Commencement 2000

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Hon. Thomas Buergenthal
of the International Court of Justice
receives honorary doctor of laws

The pomp of every commencement exercise combined with the circumstance of the new millennium as UB Law School graduated its 111th class of new lawyers.

The May 14, 2000, exercises, held in the crowded Center for the Arts, were marked by both solemnity and humor; both pride in a job well done and recognition of the sobering challenge of practicing justice in this most rapidly changing world. For while the ceremonies were the time-honored ones of academe, from black robes to mortarboards to tassels, all involved knew only too well that with the new millennium has come technological and other challenges that will transform the practice of law as we know it.

"The Class of 2000 — it has a nice ring to it," Dean Nils R. Olsen quipped as he began the exercises. He also noted that this commencement was on Mother's Day, "so we celebrate both your achievements and the gifts of your mothers. Go forth with our blessings both to do well and to do good in your careers."

University at Buffalo President William R. Greiner, a law professor on leave, told the graduates, "You are much like the Roman god Janus, whose double face allowed him to look at once both into the past and into the future. Thanks for spending a part of your past with us. But today we honor you, for you are our future."

Kenneth A. Manning, president of the UB

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"The Class of 2000 — it has a nice ring to it..."

— Dean R. Nils Olsen Jr.
Law School Report:

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Law Alumni Association, extended his congratulations on behalf of the school's 8,300 alumni, and welcomed the graduates into their ranks. "Come back any time. There will always be opportunities for you to be involved in helping to enhance the Law School," he said. The audience also heard from faculty speaker Professor Elizabeth B. Mensch. In keeping with the Mother's Day theme, she said, "We teachers today feel something akin to parental pride." She spun off an entertaining series of comparisons between parenting and teaching, noting, "We hope somehow that along the way you also grew in ethical stature." And she prompted a standing ovation with her heartfelt closing: "In our cranky, quirky, detached law-school-professor sort of way, we, too, love you."

Two student speakers from the graduating class, Anthony Pendergrass and Daniel M. Baich, looked to the lifetime of practice that the Class of 2000, which has shared three years of struggle, is entering.

Pendergrass quoted from the Declaration of Independence: "All men are created equal, endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights ... among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. I challenge us all to ensure that the precepts of this living, breathing document are ensured for all and denied to none," he said. "We must ensure that the least among us have the tools necessary to participate completely and freely in our society. We must be unyielding in our commitment to a colorblind society."

In particular, Pendergrass challenged his classmates to "speak out against police brutality and the use of deadly force where it is not warranted. Injustice anywhere in America is a threat to justice everywhere in America."

Baich looked back to a century ago, when the Industrial Revolution was in full force. Now, he said, "as we enter the new millennium, we stand at the genesis of a new industrial revolution. We are the first generation of lawyers to grow up with both a computer and the Internet at our disposal."

"I do not know where it will go or what opportunities will present themselves," he said, "and that is infinitely exciting. We are entering a time when the old industry is meeting the new technology. It is our time."

The commencement's keynote speaker, Hon. Thomas Buergenthal of the International Court of Justice, first received an honorary doctor of laws degree presented by Greiner and Patricia E. Stevens, a State University of New York trustee. Stevens noted that Buergenthal had taught at UB Law from 1962 to 1975, and said of the honoree: "He is all about action, he is all about justice and human rights, and he does this every single day."

SUNY Trustee
Patricia E.
Stevens and
Professor
William R.
Greiner

For his part, Buergenthal spoke with fondness about his 13 years at the Law School. For one thing, he said, his time in Buffalo helped develop his diplomatic skills. "When I came to the Law School in 1962, the faculty was very small and evenly divided into two camps on just about every issue. The atmosphere was quite tense — and I had the deciding vote on most issues."

The judge, who as a child endured Nazi persecution in Poland and spent time in the Auschwitz concentration camp, has made human rights law his life's work. He founded UB Law School's program in international human rights, and has served in judicial positions as president of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and of the Administrative Tribunal of the Inter-American Development Bank. Buergenthal also was a member of the United Nations' Truth Commission for El Salvador, and a member of the U.N.'s Human Rights Committee.

His academic career also has included teaching positions at the law schools of George Washington University, American Uni-

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Excerpts from Judge Thomas Buergenthal's address to UB Law School's 111th Commencement:

The Germans have a saying that money does not make you happy, but it does make life easier. That is no doubt true as far as it goes. But I have seen too many so-called successful lawyers who look back on their careers 20 or 30 years later, many of them unhappy, and wish they had let considerations other than money or status determine what they did with their lives.

These are exciting times for new lawyers. But to take advantage of these new opportunities, you must rid yourself of the notion that the world is a mere microcosm of the United States and that what works here will work elsewhere. Not assuming that the world is a microcosm of the United States means that we lawyers must attempt to know more about the world in which we live. It also means that we rid ourselves of the arrogant assumption that we in the United States have all the answers to the world's problems.

Now former dictators and military chieftains must realize that, unlike in the past, they may no longer be immune from prosecution. These developments cannot but create an international climate that is less and less tolerant of cruel and abusive regimes and thus tend to improve the human rights situation around the world. These are exciting prospects for humankind.

The world has changed dramatically, particularly since the end of the Cold War, when it comes to the role international law and international courts play. When I graduated from law school, there were very few American law firms that did any international law work. Today there are few firms that don't have international departments. Non-governmental international organizations rely on international law in their work, as do labor unions and corporations. The same is true to an even larger extent of organizations such as the U.N., the World Bank, the Organization of American States, UNESCO, the International Labor Organization, etc.

The point I am trying to make is that there is an entire, ever-expanding international law world out there that most Americans know nothing about. It is a world that is exciting, that will get ever more exciting, and that you should keep in mind as you plan your future. It is a world in which lawyers can make important contributions, in which good, committed lawyers are needed.
In his address, Buergenthal cautioned the graduates: "Do not let considerations of money and status govern your decisions. Look for a job that brings you personal satisfaction — something that touches your heart. Life is much too complex and unpredictable for you to think that you can plan it all out. Do not be afraid to be an idealist, and do not be afraid to let your dreams guide your career decisions. It will make your life more interesting and satisfying. Life is too short for it to be made boring by too much realism, particularly when you are young."

The increasingly global nature of the world economy and justice system, he said, is "creating vast new problems and opportunities. But in order to participate in these, you must rid yourself of the idea that the world is a microcosm of the United States. This means that you must learn a great deal about the world in which we live."

Citing a litany of instances — from the hidden bank accounts of Holocaust victims, to tribunals in judgment of crimes in Rwanda, Cambodia and other nations — where international justice courts are making a difference, Buergenthal noted that international law is a growth industry. "The International Court of Justice, on which I sit, has more cases on its docket today than ever before," he said.

"When I graduated from law school, there were very few law firms that did any international law work. Today there are only a very few that have no international component. "There is an ever-expanding world of international law out there. It is a world where lawyers can make important contributions, and it is a world in which good lawyers are needed."

Maybe, of course, some of the 203 lawyers who completed their UB Law School journey in that Mother's Day ceremony.
"Look for a job that brings you personal satisfaction—something that touches your heart."

— Hon. Thomas Buergenthal

Barbra A. Kavanaugh '83
Professor Kenneth F. Joyce
Barbara H. O'Neil '00
Edward J. Cosgrove '00
Thirty-nine graduates receive awards

Thirty-nine graduates of the UB Law School received awards during the school's 111th commencement ceremony held on May 14. The graduating class presented the annual faculty award to Melinda Saran of Amherst, associate dean for student services, and the staff award to Barb Premielewski of Williamsville, who is with the copy center.

Student award winners were:

- Sheila Sullivan Dickinson of Buffalo and Kathlene Marie Locenti of Brantingham jointly received The Max Koren Award, given to the outstanding member of the graduating class who, in the judgment of the faculty and the dean, has exemplified the highest standards of the profession by virtue of scholastic achievement, leadership and dedication to the ideals of the law. This award is supported by a gift from the late M. Robert Koren, son of Max Koren, one-time chair of the UB Council and a 1944 UB law school graduate. Locenti also received the Professor Louis DelCotto Award, given to the student whose academic performance in the area of taxation is outstanding as recommended by the faculty.

- Elizabeth Brady Snyder of West Lunfield and Dickinson jointly received The Dale S. Margulis Award, recognizing members of the graduating class who contributed the most to the Law School and the community. Dickinson also received the Lavender Gavel Award recognizing outstanding efforts and accomplishments in the pursuit of lesbian and gay visibility, dignity and civil rights.

- Robin Dorthea Barovick of Buffalo received The John N. Bennett Achievement Award for the member of the graduating class who demonstrated the highest scholastic achievement. She also received the Justice Philip Halpem Award, which is given to a graduating senior for excellence in writing for the Buffalo Law Review.

- Jeremy Edward Reis of Snyder received the Harry A. Rachlin Prize in Real Property Law and Real Estate Transactions, given to students who exhibit excellence in research, clinical and academic performance in the areas of real property law, housing, housing finance and real estate transactions.

- Christopher William McMaster of North Tonawanda received the American Bankruptcy Institute Medal for Excellence in Bankruptcy for demonstrating excellence in the study of bankruptcy law.

- Bryan James Maggs of Blasdell received the Birzon Prize in Clinical Legal Studies for excellence in the clinical and trial advocacy program. He also received The Robert J. Connelly Trial Technique Award, recognizing students who have the best performance records in the course in trial technique.

- David Allan Bauer of Sugar Grove, Pa., and Wendy Kay Schuster of Buffalo jointly received The Charles Dauth Award as graduating seniors who demonstrated the greatest proficiency in courses, examinations and independent research in the law of real property.

- David Patrick Kelly of Naples received The Maurice Frey Award, recognizing the member of the graduating class whose academic performance in the area of family law is most exceptional.

- Donald Collins Pingleton III of Buffalo received the Edith and David Goldstein Award for outstanding performance in courses involving debtor-creditor and bankruptcy law. He also received The Law Faculty Award, recognizing graduating students who have made outstanding contributions to the Law School community.

- Andrew Anthony Zakrocki of East Rockaway received the Judge Matthew J. Jasen Appellate Practice Award for course work and
Moot Court-competition participation that showed outstanding achievement in appellate advocacy. He also was elected to The Order of Barristers, a national oralsists' honors society whose members include students who have shown dedication and excellence in the art of oral advocacy and service to the Moot Court Board.

- Carolyn Gail Goodwin of Brookline, Mass., received the Adolf Homburger Law Alumni Association Award as the graduating senior whose academic achievements in civil procedure and compassion for people best exemplifies the qualities that Adolf Homburger, a UB law school faculty member from 1960-77, sought in his students. She also received The David Kochery Award as the graduating senior who has taken an active part in the student community through service and involvement in one or more student organizations, and who has performed exceptionally well in courses in civil procedure and remedies. Goodwin also received The Linda S. Reynolds Award, presented to a graduating senior who has demonstrated an exceptional commitment to equal justice for the poor.

- John Christian Godsoe of Pawling received the Laidlaw Law Alumni Association Award, given to the student who has demonstrated the most outstanding performance in the area of commercial law.

- Jay Marcus Tiftickjian of Williamsville received the Moot Evidence Award for the best performance in the area of evidence.

- Adam Jarrod Fumarola of Homer received The Judge William J. Regan Award, presented to the member of the graduating class who has demonstrated the greatest proficiency in estates and surrogate law, and who is motivated by strong concerns for public service and public welfare.

- Daniel Wells Morse of Buffalo received the New York State Bar Association Law Student Ethics Award, recognizing either the best-written article, essay or other exposition on the subject of legal-professional responsibility or legal ethics, or a substantial action or activity in furtherance of legal-professional responsibility or legal ethics.

- MK Gaedeke Roland of Snyder received The Carlos A. Alden Award as the senior making the greatest contribution to the Buffalo Law Review.

- Roland also received the Law Faculty Award, recognizing graduating students who have made outstanding contributions to the law school community.

- James Navarro III of Amherst received the Kenneth A. Gomez Memorial Award, presented to the law student who contributes to goals of equality and justice for all minorities.

- Stephanie Ann Williams-Torres of Buffalo received The Minority Bar Association of Western New York Award, recognizing a member of the graduating class who has exemplified high standards of the profession through scholastic achievement and leadership, and demonstrated a significant commitment to effectuating changes within the legal system to address the needs of the minority community.

- Maureen Elizabeth Flynn of Buffalo received The National Association of Women Lawyers Award, given to the outstanding law graduate who has shown superior academic achievement and has contributed to the advancement of women in society.

- Irene Chiu of Amherst received the UB Law Alumni Association GOLD Group Award, recognizing a graduating law student who has demonstrated outstanding leadership skills in advancing the mission of the Law School and enhancing its reputation for excellence in legal education. She also received the Law Faculty Award.

- Receiving The Robert J. Connelly Trial Technique Award, which recognizes the best performance record in the course in trial technique, were: James Miles Appley III of Milton; Karyn Elizabeth Connolly of Buffalo and Dana Adam Lundberg of Frewsburg, who also were elected to The Order of Barristers; Courtnay Ann Goldstein of Rochester; Anthony Leroy Pendergrass of the Bronx; Margaret Penfold Schoenborn of Buffalo; Leslie Elizabeth Swift of Buffalo.

- Receiving Law Faculty Awards, which are presented to graduating seniors who have made outstanding contributions to the Law School community, were: Kevin Hsi of Wappingers Falls; Michele Mulroy Karynul of Le Roy; Patrick Joseph Long of Getzville; Jennifer Joy Snyder of Buffalo.

- Elected to The Order of Barristers, a national oralsists' honors society whose members include students who have shown dedication and who have excelled in the art of oral advocacy and service to the Moot Court board, were: Megan Mary Herstek of Niagara Falls; Mary Ann Holden of Elma; Brian Scott McGrath of Lockville; Michelle Lee McKee of Depew; Rajni A. Namis of East Amherst; Kelly Jean Phillips of Tonawanda; and Sonja M. Rani of East Amherst.