

Congratulations to all of you on reaching the successful conclusion of your law school career. I'm of course terribly sad that we can't share this moment together and that you can't get those well deserved hugs and high fives from your family and friends and professors. But I hope that you each know how proud we are of you, and as I know your family and friends are as well.

It's been a crazy last semester, one that we'll never forget. I hope you and your family have stayed healthy and sane. I know it's been tough on everyone not to be able to share those last days of law school with your classmates. But I really admired the way your classes responded to this challenge, with good spirit and resilience.

I'm sure, as you receive your diplomas today, you have a range of emotions. You probably have, I hope, a sense of joy at a job well done, a sense of relief, and a sense of trepidation, perhaps, nervousness at what lies ahead. Some of you know where you're headed next, but many of you do not. And that creates a sense of uncertainty that can be tough to handle, especially with the additional uncertainty caused by this pandemic.

But just for today, you need to take a moment and celebrate what you've accomplished. Think about it. Many people have never graduated from high school even, let alone college. And of those, only a small percentage can even be admitted to law school, let alone graduate. So you've done something that very few people in our society can do. It takes not only intelligence, but as you know it takes perseverance, grit, and determination-- all things that you will need to continue on your road to success.

So, a job well done, and please take time today to pat yourself on the back. This is also a great time for you to reflect on the fact that you most likely did not get here on your own. At many steps along the journey to today, you undoubtedly had support from parents, spouses, children, friends, teachers. Well, you know who they are. And so if they are with you today, take a moment to share your gratitude. And if they aren't with you today, it's a great day to text them, or email them, or call them, and just say thank you.

So now you've got a degree-- not just a piece of paper, but a key to power in our society. You will find, if you haven't already, that people will start to turn to you as someone who can make a difference, someone who has the power to do things about problems, whether they are small ones between neighbors or large ones that affect us all. So you've earned a degree, a very powerful degree, and I

know that all of us look forward to seeing how you use that power in the years ahead.

Take heart, this pandemic situation will not last forever, and we will get through it. Try to block out all the noise, and focus on a plan for passing the bar exam. If you can get into a routine where you treat that studying like a job you need to get through each day, it will just be like digging a ditch. Just move your square yard of dirt each day, and soon you'll be at the other end.

And let us know how we can help. We have staff standing by to give you the best possible chance for success. But that's for tomorrow. For today, celebrate your well-deserved accomplishment.

Remember that all of us at Drake Law will be here for you on your journey forward. We're always in your corner. Good luck, and best wishes from all of us.