

Making the Grade



A smiling Margaret D. Welles holds the 2005 Law School Banner at All-University Commencement. In a long-running NYU tradition, each school selects a student to proudly lead its processional toward Washington Square Park with the violet hues of the University banners held high for all to see. Dean Richard Revesz, in choosing Margaret, recognized her outstanding academic performance in addition to her thoughtfulness, generosity and intellectual sophistication.

Commencement 2005

Celebrating the lifelong pursuit of knowledge

Washington Square Park was a sea of violet on May 12 as more than 6,000 students and another 15,000 family and friends gathered to celebrate New York University's 173rd Commencement Exercises.

New York University President John Sexton presided over the ceremonies. Shirley Tilghman, a biologist and the first woman president of Princeton University, received an honorary Doctor of Science and delivered "A Response on Behalf of the Honorary Degree Recipients," an NYU commencement tradition. In her brief address, she spoke of being "struck by the ubiquity of the human appetite for knowledge." She then expressed her hope that "your appetite for knowledge will never be fully satisfied."

Sexton also bestowed honorary degrees on three others. Artist Louise Bourgeois, now 94 years old, was too frail to receive her Doctor of Fine Arts in person. She is best known as a sculptor of large-scale works that beg for psychological and intellectual examination. "Celebrated sculptor, prominent contemporary artist, you have created works that unlock treasures of memory and metaphor," said Sexton. He also expressed his appreciation for her seven-decade-long friendship and generosity to the NYU Institute of Fine Arts (IFA), where her husband Robert Goldwater was on the faculty. Recently, Bourgeois donated the full edition of six cast-silver sculptures titled *The Institute, 2002*, to the IFA. The institute will install one in its Great Hall and will make the others available for acquisition to raise funds.

Nobel Laureate Eric Richard Kandel collected yet another mark of distinction with an honorary Doctor of Science from NYU. A neuroscientist, Kandel pursued the "mapping of the fundamental machinery of the mind for over three decades...and helped explain for humankind the precious and mysterious gift of memory."

The leading authority on the evolution of Christianity, religion scholar Jaroslav Jan Pelikan Jr., received a Doctor of Humane Letters. In his citation, Sexton focused on Pelikan as a "brilliant exemplar of the central aim of a university to create and transmit knowledge, and astute commentator on what a university is and ought to be."

The University also bestowed its highest honor, the Albert Gallatin Medal, to Jan Vilcek, head of the cytokine research unit at NYU's School of Medicine. Vilcek is the discoverer of Remicade, a drug that relieves arthritic pain. The Lewis Rudin Award for Exemplary Service to New York City went to

developer Bruce Ratner, president and CEO of Forest City Ratner Companies. Ratner has developed commercial, retail, hotel and entertainment real estate in all five boroughs and is currently championing the creation of a Frank Gehry-designed stadium in Brooklyn for the Nets basketball team.

The commencement exercises ended, as they began, with a corps of Scottish bagpipers accompanying the smiling violet-robed graduates as they left the park. ■



Mina Kim, left, embraces fellow graduate Lisa Khandhar.

Law School Convocation

A call for service to all

On May 13, the NYU School of Law held its 2005 Convocation at Madison Square Garden. With thousands of guests looking on, the law faculty honored 958 graduating J.D., LL.M. and J.S.D. candidates.

Dean Richard Revesz began the ceremony by speaking warmly of the graduating class of J.D. candidates whose first year coincided with his first as dean. He then highlighted many of the achievements of the graduates and detailed ongoing institutional changes, including the expansion of the law school infrastructure, faculty and scholarship programs. He ended by exhorting students to continue their hard work in pursuing excellence in the profession and to stand up for and pursue such ideals as justice and the rule of law. "More than at any point in recent history, society needs the insights, skills, talents and commitment of imaginative problem-solvers and justice-seekers. The vexing issues we must confront...require nuanced understanding and sound judgment about legal and political systems. They require problem-solving abilities that can cut across disciplines and across cultures. They require a firm moral compass."

Former Law School Dean and University President John Sexton expressed eager anticipation to returning to the classroom this fall after three years of self-imposed exile. He also praised Dean Revesz and indulged in his characteristic humor, poking fun at himself and his legal alma mater, Harvard Law School. Anthony Welters '77 congratulated the graduates on behalf of his fellow members of the Law School Board of Trustees.

Student speakers Nomaan Raja, an LL.M. student from Pakistan, and J.D. candidates Angelica Jongco and Jesse Wegman reflected on friendships that will be missed and anticipated the promising careers

awaiting the class. Raja's insightful sketch of the experience of foreign students was a hit with his LL.M. classmates. Wegman thoughtfully described how a fairly routine property case taught him that law is ultimately about people's individual stories, which shape and are shaped by law.

Jongco and keynote speaker Helaine M. Barnett '64, president of the Legal Services Corporation, spoke passionately about social justice. Jongco, who earlier in the spring had won an argument in the Third Circuit Court of Appeals (*see "Students Argue Home Is Where the Heart Is," page 6*), movingly shared her sense of responsibility for the immigrant client she defended in her case and decried the "deficit of justice" in the United States. The U.S. "ranks first in gun violence, first in putting people in prison and first in the greatest inequality between rich and poor," she said and urged her classmates to fill the need for more "good and ethically ambitious lawyers."

Barnett noted with approval the parity between men and women in law school enrollment and the significant minority enrollment rate at NYU. She then called for public provision of lawyers for the poor in civil cases. "The guarantee of a lawyer for the poor has not yet been extended to civil cases. As one commentator has noted, it is simply unacceptable in a civilized society that the only time a poor person can get into court with a lawyer is when he or she commits a crime." Barnett closed by beseeching the graduating class—regardless of the career they pursue or area of law they practice—to take seriously the lawyer's version of the Hippocratic oath, the aspirational Model Rule of Professional Conduct calling for each lawyer to spend 50 hours a year on pro bono matters.



The highlight of the ceremony for most attendees was, of course, the presentation and hooding of individual degree candidates. One by one the graduates walked jubilantly across the stage dressed in violet robes, some carrying their infant children, and were given velvet hoods symbolizing completion of their legal studies. Many graduates chose to be hooded by family members who are themselves graduates of the NYU School of Law. And major benefactors like John Creedon '62 and Jay Furman '71 hooded recipients of the scholarships they endow.

Scores of graduates were singled out for special recognition in the Convocation program. Numerous awards honored excellence in a variety of areas, including highest grade-point averages, general academic scholarship, service to the Law School, scholarship in specific subject areas, law journal contributions and student notes.

The Convocation was followed by a wine and cheese reception at the Law School and, later, exuberant carousing throughout the city that lasted well into the night. ■

Top row, left: Angelica Jongco delivers an address for the J.D. graduates; right: Nomaan Raja gives his address to the LL.M. graduates.

Second row, left: Christina Weis and Mitchell Kent proudly present the Class of 2005 Gift. The class raised more than \$30,000 in gifts and pledges; right: Trustee Anthony Walters.

Third row, left: Helaine Barnett, president of Legal Services Corporation, gives the convocation address; right: Jesse Wegman speaks to his fellow J.D. candidates.

Bottom: The Theater at Madison Square Garden.