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## Our 101st Commencement

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# Our 101st Commencement

“Public interest law must not be conceived of as a fringe activity, reserved for do-gooders or aspiring saints.

It must be incorporated into all our thinking as a mainstream concern, the expected norm,” commencement speaker Haywood Burns, dean of CUNY Law School, told the new graduates at ceremonies in the Alumni Arena on May 20.

A graduate of Harvard University and Yale University Law School, Burns recalled how he began his career as a law teacher at UB Law, where he was a visiting member of the faculty in 1974-75. Previously, in 1971, he headed the Attica legal defense after the prison rebellion, and in 1968, served as chief counsel to the Poor People’s Campaign, the last project organized by Dr. Martin Luther King. He is currently vice president of the Center for Constitutional Rights.

In a rousing address, Burns spoke of the challenge facing society and the legal profession to “find ways to bring our concepts of justice and the dictates of law closer together, and to remove the barriers that impede true access to justice.”

Burns said the legal needs of the poor, women and racial minorities are increasingly unmet. “There are not the necessary legal services available to address the problems of the homeless, domestic violence, hunger, AIDS, crime and public dependency. These social phenomena are all on the rise at a time when available legal service is contracting.”

Failure to address these needs by the





*Dean Haywood Burns delivered the commencement Keynote Address.*

bar has consequences not just for the poor not served, but for society and the profession as well. It is a "shameful situation," he said, and "makes a mockery" of the supposed relationship between law and justice.

According to Burns, lawyers have a very special responsibility. Citing numerous ways lawyers and firms can do public interest law, he suggested that consideration be given to a small tax on legal fees above a certain level, the proceeds of which would be earmarked for legal services programs.

He exhorted the graduates to dispel the notion that there is an inherent conflict between doing good and doing well. "Some of you are going to be very rich," he said, "but wherever you are, you can find a way to contribute professional service in the public interest . . .

"In entering this profession you automatically assume a position of privilege and power in this society whether you want it or not. The central question for you as you leave here today should be how to use your position."

Following the address, Associate Dean John H. Schlegel presented awards and prizes. **Christine A. Constantine** and **Tracy M. Hamilton** shared the top student award. The two women, both of Rochester, received the Max Koren Award as the outstanding members of the 1990 graduating class. Friends as well as classmates, they often studied together and earned identical grade point averages.

The award is supported by a gift from M. Robert Koren, chairman of the University at Buffalo Council, a member of the Class of 1944, and son of Max Koren.

Among other student awards were the John N. Bennett Achievement Award and four Faculty Awards.

The Bennett Award was presented to **Jeffrey D. Williams**, of Leroy, N.Y. Williams, who graduated cum laude, was the first black editor in chief of the school's *Law Review*.

The Bennett Award is made to the

member of the graduating class who has exemplified the highest standards of the profession by virtue of scholastic achievement, leadership and dedication to the ideals of the law. It is named in honor of John N. Bennett, Class of 1933.

The Faculty Awards are given to students whom the faculty believes deserve special recognition. The graduates honored were **Kimi Lynn King**, of Boston, Mass.; **Craig G. Mokhiber**, of Kenmore, N.Y.; **Troy J. Oechsner**, of Croton-on-Hudson, N.Y.; and **Alice L. Elder**, of Washington, D.C.

Other awards and prizes included:

Dale S. Margulis Award, **Amy Rosen**; Adolf Homburger Law Alumni Association Civil Procedure Award, **Deirdre M. Bowen**; Judge Matthew J. Jasen Appellate Practice Award, **Kimi Lynn King**; David Kochery Award for Community Service and Academic Achievement, **Harold J. Marcus**; Laidlaw Alumni Association Commercial Law Award, **Sean A. Fitzgerald**; Moot Evidence Award, **Harold J. Marcus**; Birzon Prize in Clinical Legal Studies, **Paula M. Eade**.

Robert J. Connelly Trial Technique Awards: **Lori V. Battistoni**, **Marjorie A. Bialy**, **Nan B. Clingman**, **Gary P. Hall**, **Robert R. Jones**, **Karen E. Murray**, **Marianne R. Piccirilli**, **Linda E. Salmon**, **Ginger D. Schroeder**, **Ellen S. Simpson**, **Sandra Wallace-Smith**, **Michael K. Welch** and **Paul B. Wojtaszek**.

Carlos C. Alden *Buffalo Law Review* Award, **Jeffrey D. Williams**; Justice Philip Halpern Law Review Award for Excellence in Writing, **Jennifer B. Lew**; Edith and David Goldstein Award for Outstanding Performance in Courses Involving Debtor/Creditor and Bankruptcy Law, **Kevin J. O'Brien**; Bar Association of Niagara Falls Senior Law Student Scholarship, **Kathleen Doyle**.

Prentice-Hall Award for Outstanding Performance in Taxation, **Christine A. Constantine**; Maurice Frey Family Law Award, **Paula M. Eade**; Ethics Award, **Prison Task Force**; Minority Bar



## Latin Honors

### MAGNA CUM LAUDE

Tracy Hamilton  
Christine Constantine  
John Juers  
Michael Deming  
Michael Welch  
Markian Melnyk  
Harold Marcus  
Lori Battistoni  
Diane Roberts  
Frank Fontana  
John Wenzke  
James Grasso  
Ellen Simpson  
John Langey  
George Kotlarz  
Kevin O'Brien  
Ginger Schroeder  
Alicia Rood  
Barbara Gardner

### CUM LAUDE

Scott Tompsett  
Keith Soltis  
Patrick Ryan  
Deirdre Bowen  
Jeffrey Williams  
David Gossel  
Wayne McChesney  
James Brandl  
James Brooker  
Brian Knauth  
Karen Doebelin  
David Roth  
Keith Woodside  
Kimi King  
Paul Labaki  
Barbara Schaus  
Denise Malican  
Ian Bradford  
Paula Eade

Christopher Moriarity  
Barry McFadden  
Timothy Kaltenbach  
Kathleen Burr  
Soon Mo Ahn  
Beth Irwin  
Michael Flaherty  
Martha Harris  
Peter Farrell  
Troy Oechsner  
David Stefaniak  
Robert Jones  
Linda Salmon  
Craig Mokhiber  
Matthew Baxley  
Colleen Sloan

Association of Western New York Award, **Gail I. Hallerdin**; Bureau of National Affairs Inc. Law Student Award, Lisa Kril; Callaghan and Co. Award for Outstanding Academic Record, **Tracy M. Hamilton**.

Order of Barristers: **Margaret E. Barton, Christina M. Berninger, Nan B. Clingman, Gary P. Hall, Beth Irwin, James P. Kennedy, Jeffrey P. Markello, Elpiniki Moumoulidis, Leah S. Ranke and James Rivard.**

State and Local Government

Certificates: **Oliver L. Bickel, Phillip M. Fries, Jonathan H. Kurens, John R. Langey, Barry D. McFadden, Joseph M. Militi, Mary J. Murray, Peter A. Perlman, Susan M. Sturman and Wendy A. Urtel.**

American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers Award, **James R. Grasso**; Judge William J. Regan Award, **Martha Harris and Alicia Rood**; Kenneth A. Gomez Memorial Award, **Martin A. Sanchez-Rojas.** ■

