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VANDERBILT  Law School

LAW@Vanderbilt

May 2019

Dear alumni and friends:

The Classes of 2019 [celebrated their Commencement](#) on a near-perfect day: cool, pleasant and dry, despite predictions of storms earlier in the week. Two hundred and eleven graduates received their J.D. diplomas, and 54 international attorneys received their LL.M. degrees. Two graduates received both a J.D. and a Ph.D. in law and economics, five earned a J.D./M.S.F., and two earned a J.D./M.B.A. Professor Rebecca Allensworth, a frequent winner of the Hall-Hartman Award for Outstanding Teaching, was selected by the Classes of 2019 to deliver their Commencement address. Diplomas were presented by Associate Dean Sue Kay, and Associate Dean Chris Serkin and Professor Margaret Blair assisted in the hooding ceremony.



During the commencement ceremony, we recognized **Joshua Burton Landis (BA'14)** with the Founder's Medal for First Honors; **Wesley Dozier (BA'16)** with the Bennett Douglas Bell Memorial Prize, the only award whose recipient is chosen by a vote of the entire law faculty; **Shannon Vreeland** with the Chris Lantz Award for leadership; and **Mackenzie Doska Hayes** with the Weldon B. White Prize for submitting the best paper in fulfillment of the law school's advanced writing assignment. [Nineteen other graduates also received awards or prizes.](#)

It's always bittersweet to bid farewell to students who have been a vital part of our community for three years. But we've come to know and respect the members of the Class of 2019 for their intelligence and work ethic, and these new law graduates are well-prepared for the jobs they've secured. Many of our 2019 graduates will work as associates at law firms throughout the country. Twenty will serve as federal judicial clerks, and five as clerks in state courts, including the Delaware Court of Chancery. Graduates were also [selected to join the Department of Justice Honors Program](#) and the Department of Homeland Security. Four plan to join the Philadelphia District Attorney's office.

Vanderbilt participates in the Gideon's Promise Law School Partnership Program, which helps public defenders launch their careers. **Sam Heller** and **Jordyn McCarley** represent Vanderbilt in the [2019 Class of Gideon's Promise Fellows](#); other graduates will join public defenders' offices in Colorado, Florida, Georgia and Pennsylvania and Appellate Advocates in New York. Our [George Barrett Social Justice Program](#) offers two postgraduate fellowships to help graduates launch careers practicing in the public interest. **Holly Thompson** and **Vanessa Zapata** are our [2019 Barrett Social Justice Fellows](#). [Wesley Dozier was named an Equal Justice Works Fellow.](#)

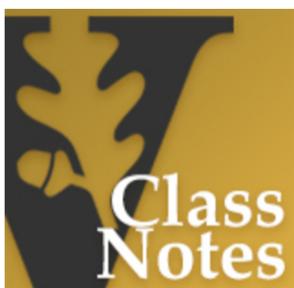
My sincere congratulations to the members of the Classes of 2019—and my thanks to all of the family members and friends who joined us May 10 for supporting and encouraging these terrific students during their three years at VLS.

We will resume *Law@Vanderbilt* in August. I wish you an enjoyable and productive summer and look forward to meeting alumni and prospective students in several cities during the summer.

Sincere regards,

Chris Guthrie

Dean and John Wade–Kent Syverud Professor of Law



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