

**Remarks of Lune Klappe
Graduation Committee Co-Chair
Introduction and Welcome
Columbia Law School Graduation
Thursday, April 29, 2021**

Welcome, to our distinguished guests, faculty, family, friends, and of course, the graduating Class of 2021. Coming to you from the rectilinear boundaries of Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue—as the famous writer Herman Wouk once described our beautiful campus—my name is Lune Klappe, and I’m from the Netherlands. As the LL.M. co-chair of your graduation committee, it is my honor to welcome you to the Columbia Law School graduation ceremony for the Class of 2021.

What a year it’s been. One year ago, I remember watching our predecessors graduate virtually fervently wishing circumstances would allow us to celebrate in person this year. However, none of us could have foreseen the incalculable damage this pandemic has afflicted upon our world. For us, the graduating class, the pandemic was a presence in our final semester in law school. Sitting in class with one or even two masks on, coming up for a gasp of air on Revson Plaza only to find out, that is now a one-way route. Slowly forgetting what the bottom half of your classmate’s face looks like, raising your blue hand in Zoom-land, reminding professors to hit the record button, or even taking classes asynchronously from opposite time zones. Our class has conquered all of these challenges. Today is the day that we celebrate not only the drive and tenacity that brought us to Columbia and allowed us to thrive here. Today, we also honor the strength each of us had to continue pursuing our dreams despite setbacks and suboptimal circumstances. We deserve to take this as the joyful occasion that it is. Whether you’re here in New York City or tuning in from the other hemisphere, reflect on all you’ve learned not only from your professors and mentors but also from your fellow students who are talented, passionate, and tenacious. Express gratitude for those who offered up their love and support along the way. Honor the opportunity to carry your Columbia Law School education into the world at a time when your skills are needed more than ever. Be proud of yourselves for having the courage to be part of something that only starts here.

With that, it is my pleasure to introduce to you my graduation co-chair, Chizoba Ukairo. Thank you, Columbia Law Class of 2021, and congratulations!