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On behalf of the faculty and graduates of Columbia Law School, it is my pleasure to welcome all of you. You are a remarkable group, and we are very proud to have you with us.

You join us at the end of a somewhat unusual summer. The U.S. government nearly ran out of money. The stock market has been like a roller coaster. A prominent U.S. congressman resigned in disgrace after claiming that his Twitter account had been hacked. Meanwhile, an influential media organization is in disgrace because it has been accused of hacking the accounts of pretty much everyone else. Needless to say, national insolvency, predatory behavior, and invasions of privacy are all sobering topics.

But the summer wasn't all bad. The New York Mets are only 20.5 games out of first place—I remain hopeful—and, of course, Harry finally defeated Voldemort. One of my favorite memories from the summer was taking my children to see the new *Winnie the Pooh* movie. One of my daughters was initially reluctant to go. “Daddy,” she said, “I liked *Winnie the Pooh* when I was four, but now I’m 7 and-a-quarter, so I’m too old for it!” The truth is, I don’t remember much about the movie, but I was really struck by the idea that three years represents almost half of my daughter’s life so far. This brings me to a somewhat heavier subject.

For many of you, almost half of your life amounts to about 10 years, and we are just a few weeks away from the tenth anniversary of September 11, 2001. You have lived your adult lives in the aftermath of the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, so much so that you might not even realize how different things used to be. Obviously, for those who lost loved ones on that day, nothing could ever be the same. The rest of us in the United States have felt an undercurrent of anxiety that we didn't feel before, and this feeling is reactivated with each new tragedy or close call—from Eilat to Times Square and from Mumbai to Oslo. Meanwhile, the United States and its allies have been at war for the past decade, the longest war this nation has ever fought.

There also once was a time when the U.S. military base in Guantanamo was not a topic of everyday conversation. But in the past 10 years, those conversations have been heated. At one level, we all agree that a core responsibility of government is to keep the population safe, and that we need to do so in a way that is consistent with our ideals. Once we get into specifics, though, difficult questions arise about what process we should use for interrogating and detaining suspects, and what body of law should govern these issues.

Some of you came to law school because of your deep interest in these subjects, and Columbia was especially appealing because our faculty has been centrally involved in these issues. Sarah Cleveland has just returned from serving as Counselor on International Law in the U.S. State Department. Trevor Morrison worked on national security issues in the White House Counsel's office. Matt Waxman served in the National Security Council, the Defense Department, and the State Department. Philip Bobbitt served in the National Security Council. Lori Damrosch edits the *American Journal on International Law*. Michael Doyle served as Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations.

National security law is an example of one of Columbia Law School's great strengths: You can study with faculty who are deeply engaged with the most important issues of our time—and, of course, you know this because it is part of what brought you here. Zohar Goshen just completed a three-year term as the head securities regulator of Israel, and Harvey Goldschmid recently served as a Commissioner of the Securities and Exchange Commission. Robert Jackson worked on the U.S. Treasury Department's recent initiatives on executive compensation, and Olati Johnson worked on Capitol Hill. Tim Wu is currently serving as Senior Advisor to the Chairman of the Federal Trade Commission. Nate Persily has served as a special master, drawing congressional districts. Michael Graetz regularly testifies before Congress about tax reform, and Jack Coffee regularly testifies about financial regulation. Jim Liebman ran the Office of Accountability in the New York City Department of Education, and Ed Morrison advised Congress about bankruptcy law and the housing market. Tom Merrill regularly submits amicus briefs to the Supreme Court. Two members of our faculty—Debra Livingston and Jerry Lynch—serve as judges on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit. Obviously, there are many other examples as well.

You are here to train for similar responsibilities. Like our faculty, the graduates of this law school are among the most distinguished and influential lawyers in the world. You know the names of many of them, but not all. For example, one of our graduates was Governor of New York, a candidate for President of the United States, Secretary of State, a judge on the Court of International Justice in the Hague, and Chief Justice of the United States. How many of you can name the graduate I am talking about? Have you heard of Charles Evans Hughes? He is arguably the Columbia graduate most in need of a publicist, since I'm betting that his name is new to most of you, notwithstanding his remarkably distinguished career. Hughes

graduated in 1884, and this coming April marks the 150th anniversary of his birth. It is worth remembering Hughes today because he helped define this nation's direction during a time of extraordinary turmoil and change—in the geopolitical order, in our economy, and in our constitutional system—a time that was, in many ways, much like the present.

Hughes inherited from his immigrant father ambition and a work ethic that would make even today's most driven "helicopter parents" seem downright relaxed. He went off to college at the tender age of 14, armed with the following advice: "Have a little memorandum with a classification of rules," his father wrote. "And write down our counsel under respective heads, e.g.,—Rules for Health—Rules for Conduct. . . . Rules for Religion. Do not deviate from your systematic plan. . . . I mean your regular daily and hourly routine." Just like *your* parents taught you, right?

Hughes' professional trajectory was meteoric and, as he rose to the top of our profession, he was constantly in the company of other Columbia-trained lawyers. Within a few years of his graduation, Hughes became the name partner of a distinguished New York law firm (which still exists, and is now called Hughes, Hubbard & Reed). One of his first law partners was another graduate, Paul Cravath, Class of 1886, who went on to found another well-known law firm, Cravath Swaine & Moore. Hughes' political career began in 1905, when he presided over hearings to investigate the gas monopoly in New York City and the insurance industry. By revealing rampant corruption and incompetence, Hughes so wounded the New York political establishment that he was the only viable Republican candidate for governor left standing in 1906. Or at least that was the assessment of Theodore Roosevelt, who was two years ahead of Hughes at Columbia Law School. As President of the United States (and as a former Governor of New York), "TR" was Hughes' most influential supporter. When Hughes later served as

Chief Justice of the Supreme Court from 1930 to 1941, his central preoccupation was the legality of the agenda of another Columbia-trained lawyer, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Class of 1907. And when Hughes retired, his successor as Chief Justice was Harlan Fiske Stone, a graduate from the Class of 1898 and a former dean of this law school. Basically, these guys all knew each other. If they lived today, they would be writing on each other's Facebook walls. (I have no idea what that means, but I suspect you all do.)

Although Hughes was a magnificent legal craftsman, he was not a natural politician. He was uncomfortable running for office, and considered it unseemly to court political allies and to reward supporters with political appointments. About his close loss to Woodrow Wilson in 1916, one commentator observed: "No other candidate for President within the memory of living man ran downhill so rapidly."

But as Chief Justice, Hughes was masterful. The Supreme Court was divided about the legality of President Roosevelt's New Deal legislation. In response, Hughes clung steadfastly to the Court's political center, nurturing a body of case law that accommodated the political exigencies of the Great Depression while adhering as closely as possible to precedent. At times, Hughes would vote uneasily with the majority—not so much because he agreed with the outcome, but because he wanted to influence the Court's reasoning. As you will learn in your time with us, sometimes the reasoning of a Supreme Court opinion is even more important than the outcome.

It will not surprise you that other Justices who favored more sweeping doctrinal change resented this tactic: "When I see how a synthetic halo is being fitted upon the head of one of the most politically calculating of men," Felix Frankfurter wrote to Harlan Fiske Stone about Hughes, "it makes me in the sanctified language of the old gentleman [Oliver Wendell Holmes] 'puke.'"

My guess is that Hughes would have offered a comparably colorful assessment of Frankfurter, but that's a story for another day. Put another way, there's no chance that Hughes would have included Frankfurter in his Google+ inner circle.

As I am sure you know, Hughes was part of a proud Columbia Law School tradition that continues to this day. Generations of our graduates have had a profound influence on the law and on our world. For example, the new Chief Justice of Ireland, Susan Denham, was in the LL.M. Class of 1972. The Chief Justice of Japan, Takesaki Hironobu, was in the LL.M. class of 1971. Xue Hanqin, a new judge on the International Court of Justice, earned her LL.M. in 1983 and her J.S.D. in 1985. Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg of the U.S. Supreme Court was in the Class of 1959, and was once a tenured member of our faculty.

Speaking of the U.S. Supreme Court, the U.S. government's lead lawyer before the Court—the Solicitor General—is Don Verrilli, Class of 1983. His boss, the Attorney General, is Eric Holder, Class of 1976. Not so long ago, they sat where you are now sitting. So did Jeh Johnson, Class of 1982, who is the General Counsel of the Defense Department. I am sure you know that in the past few months, Congress voted to repeal the “don't ask, don't tell” policy, allowing openly gay soldiers and sailors to serve in the U.S. military. Jeh led an influential Defense Department study of the issue and was deeply involved in effecting this change. No doubt you also followed the U.S. government's brush with insolvency. Did you ever wonder which government obligations would be paid during a default, and which would be deferred? The General Counsel of the U.S. Treasury has to analyze this sort of novel and difficult question. His name is George Madison, Class of 1980. And the list goes on. These graduates are helping to shape our collective future, and they trained for these weighty responsibilities here in this building.

I suspect that during their first week at Columbia Law School, these graduates had no idea how their careers would unfold, and obviously the same is true of all of you. But we know that, like the classes that have come before you, you will grow intellectually and personally while you are here.

You will develop new habits of mind, and I predict that they will make you not just a better lawyer, but also a better citizen, friend, and parent. This is an extravagant claim, I know, and I expect you to be skeptical. You are probably wondering whether I am also going to say that law school makes you healthier and more attractive. Well, no. But I do believe that law school teaches essential lessons that help in personal as well as professional settings. Here are a few examples:

First, a legal education encourages us to be rigorous about what we know, and what we don't know. What assumptions are we making, and are we certain that they are correct? The best lawyers are independent thinkers, and that's what you want to be. Just ask people who accepted the conventional wisdom that housing prices can never go down or that Apple was just a quirky little company that could never go mainstream.

Second, good lawyers know that *how* you do things can be just as important as *what* you do. Process and precedent matter. Obviously, judges will focus on how a question was addressed before, but so will your employees and—for that matter—your children. And how many times has a friend said to you, “I can understand why you wanted to do that, but I wish you had spoken to me first”?

Third, while you are here, you will learn to disagree in a cordial way. If your goal is to persuade, it is rarely effective to raise your voice. You may *be* angry, but you rarely want to *seem* angry, because your audience will tune you out. This is just as true of family and friends as it is of clients and counterparties. Sometimes we yell because we feel the need to vent, and that's a mistake. Go to the gym instead.

Fourth, while you are here, there will be more to do than you can possibly do. After you leave us, this will become even more true. So you will learn to prioritize and to manage your time. Part of the challenge is to make time for family and friends, and you need to make sure that you do.

Fifth, speaking of priorities, your reputation and conscience are your most precious assets. You can't please everyone, so be true to yourself. This way, if you are called upon to defend what you have done, you will be defending something you actually believe in. The world can be unforgiving, and sometimes one mistake is all it takes to sink your career or, for that matter, your marriage. It may seem unfair that people focus on the mistake, and not on what you have done right, but that's life. How sympathetic would *you* be if someone said to you, "one felony conviction, and no one remembers what a good sense of humor I have"? Zero tolerance for unethical behavior is the only way to go.

Well, I am sure you all understand this point already, and much of the rest of what I have said as well. One of the challenges of teaching all of you is that you are so gifted that it takes real effort to open your eyes to insights that are not already apparent to you. Needless to say, the faculty wouldn't have it any other way. It is a great pleasure and a privilege to have you with us, and I look forward to an exciting time together. Welcome to the Columbia family!