

**Remarks of Udoka Joy Okafor '20
Graduation Committee Co-chair
Columbia Law School Graduation
Wednesday, May 20, 2020**

Introduction of Bert Huang, Vice Dean for Intellectual Life and Michael I. Sovern Professor of Law:

It is now my honor to present the 2020 Willis L.M. Reese Prize for Excellence in Teaching to Professor Bert Huang, the Vice Dean for Intellectual Life and Michael I. Sovern Professor of Law at Columbia Law School.

This prize honors a faculty member who embodies the legacy left behind by Professor Willis Reese, best remembered for his legendary passion for teaching and dedication to his students. The student body votes to select the winner, which makes Professor Huang the perfect candidate.

Professor Huang's CV paints the picture of someone deeply committed to the letter of the law. Renowned as an expert in United States federal courts and civil procedure, he worked as a staff economist for the White House and clerked for Supreme Court Justice Hon. David Souter before joining Columbia Law's faculty in 2009.

For students, Professor Huang stands apart as a teacher who carries this real life experience into the classroom with a commitment to not only the highest standards of learning, but also kindness and fun. His thoughtful lesson plans, punctuated with black board drawings and animated reenactments of *Palsgraf* got many of us, myself included, through first-year Torts.

Perhaps most importantly, Professor Huang makes it clear that he cares about his students as people, not just prospective lawyers. He is a treasured member of the Columbia Law community, making it a point to connect with students outside of the classroom. Chatting about ethical dilemmas over snacks during office hours or catching up after running into him on the seventh floor of JG has brightened many of my days. And his efforts to attend every affinity function do not go unnoticed by the student body.

Professor Huang is a brilliant economist and lawyer. But he also demonstrates to his students how to practice our future profession with compassion, humor, and humanity.

It is now my immense honor to present the recipient of this year's Willis L.M. Reese Prize for Excellence in Teaching to Professor Bert Huang.