorably, to countless hours studying cases and statutes on Westlaw or Lexus, where you learned not only what the law is, but how to apply it and utilize it serve the public good. You've accomplished what you

[01:00] set out some years ago to do, to graduate with your *juris doctor*. Take a moment to think back to the beginning of our law school careers here at Suffolk, back to that weeklong orientation when our minds were racing. We were trying to figure out what an IRAC legal memo was. And many of us were both excited and absolutely terrified to begin our legal careers. We started to meet some of our stellar professors, one of whom is the amazing Justice Georges.
[APPLAUSE] Give it up for Justice Georges! [APPLAUSE]

[01:30] And we learned that Justice Georges is a big fan of calling us Suffolk people. And he told us that Suffolk people are some of the best there are in the world. And I didn't realize how right he was until I had the honor and privilege of meeting so many of you. So who are these renowned Suffolk people? What makes them so great? As I thought about the answers to those questions, I also thought of Justice Georges' evidence class. Now, don't worry, I'm not about to go into the exceptions

[02:00] to hearsay. I know you don't want to hear that. But this may help you get started on your bar studying. For evidence to be admissible in a trial, it must be reliable, authentic, and relevant, among other qualities. You as Suffolk people embody those qualities. First, Suffolk people are reliable. As we all demonstrated through our ability to tackle at least part of our law school career over Zoom. We showed our reliability not just to our school and to our classes, but to one another.

[02:30] We adapted by making "accountability buddy" Zoom calls to answer each other questions. We shared outlines, Quimby log-ins, whatever we had to help raise one another up. More importantly than anything academic, though, we were there for one another. We supported each other through what for many of us were some of the most challenging years of our lives.

Reliability is not a quality that can be learned in torts or contracts, but rather it's a trait that requires commitment and dedication,

[03:00] making hard choices and sticking to them. Reliability is something that this world needs some of, and you are going to provide as you serve your clients and your causes. Now Suffolk people are also pretty darned authentic. In other words, Suffolk people are who they say they are. We have come from all over the world, or just down the street, to be a part of this community. Some of us came fresh out of college, others after years in industry. Some of us knew exactly what type of law we wanted to study, and a lot more

[03:30] of us are still figuring that one out. Our strength lies in our diversity, and the bonds we have forged, and the people that we are. No matter how you chose to spend your time here at Suffolk, you used your skills and your experiences you've gained in your life to make someone else's better. By being your authentic selves, you are going to going to better the public trust in lawyers, and you are going to be in a better position to make a positive difference in this world. And last, but most certainly not least, Suffolk people are relevant

[04:00] because of the choices we've made and the work we've done. Many of you have sought out Suffolk so you could be a part of a clinic, like the Innocence Clinic, to help overturn wrongful convictions, or to be a part of the Marshall Brennan Constitutional Literacy Project, to help educate high school students about their Constitutional rights. Even more of you came here to be transactional attorneys, learning how to resolve conflicts and to give your clients the best future you possibly could. Many more of you have already published articles being used today by lawyers, judges, and practitioners

[04:30] in law journals. You chose to be relevant by taking action to make this world better, even before you got your degree. You see, a *juris doctor* is much more than a law degree or a piece of paper that was built on caffeine and class outlines. It's an honor awarded to those who society turns to when they need help. It's a representation that we chose to act to better ourselves and that we seek to better the world around us.

[05:00] It's evidence of our efforts and our ability to advocate for the people we serve, the laws we abide by, and the Constitution that serves as the foundation of our justice system. Because you earned that *juris doctor* here at Suffolk, you leave here today not only with the skills to handle any challenge that this world has to offer, but with the determination and the resilience to conquer those challenges and make this world a better place. Each and every one of you has your own story to tell.

[05:30] The experiences that have led you to this moment have been different for each of you. And I'm not going to pretend that I represent them all. Rather, I will thank you for the honor of being among you. Continue being the reliable, authentic, relevant people you all are. Have courage and be kind, because how you do something is just as important as what you do. And remember that no matter what, we are all Suffolk people. And that already makes you among the greatest

[06:00] in the world. Congratulations and good luck. [APPLAUSE]