

"Pursuit of the Learned Art in the Spirit of Public Service"

**Commencement Address
Barry University School of Law
Delivered at the Basilica of the National Shrine of Mary,
Queen of the Universe
Orlando, Florida
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Thank you for that very kind and overly generous introduction.

Sister Linda, Board of Trustees Charles Modica, Sister Rosemary, Dean Leticia Diaz, distinguished faculty and staff, proud parents and families, and the unsurpassed Barry University Law School Class of 2011 – thank you for giving me this great honor as well as the opportunity to be part of this blessed day for Barry University and its Law School.

Graduation speeches are one of the toughest assignments for a speaker. To start off with, you're almost certain to be speaking in a huge room, 100's of times larger than any court room. Graduations are always held in beautiful venues that swallow up even the most robust speaker. So here we are this morning in the beautiful 2,000 seat Basilica of the National Shrine of Mary, Queen of the Universe, adorned with inspirational stained-glass windows, breathtaking architecture and solemn religious symbols. Additionally, graduation speakers have to engage a big, distracted crowd that thinks they know everything about everything – and who knows more about everything than the Barry University Law School Class of 2011? Finally, graduation speakers are often addressing an audience who probably stayed out a little too late last night celebrating!

There are also the appropriate legal disclaimers that graduation speakers must provide. The world is full of lawyers. In just a short time there will be 214 more lawyers. A graduation speaker can never be too careful you know. Warning: You may experience some temporary amnesia or dizziness or feel faint about your graduation speaker and his topic. Don't worry because this is often temporary, and it will subside at the conclusion of my commencement address to you. I have no recollection of any of my graduation speakers, including at my law school graduation, and I suspect you will suffer no lasting side effects from my talk, but the impact of Barry University School of Law will be with you forever. If however, after my graduation address and the aforementioned legal warnings, you feel injured, aggrieved or harmed in any way, you may file a tort action on your own; or a class action under the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure Rule 23 and United States Code Annotated § 1332 (d). You may also refer the case to 1-800-Morgan Law - "For the Graduate"!

In a very short time you will become Barry University School of Law graduates. You will take an oath and you will become a professional. You will belong to the profession that is fundamental to how we live our lives, to our democracy, and to our future as a nation. Without the law there is no justice and only raw tyranny can prevail. As a Barry University Lawyer you are the embodiment of the mission of this law school and you will become the living legacy of the Dominican Sisters to seek the truth, to address the most pressing legal, justice and public policy issues that affect the most poor and vulnerable along with the needs of our planet.

The three ancient learned professions were the law, medicine, and theology. The word profession comes from the Latin *professus*, meaning to have affirmed publicly. As one legal scholar has explained, "The term evolved to describe occupations that required new entrants to take an oath professing their dedication to the ideals and practices associated with a learned calling." Many attempts have been made to define a profession, in general, and the legal profession, in particular. The most frequently cited definition is by the late Dean Roscoe Pound of Harvard Law School:

"The term profession is a group of people pursuing a learned art as a common calling in the spirit of public service - no less a public service because it may incidentally be a means of livelihood. Pursuit of the learned art in the spirit of a public service is the primary purpose..." Let me repeat that last part... "Pursuit of the learned art in the spirit of a public service is the primary purpose."

The "spirit of public service" may not have been on your mind or in your heart when you were admitted to law school, but if it wasn't, I am confident that your three years here at Barry University School of Law – Florida's dynamic young law school - has changed all of that.

Barry University School of Law seeks to offer a quality legal education in a caring environment that enables its graduates to apply the skills and knowledge they have acquired to their own personal development and to the good of society through the competent and ethical practice of law or through pursuits other than traditional legal practice. This School of Law provides a learning environment which challenges students to accept intellectual, personal, ethical, spiritual, and social responsibilities. Barry University School of Law commits itself to assuring a religious dimension in an atmosphere of religious freedom and to providing community service.

For many of you the traditional practice of law will be your professional pathway to activate this learned art we know as the law, in the spirit of public service. I commend you and wish you all the success in the practice of law and in the profession. You will bring honor and recognition to this law school.

The traditional practice of law is not, however, the only way for you to be successful. You need to find success on your own terms, and it may not be measured by 1900 billable hours, a corner office or having your name on the letterhead. And remember, there is no accomplishment that can ever overcome a failure in your family life, in your faith, or in leaving a legacy for the people and the issues you care most about. You have had a great education here at Barry University School of Law, and now it is up to you to turn that into a great opportunity!

The list of opportunities is endless:

- Alternative dispute resolution
- Business and industry
- Government and politics
- Healthcare and medicine
- Nonprofit organizations and foundations
- Publishing and media
- Environmental concerns and civic life
- Educational institutions and life long learning

And if you have the ability to provide an entrepreneurial spark to any of these opportunities, you can amass a fortune, become a philanthropist, and you can hire me to run your foundation.

Many successful law-trained professionals have gone on to contribute great things beyond the traditional practice of law. These include Mohandas Gandhi (Indian political/spiritual leader), Tony LaRussa (St. Louis Cardinal's manager), Herb Kelleher (chairman of Southwest Airlines), Fred Graham (CBS TV reporter), Ralph Nadar (Consumer Advocate) Ben Stein (Financial guru), Marian Wright Edelman (Children's Defense Fund) and the 44th President of the United States of America, Barack Obama!

These lawyers have achieved success and influence in the direction of our country and the world because of their legal education. In your case, it's a Barry University School of Law education enhanced by the Dominican mission, to try to forge new ways for humans to live with each other, a new way of structuring society in which fundamental values for all laws and economic policies and international relationships will be compassion that calls for and animates justice. Indifference as a Barry University lawyer is therefore intolerable.

In this context I am reminded of the words of the great jurist, Oliver Wendell Holmes, who a hundred years ago urged lawyers to make a passionate commitment to the communities in which they live and work, stating: "You should take part in the actions and passions of your time or you will be at risk, at peril of being judged not to have lived at all."

May it please the Court... in closing let me share with you a simple yet powerful concept I learned from my friend Rick Goings, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Tupperware Brands: "Go Beyond Borders." Some of you will recognize this as the CNN tag line, but Rick Goings uses it his personal life, in his company, and in his philanthropic work. It is also an appropriate message for this occasion. The Dominican Sisters went beyond their borders of Europe to America. They went beyond their borders of simple charity to build Barry University in a scrub and palmetto studded place now called Miami Lakes. They again went beyond their borders to sponsor this law school to further the Dominican search for truth. You went beyond your borders to attend this young dynamic law school. And now the unsurpassed Barry University School of Law Class of 2011, it will be your time to go beyond your borders, to pursue the law as a learned art, as a common calling in the spirit of public service – in the courtroom, the corporate board room, in matters of conscience or in the community.

Congratulations to the Barry University School of Law class of 2011, and God bless.