

Yale Law School Commencement Remarks

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Dean-Designate and
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Thank you, Tony, for this final act of leadership and friendship. For those of you who do not know, when Tony Kronman steps down as Dean on July 1, he will become Sterling Professor of Law. If you have any doubt, that is a promotion: a professor answers only to students and colleagues, a Dean answers to everyone, but a Sterling Professor answers only to God. Will you please rise and join me in thanking Tony Kronman for his remarkable decade as Dean?

My friends, these maces symbolize the continuing greatness of the School we love. I accept them with honor, humility, and most of all, with hope.

Kingman Brewster once said, "I did not become President of Yale to preside over a finishing school on Long Island Sound." Well, let me tell you, I did not become Dean of Yale Law School to preside over just another

professional school. There is only one Yale Law School and it is us. We are not just a law school of professional excellence, we are an intellectual community of moral purpose.

Look to your left, look to your right, and you see what Yale Law School is, and must always be: a community of remarkable individuals, committed to excellence and humanity in everything they do. From century to century, from graduating class to graduating class, from Dean to Dean, this School has remained a *community of commitment* to the values we share: commitment to the highest excellence in our work as lawyers and scholars, to the greatest humanity in our dealings with others, and to the pursuit of careers not of selfishness, but of service.

On July 1, I will become the 15th Dean of Yale Law School. On this, the 50th anniversary of *Brown vs. Board of Education*, it moves me deeply to think that the greatest law school in America has chosen a Dean based not on the color of his skin, but on the content of his commitments. As we move into a new global century, I am committed to helping Yale Law School to address new challenges and to create new opportunities. During my deanship, we will ask how legal education should address the challenge of globalization. We will consider how to renew ourselves and how to strengthen our ties to the

profession. We will ask ourselves how we can build upon and increase our contribution to public service.

To stay the same, we will have to change. To remain the greatest law school in the 21st century, we will have to look hard at ourselves, and make ourselves better. I pledge to you that I will do my very best to lead that effort, with every ounce of energy, optimism, and enthusiasm I can muster.

So today marks a new day. Congratulations, Class of 2004! We begin our adventures together, you and I! Remember, we are just a mouse-click away. So don't forget to write! As your teachers, we will always be a part of you and you will always be a part of us. Please call on us whenever you need what we have to give.

You represent everything about the Yale Law School that we love. Good luck and God Bless you!