

*JD/MBA student Aman Gill's remarks to the 2019 Donor and Volunteer Reception*

Good evening,

Firstly, I would like to thank you all for joining us here tonight. I'm here to share a little bit about my journey to law school, my experience in law school, and the invaluable contributions that donors and volunteers like yourselves have made to help students like myself achieve our dreams.

My journey that lead up to a decision to attend law school was heavily influenced by my involvement in the political landscape. I was only nine years old when I first got involved in politics. And only ten years old, when I was inspired to learn of the *Charter* and that it was this document that protected my right to wear my turban to school – something about that seemed so powerful to me. Although I did not know it at the time, my passion for law had sparked. It was then, in 3<sup>rd</sup> year of my undergrad in Life Sciences at McMaster University, when I firmly and without reservation, decided to pursue a legal education.

I wanted to attend a law school that would provide me the skills and education to help me thrive as a student and enhance my career prospects – and U of T always remained at the top of the list. But law school came with quite the price-tag, and that too at U of T. Coming from a middle-class family with a sister also in post-secondary education, I understood that law school would undoubtedly be a heavy financial burden for my family and me.

And although I knew almost certainly that I wanted to attend U of T Law, unlike undergrad, I had to give careful consideration to each university's financial aid program. But this consideration came easy. Unlike many Canadian law schools, U of T's comprehensive financial aid program is designed for students who need it the most. It made the decision easier because it relieved the uncertainty around relying on a competitive merit-based system. I knew that based on my family household income and unmet need, the financial aid I would receive would be fair.

As I recall my father's story who came to Canada in the '90s with just \$20 dollars in his pocket – he too, had a Canadian dream. His dream was simply that he would work hard and provide his kids an opportunity to grow and study at one of the finest educational institutions in the country – something that came with many barriers for him in *his* home country. But fortunately for me, I am able to attend one of the finest law schools in the world because of UFT Law's commitment to ensuring students achieve excellence *without* barriers.

And now here at U of T Law – the well-renowned faculty and its extraordinary strength becomes evident when you get taught your first year courses by some of the top academics in the world. U of T Law provides ample support for professional growth through the Dean's leadership lunches, mooting competitions, and leadership skills workshops. Initiatives made possible from the support and contributions of its alumni network.

The University of Toronto Faculty of Law's alumni network is outstanding – with former Prime Ministers, Supreme Court Justices, and changemakers that are progressively shaping the field of law and strengthening of our legal institutions. And as such, your contributions have superlative,

long-lasting impacts that help students achieve their dreams. I and along with all other students who received financial aid have felt the impact and thank you immensely for enriching our law school experience and supporting us in our path to achieving excellence. Thank you very much.