

# THE VERDICT

Newsletter



Above, Seniors attend a Professional Exposure event at Goldman Sachs

## Light Shines Through the Darkness

A note from the Executive Director, James O'Neal

No one could have predicted that 2020 would be a year of social, economic and political turmoil. No one knew that our lives would be consumed by the pandemic, the economic crisis, and social discord resulting from the death of George Floyd and others who have lost their lives at the hands of the police.

Yet, in the midst of the darkness, rays of light emerge that give us hope and compel us to press forward. In this spring issue of the Verdict, I'm pleased to share with you two of those rays of sunshine. The first is the college matriculation list for the Legal Outreach class of 2020. The names of their colleges are well known: Harvard, Yale, Williams (2), Columbia, Cornell (2), U. VA, U. Rochester (2), NYU, Hamilton (2), Smith, Mt. Holyoke, Boston College, Northeastern, Skidmore, Hobart and William Smith (2), Syracuse (3), Fordham, Spelman, Lehigh, SUNY Binghamton, SUNY Stony Brook, and many more.

The second source of light was emitted by those of you who helped us meet our Emergency Relief Fundraising goal. Your generosity has helped ensure that the students accepted to the colleges above whose parents have lost jobs will have the support needed to continue their journey. Creating opportunity changes the world for the better. Thanks for doing your part to give life, hope and light.

## Congratulations to all our LO2020 Seniors!

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|--|--|
|  <b>Divine Agidah</b><br>Hobart and William Smith Colleges |  <b>David Alvarracin</b><br>University of Rochester       |
|  <b>Michael Amo-Adu</b><br>Northeastern University         |  <b>Philip Austin</b><br>Stony Brook University           |
|  <b>Jhanique Berridge</b><br>Cornell University            |  <b>Cassandra Brewster</b><br>Harvard University          |
|  <b>Daniela Cardenas</b><br>Boston College                 |  <b>Ashley Craig</b><br>SUNY Plattsburgh                  |
|  <b>Juliana Dominguez</b><br>Canisus College               |  <b>Aayusha Duwadi</b><br>Goucher College                 |
|  <b>Deon Ewaka</b><br>Syracuse University                  |  <b>Nikalis Exume</b><br>Allegheny College                |
|  <b>Khadidiatou Faye</b><br>Ithaca College                 |  <b>Jhoana Flores</b><br>Hamilton College                 |
|  <b>Jadyn Francois</b><br>New York University              |  <b>Maya Giardina</b><br>Hamilton College                 |
|  <b>Christopher Glover</b><br>Syracuse University          |  <b>Asia Harford</b><br>University of Virginia            |
|  <b>Nehemiah Henry</b><br>Drexel University                |  <b>Dave Jasmin</b><br>Lehigh University                  |
|  <b>Daniel Jones</b><br>Florida Gulf Coast University      |  <b>Nathaniel Lopez</b><br>SUNY Baruch                    |
|  <b>Samantha Luna</b><br>Williams College                  |  <b>Sazida Marzia</b><br>SUNY Baruch                      |
|  <b>Jada McBeth</b><br>Spelman College                     |  <b>Gabriel Montana</b><br>CITY College of New York       |
|  <b>Nogaye Ndiaye</b><br>Syracuse University               |  <b>Melodie Nerestant</b><br>Williams College             |
|  <b>Jeimy Nunez</b><br>University of Rochester             |  <b>Kayla Powers</b><br>Hobart and William Smith Colleges |
|  <b>Stacy Raphael</b><br>Cornell University                |  <b>Nicole Rodriguez</b><br>Yale University               |
|  <b>Maille Romulus</b><br>Mt. Holyoke University           |  <b>Richard Sherpa</b><br>Hamilton College                |
|  <b>Vanessa Nicole Silva Burgos</b><br>Smith College       |  <b>Ngozi Simmons</b><br>Queensboro College               |
|  <b>Laila Smith</b><br>Marymount Manhattan College         |  <b>Ophelia Thompson</b><br>Lehigh University             |
|  <b>Kasang Tobtsang</b><br>Columbia University             |  <b>Luana Uchida</b><br>Ithaca College                    |
|  <b>Jordin White</b><br>SUNY Binghamton                    |  <b>Jadena Williams</b><br>Ithaca College                 |
|  <b>Jamel Williams</b><br>Fordham University               |  |

## Seniors reflect on the LO Pledge

"My favorite line from the LO pledge is 'I will sacrifice to achieve my goals because I understand that short-term gain leads to long-term pain and long-term pain leads to short-term gain.' Over the course of my high school career, these words have influenced the choices I have made. I realized it was all worth it when I learned that I had made it to the Legal Outreach Debater of the Year Competition as one of the top 6 debaters in 2020. I know that my success in college and life will be dependent upon my ability to always remember these lines."

-Jamel Williams, Fordham University, '24

"My favorite line from the LO pledge states that 'If I fall seven times, I will stand up eight because perseverance is the touchstone of great character.' I believe that this is a great life rule. Not everything will be perfect, but having the motivation to continue moving forward and working hard is extremely important especially during the times in which we are living."

-Asia Harford, University of Virginia, '24

"As I reflect on my time at LO, the one line from the pledge that will remain with me forever states the following, 'I will remain focused on my vision of greatness because no life grows great without dedication and discipline.' This line speaks to the determined and ambitious person that I have become. Throughout my high school career, everything I have done has moved me a step closer to achieving my goals and dreams of becoming a successful woman with a great career. Dedication and discipline have been the keys to my success"

-Jeimy Nunez, University of Rochester, '24

## United in Isolation, Student Celebration & Emergency Relief Fundraiser Unites the LO Community During Social Distancing

On May 28th, Legal Outreach held a virtual Senior Celebration event to show our support for our students and give thanks to all our donors who contributed to the Emergency Relief Fund. This fund was set up by the board to provide temporary support to our seniors and alumni currently attending college whose families have been affected by the global pandemic. These funds will help with expenses such as travel, tuition, books, and school supplies to ensure that our alumni are able to continue attending their chosen college and pursue their career goals.



Click on the Video above to watch the recorded event

Highlights of the evening include both moving and joyful moments. Cassandra Brewster, Harvard class of '24 and one of two chosen senior speakers, urged her peers to use the values they have learned throughout their time at LO to strive for more,

*"The effects of the 2019 global pandemic have revealed many of the shortcomings in not only America, but in nations around the world. After the way our world has been changed, we cannot afford to forget about those who have been disproportionately affected due to underlying inequalities...The world around us is changing, but if we gain strength from the values we have learned throughout our experiences as Legal Outreach students, we shall definitely overcome this challenge. Not only will we overcome, but we will go on to do great things."*

The second half of the evening, hosted by current LO sophomore Jada Kerr, consisted of laughs and celebratory moments as featured announced the recipients of scholar awards, a look-back slideshow showing just how much the students have grown over the past four years, and a special tribute from past and current staff performances added a comical note to the event.

At the culmination of the fundraiser, the Legal Outreach community succeeded in surpassing our \$300,000 goal! We are so grateful to all who have donated so far to ensure that the futures of these incredible seniors are not derailed by the current global situation.

**To watch the entire recorded event and to donate to the Emergency Relief Fund, visit our event page:**

**UNITED IN ISOLATION** Legal Outreach Graduation & Emergency Relief Fundraiser

## LO2020 Champions

- |                                  |                                 |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton | Patterson Belknap Webb & Tyler  |
| David & Peggy Levin              | Peter Dopsch & Alison Lowy      |
| Howard & Jill Sharfstein         | Sintelle and Ronald Taylor, Sr. |
| Jeff & Karin Miller-Lewis        |                                 |

## LO2020 Heroes

- |   |                                 |
|---|---------------------------------|
| Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld          | Kevin Tagami                    |
| Anne Bingaman & The Bingaman Foundation | Kramer Levin Naftalis & Frankel |
| BMW of Bridgewater                      | Melvin Rosa                     |
| Doug Tabish                             | Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe  |
| Duane Hughes & Sabina Dankwa            | Simpson Thacher & Bartlett      |
| Edwin Gould Foundation                  | The Group & 1844                |
|   | William and Holly Russell, Jr.  |

## LO2020 First Responders

- |                               |                            |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Christine Okike               | Michael and Nancy Cardozo  |
| Frink-Hamlett Legal Solutions | Shapiro Aronow Family Fund |
| James O'Neal                  | Steven Cooper              |
| John MacMurray                |                            |