“Dear Class of 2020”
Congratulations from your fellow law alumni . . .
Class of 2020

Congratulations to the Class of 2020 on a wonderful achievement! Thank you for making the law school community better over the last few years, and thank you in advance for making the legal profession, and the world, better as you go forward.

Stay in touch!

Edward Iacobucci (LLB 1996)
Dean and James M. Tory Professor of Law
It is an honour for me to be one of the many alumni of the University of Toronto law school to welcome you to the club. I am very proud of being a U of T law graduate and, while life took me on a slightly different path than that of the practice of law, the background and the insight my law school years provided me were invaluable in everything I did. You have graduated from a great school and what you have gained is immeasurable. I wish you all the very best in the years to come.

The Right Honourable Paul Martin (JD 1964, LLD 2011)
Prime Minister of Canada (2003-06)
Dear Class of 2020

I extend congratulations to each of you—the graduates and your families—on the occasion of your graduation from the University of Toronto Law School, Class of 2020. You have completed an important phase in your life. Be proud of what you have accomplished! My law degree was an important building block in my business career. You are graduating at a time of unprecedented change with society focused on new developments in science, technology, social interaction, new market opportunities, radical changes in business organizations, all leading to new perspectives on social and public policy development. I hope as you pursue your careers you will be bold in your thinking, open to the possibilities, but above all, committed to making a positive difference to people and society.

Maureen Kempston Darkes (JD 1973, LLD 1996), Former General Motors Corporation Group Vice President and President, GM Latin America, Africa and Middle East; 2020 Distinguished Alumni Award Recipient
Dear Class of 2020

Congrats! The last three years were new, exciting, challenging and fun. The end of your law school journey was certainly a unique experience for U of T law grads. Alumni including myself are excited to welcome you as fellow alumni, future colleagues, peers and friends.

Atrisha S. Lewis (JD 2012)
Associate, McCarthy Tétrault
2020 Wilson Prichard Alumni Award Recipient
Dear Class of 2020

Congratulations to the Class of 2020! You embark upon your legal career in turbulent times, but I have no doubt your education at U of T Law will bode you well. As an alumnus from the Class of ’98, I can tell you that my time at U of T Law was memorable and prepared me extremely well for both my legal career as a constitutional and human rights lawyer, and subsequently, my Parliamentary work. Best of luck to all of you and once again, congratulations!

Arif Virani (LLB 1998)
Member of Parliament for Parkdale-High Park
Dear Class of 2020

I want to wish you all the best as you graduate in what will always be the Year of Covid. Stay honest with yourself and others. Take time to listen and laugh. Be curious. And may you stay forever young. Best always, Bob Rae

The Honourable Bob K. Rae (LLB 1977), Former Premier of Ontario, Special Envoy of PM of Canada for Humanitarian and Refugee Issues; Senior Counsel OKT LLP; Adjunct Professor, Faculty of Law
Dear Graduates: What an achievement! As a graduate of the premier law faculty in Canada, know that you are well equipped with the skills, knowledge and passion to pursue the career path of your choice. Congratulations and Best Wishes!

Julie Y. Lee (LLB 1978)
Retired Partner, Osler, Hoskin & Harcourt LLP
As you embark on your journey in the law, I encourage you to stay connected to the people and causes which motivate you and bring you happiness. Engage with the U of T alumni community and take advantage of the support and encouragement that it can offer. Lastly, do not lose sight of the great privilege it is to be a lawyer. Our world, perhaps now more than ever, needs innovative thinkers, astute problem-solvers, and courageous advocates. Each of you has the opportunity to be a change-maker, whether it be in the life of one person, or the lives of many. Best wishes, and once again, congratulations!

Justice Rita J. Maxwell (JD 2001)
Judge, Ontario Court of Justice
Warmest congratulations on graduating from one of the world’s finest law schools and joining the alumni who collectively contribute remarkably richly to every aspect of the profession and the broader world. No matter what you choose to do, there is no limit to the difference you can make. Go for it.

J. Robert S. Prichard (LLB 1975, LLD 2002), former Professor of Law, Dean and President, U of T; Non-Executive Chairman, Torys LLP
Dear Class of 2020, While this surely wasn’t the graduation you envisioned, know that the experience you had and the relationships you built over the course of your studies at the Faculty of Law will last a lifetime. Congratulations to all of you on graduating from such a stellar institution!

Marcia T. Moffat (LLB/MBA 1996)
Country Head of Canada, BlackRock
Dear Class of 2020

Every graduating class is told they're launching into a world of uncertainty. But the uncertainty of the past is nothing compared to what you're facing. Every graduating class is told that they are launching into a world of opportunity. That has also never been more true. And so I wish you good luck. We are counting on you. The only advice I would presume to give you is: the choices you will face are often not that difficult; choose the one that makes you proud.

David I. Shore (LLB 1982)
Producer and writer, known for House M.D., The Good Doctor and Law & Order
Dear Graduates. Please accept my sincere congratulations and best wishes on this auspicious occasion. You and your family members must be thrilled — and with good cause. Despite these difficult times, filled with uncertainty and much distress, I hope you will enjoy the day and go forward with courage and conviction. As you embark upon your careers, you take up the mantle of ensuring that the values and principles that we cherish in Canada, including adherence to the rule of law, the independence of the judiciary, the importance of a strong and independent bar and the sanctity of our Constitution, must be preserved and protected at all costs. I know you will take up the task with enthusiasm and I wish you great success. The law is a noble profession and I know you will do it proud.

Justice Michael J. Moldaver (LLB 1971, LLD 2019)
Judge, Supreme Court of Canada
First my congratulations and my best wishes for a successful future, which I hope will be filled with the challenges that will make you an even better thinker and solver of problems. Have courage and determination. They will serve you well. Never hesitate to take on work that is outside your comfort zone. There is no better way to keep on learning. Remember always that achievement is only reached through effort and that success is but the reward of struggle. Interrupt the status quo. Understand that the years ahead will make great demands on you. Accept that the easy way out, by focusing on identity issues and climate issues, will do nothing to help grow the economy after these difficult days have come to an end. Lead, never just follow. Accept that with the privilege of your education, comes leadership responsibilities. It may be old fashioned, but the concept of ‘noblesse oblige’, to whom much has been given, much is expected, should be your mantra.

Maureen J. Sabia (JD 1965)
Non-Executive Chairman, Canadian Tire Limited
Congratulations to the graduates of the University of Toronto Faculty of Law Class of 2020, Canada’s best — and most selective — law school and the perfect platform from which to build your future career. You are following in the footsteps of Prime Ministers, Premiers, Supreme Court justices, writers, academics and yes, CEOs — my education at U of T certainly set me on the path to succeed no matter the course I followed. I wish you every success.

Mirko Bibic (LLB 1992)
President & CEO, Bell Canada
Dear Class of 2020

Congratulations Class of 2020! I am happy to share in the excitement of your convocation day. Whatever you choose to do from here, remember to be in service to others and to our profession. You will do great things!

Lisa Talbot (LLB 1999)
Partner, Torys LLP
2020 is going to be a year to remember — for all kinds of reasons. Despite everything else going on in the world, your 2020 Convocation is going to be both a great memory and jumping off point for the rest of your life. I know from my own experience at U of T that your years of study and hard work have prepared you to handle both success and adversity. Enjoy this time of celebration and accept my warmest wishes to welcome you to the Alumni community!

Brian Bowman (JD 1999)
Mayor, City of Winnipeg
Dear Class of 2020

Congratulations to you all. If I’ve learned anything in life, it is that this degree can now lead you to the highest levels of the legal profession, or anywhere else your heart and fate may take you. There are no limits. You’ve done all the hard work, now set your spirit free and have a great life!

Geoff M. Smith (JD 1979)
President, CEO, Director, EllisDon Corporation
Dear Class of 2020

Graduates, While a live convocation ceremony may have been cancelled this year, the occasion marking three years of your hard work and dedication at the University of Toronto Faculty of Law is no less important. You are graduating in uncertain times. But I’ve always believed that those who succeed are the ones able to evolve to overcome new challenges. Your legal studies at the University of Toronto have equipped you with the skills you need to adapt. I know all of this will make you even stronger. The world is yours to shape. Congratulations on your amazing achievement and welcome to the University of Toronto alumni community. Good luck in all of your endeavors. I’m honoured to be in the company of the best and brightest students out there!

Michael B. Medline (LLB 1987)
President & CEO, Sobeys
Think of your law degree and education as tools that can shape and build a better world. Your energy, creativity and vision are needed now more than ever. Congratulations to everyone in the Class of 2020 on their achievement.

Laura K. Fric (LLB 1993)
Partner, Osler, Hoskin & Harcourt LLP
Congratulations – you are about to enter the exciting and challenging practice of law, which will probably be very different from your law school experience. I hope you approach it with open-mindedness and humility. Don’t ever think you have all the answers, but instead ask thoughtful questions. Good luck!

Jerry Lee (JD 2018)
Associate, White & Case LLP
To the Class of 2020: Congratulations on graduating and welcome to the alumni community! I feel very grateful to have gone to U of T. It prepared me exceptionally well to be a lawyer and helped me become a more informed citizen. I also made good friends, had lots of fun and met my wife at law school. We are privileged to have had the opportunity to attend such a fine institution. I hope you look back fondly on your experience and that you stay connected to your classmates and the Faculty in the years to come.

Jeremy Fraiberg (LLB 1998)
Partner, Osler, Hoskin & Harcourt LLP
As a recent past-President of the U of T Law Alumni Association, I am delighted to congratulate you on your graduation, and to welcome you to the legal profession and to the association of your fellow law alumni. It is a distinguished association of which you are now members. I have followed closely your considerable accomplishments over the course of your three years at the Faculty, and I have no doubt that you will continue to achieve great heights in the practice of your new profession. It is a wonderful and rewarding profession. It will offer you exciting opportunities to serve society, your clients, and your colleagues in the profession. Look for the opportunities that excite you, and seize them with energy and passion. Do so, and the Faculty will continue to be as proud of you as it is now. And maintain contact with your classmates and with the Law School — You will be glad you did.

Paul Morrison (LLB 1975)
Partner, Miller Thomson LLP
Congratulations to the class of 2020. You have accomplished something truly remarkable. Now go be fabulous! As you inevitably face ethical and professional dilemmas, please do not hesitate to contact more senior alumni to chat. We are always here for you.

Robert A. Centa (LLB 1999)
Managing Partner, Paliare Roland Rosenberg Rothstein LLP
As Chancellor of Trent University — not of University of Toronto, though I am indeed a proud graduate of U of T Law School — I do not have the right to confer degrees upon you, the most excellent class of 2020. However, I am told that all Chancellors do have the right to confer Great Honour and Congratulations upon graduates of all universities, and as such I am proud and delighted to bestow such Great Honour upon you, to welcome you as alumni of U of T Law School, and to offer you most heartfelt Congratulations! Well done!

Stephen Stohn (JD 1977)
Chancellor, Trent University
My heartfelt congratulations to the Class of 2020. Yours is wonderful achievement. One of the greatest things about a law degree is the opportunities it opens to serve others and to contribute to society. There are so many possibilities. At its most elementary, you will have opportunities to help people build relationships, overcome problems, further their projects, and resolve disputes. That is immensely important and it brings equivalent satisfaction. Some of you may contribute to social advancement and fairness through work in government or with NGOs. I hope that some of you will contribute to the elucidation, clarification and development of the law. Others will help fund collective social provision by paying large sums to the exchequer. Truth told, these fiscal contributions may be the most valuable of all. Whatever you do, I think you will find that the opportunity to contribute to society is one of the richest rewards of your legal education. Key to success throughout your career will be high personal standards and it is important that you establish these early. So attach yourselves to the people with the highest personal standards you can find. They will role model good practice. Hopefully you will also learn from them diverse approaches to legal problem solving and practice. I still find myself reflecting on how one or other of the people who trained me would tackle a problem or manage a situation. So be proactive and choose those people well. Exciting things lie ahead. You are entering the workforce at an unusual time. I don't think you should worry about this. I remember being told when I started law school, in the middle of a rescission, that there would always be jobs for good lawyers. My observations since then bear that out. These are interesting times full of opportunity.

Steven B. Elliott (JD 1995)
Barrister, One Essex Court, United Kingdom
Greetings to the 2020 Graduates: While all students remember their graduation, you will have a unique version that very few people will be able to claim! I always say that having a personal collection of great stories is invaluable. I’m sure you’ll be able to work this one into your oral submissions someday: “My Lady, as an example of force majeure…” My wife and I were both U of T Law graduates in 1991. I hope you found love there as well! We actually had four law school couples get married the summer after graduation. Law school was certainly a time of hard work and good friends. Practice will be another period of hard work and good friends. It is critical that you fight to retain some balance in your life, because there is always more work that could be done. It is also critical to set goals and to work towards them, even if they morph over time. You are well positioned for a great career, with a capacity to do great things. A few years ago, I was fortunate to be counsel in a Canadian Forces disability pension class action that resulted in over $800 million going into the hands of our injured vets. I hope you get a chance to do something as rewarding at some point in your career. Knowing I had hit my career high point, I needed a change, hopefully to somewhere where I could try to advance social justice a bit more than private practice often allows. Twenty-six years after graduation, I was honoured to be called to bench on the Supreme Court of British Columbia, at the same ceremony as one of my other Class of ‘91 classmates Michael Brundrett. In 20 years or so, I hope to see some of you coming onto the bench to take our spots when we step off! Congratulations graduates and best wishes for a clear and bright virus-free future!! Don’t hesitate to touch base if you are ever seeking career advice.

Justice Ward K. Branch (LLB 1991)
Judge, Supreme Court of British Columbia
Dear Class of 2020,

Congratulations for what you have accomplished and best wishes as you set out on the next chapter of this adventure — your lives. Crazy times for sure but you have equipped yourselves for success whatever your goals, whatever the obstacles.

Lionel Schipper (LLB 1956, LLD 2000)
Businessperson and Chairman, Fallbrook Holdings Ltd.
Dear Class of 2020

Well done. Now the real work begins when initially everything you work on seems strange. Except litigation. Good luck.

Norman Schipper (JD 1954)
Honorary Director, Board of Governors, Baycrest Health Sciences
I congratulate you warmly on your accomplishment. It is no small thing, this credential that is now yours. And in the course of obtaining it, you have been exposed to a variety of perspectives and beliefs, you have been given the gifts of critical thought and the luxury of time to think — really think — about the subject matter you've learned about. As you move on, take this grounding forward. Be a citizen-plus, who brings the light of sweet reason to our world of contention and peremptory assertions. To be sure, you must be the advocate who fearlessly speaks for the client. But be also the leader and community builder who pulls people together by seeking fair outcomes that reconcile competing viewpoints and priorities. Taking a wrecking ball to things is really not all that difficult, if you have the stomach for it. The real challenge — and the real reward — comes in the hard yards of building something up.

Justice Russell S. Brown (LLM 2003, SJD 2006)
Judge, Supreme Court of Canada
Dear Graduates, As a member of the Class of 1970, former professor and Dean, and now Distinguished Jurist in Residence, I extend my sincere congratulations upon your graduation. You enter the legal profession in challenging times and I wish you every success in making our world better and more just.

Justice Robert J. Sharpe (LLB 1970)
Retired Judge, Court of Appeal for Ontario; former Dean, Faculty of Law
2020 Distinguished Alumni Award Recipient
Congratulations to the Class of 2020! This may be a graduation unlike any other, but there hasn’t been a more important time to enter the legal profession. From helping individuals and business navigate this rapidly changing world, to ensuring that we maintain the integrity of our rules based societies, our world needs us – and you in particular – even more.

Gordon G. Raman (JD/MBA 1996)
Partner, Fasken
Congratulations graduates! I hope that you look back fondly on your law school years, as I do, even as you look to the future. From the moment that you enter the legal profession, continuously think about changing it for the better. Good luck!

The Honourable Hal Jackman (JD 1956, LLD 1993)
Businessman and Philanthropist, former Governor Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario, and Chancellor Emeritus, University of Toronto