

**Remarks of Rebecca Chacon Naranjo '22 LL.M.
Graduation Committee Co-Chair
Columbia Law School Graduation
Monday, May 16, 2022**

Presentation of the Class Gift

Good evening. My name is Rebecca Chacon Naranjo. This year, Saaket Milind Pradhan and I had the great honor of serving as graduation co-chairs for the Class of 2022. Each year at commencement, members of Columbia Law School's graduating class present a class gift to the Dean, Gillian Lester, as we transition from students to alumni, a tradition since the late 1990s to support the students who will follow in our footsteps.

Unfortunately, this year, as in the past two, the pandemic rendered this effort impossible. Acknowledging the fortitude of the Class of 2022, Columbia Law School alumnus Kenneth L. Stein—Class of '62, co-chair of his 60th reunion, and former member of the Law School's Board of Visitors—has made a gift on behalf of the entire Stein family in honor of every member of the Columbia Law School Class of 2022. This reunion gift will help alleviate the unanticipated financial needs of current and future Columbia Law students. On behalf of the Class of 2022, we would like to thank Mr. Stein for his generosity and commitment to our class. His gift is a reminder to us all of our potential to give back to the students who come after us like the countless alumni and friends who have graduated and continue to come back and offer us wisdom and guidance. His ongoing support is an inspiration to us all as we transition.

Thank you again, and congratulations to the Class of 2022.

Closing Remarks

OK, one more round of applause for 2022, and I swear my speech is short. I promise. So, first, I'd like to really quickly say thank you again to our families and loved ones who helped build the foundation of our academic and professional journey. Next, I'd like to speak to my LL.M.s., so all of you there. Our class represents over 58 nationalities and is the largest in Columbia Law School history. Highlighting the countless deferrals, visa issues, and general uncertainty that we overcame to arrive in New York last August. It's for this reason that I think that for those of us who come abroad, studying at Columbia as LL.M.s bears a gravitas of accomplishment in and of itself. Just this, just coming from abroad and being here.

And yet, whether you're a J.D.—thank you, to you guys who stayed—whether you're a J.D. or an LL.M., we all lived a unique year bonded by the hopeful and gratifying experience of studying in the first breaths of post-pandemic freedom. That's why I know that this year meant a

lot more to us. I mean, we stressed more, don't get me wrong. But we danced harder at Barristers or in Papatzul and smiled much wider when our masks came off. Thanks to this, it is with a suitcase full of knowledge and friends we won't soon forget that we stand on the precipice of possibilities, both personal and professional.

There's more to this cliff than the edge, and so I really hope that everybody enjoyed the view this year. As a really good friend once told me, "It's not over, it's just the end." Congratulations to the LL.M.s, and congratulations to the Class of 2022! [Cheering and applause.]