

STANFORD LAW SCHOOL

Law Class of 2006 Graduation Ceremony

Student Remarks

Michelle Renee Skinner

Class of 2006 Co-President

May 21, 2006

Good morning! I'd also like to welcome the friends and family of the class of 2006 – I know that some of you have traveled long distances to be here, and some of you have traveled from Los Altos, but regardless, welcome to Stanford.

In asking my classmates what they wanted me to say today, the overwhelming majority of them said either one or both of the following: 1) Keep it short, and 2) “well, when I gave my graduation speech...” I think I might be the only person in our class who hasn't given a graduation speech! But even if you *haven't* given one yourself, I know you've had to sit through at least two already – and for family members, and faculty, you've probably heard more than you can count.

As seasoned veterans of graduation speeches, I'm sure you realize that there's no great wisdom that I can impart to you today that you either don't already know, or that you just have to learn for yourself. So, I have to admit that (as all of my classmates will attest is a rare situation indeed) I have been at somewhat of a loss for words.

Fortunately, my Dad taught my brother and I when we were growing up in East Texas that when you're called upon to speak in front of a group of people, and you don't what to say, you can't go wrong by saying “Hey, I'm just happy to be here!” And you know, years later, after a degree in English literature and three years of law school, I really can't think of a better way to express what I'm feeling today. I'm just happy to be here.

First of all, happy to have gone to this incredible school, where there are passionate grass-roots campaigns for who should win the Hurlbut teaching award, and where people don't know what to do with themselves when they can't wear flip-flops in early April, and where there's complete outrage on an email discussion list over the idea that someone actually might **not** be willing to share their outline for a class. I really can't imagine having gone anywhere else.

Secondly, I'm happy to be graduating with this truly amazing group of people. They have constantly surprised me - since the first day of admit weekend, where I found out that there were two other people in our class who had also worked for Microsoft, to this week, when I found out that apparently 75% of you were either high school valedictorian or President of your student body in college. It seems like every time I turn around, I'm saying...”Wow, I didn't know that you had trekked across Antarctica?” or “I didn't realize you'd won a Pulitzer before coming to law school.” And the advanced degree students! Many of them have had quite distinguished careers before coming to Stanford (and having to put up with us JDs). Overall, it truly is an impressive bunch.

So in the interest of keeping my speech very short, I'd like to close by saying a few thank yous – to the faculty and the administration, for making this such a great environment in which to study law (which is probably what I was supposed to talk about today), to my family and everyone else's, for somehow turning out this amazing group of people, but most importantly I'd like to say thank you to my classmates – for constantly surprising me, for making me laugh - and making me cry, for always keeping things interesting, and

most of all for making me very proud to walk across this stage with all of you today. See you in five years.