

**Remarks of Saaket Pradhan '22
Graduation Committee Co-Chair
Columbia Law School Graduation
Monday, May 16, 2022**

Hello, Class of 2022. And welcome, friends, family, and distinguished guests. We've had a lot of hurdles, rain delays, but here we are. We're finally here. Let's get this started. My name is Saaket Pradhan, and I am the J.D. Graduation Committee co-chair.

It is my honor to welcome you here today for the first in-person graduation in three years. [Applause.]

Thankfully, this one's not on Zoom.

Today, we celebrate a huge milestone in our lives. It's been a rollercoaster last few years, to say the least. But in spite of all the ups and downs of our law school experience, I am so proud to be a part of the Class of 2022, the most resilient group Columbia Law has ever seen.

We've not only survived law school, but we've weathered a global pandemic, job hunted through a recession, and forgot what the bottom half of our classmates faces looked like. Although, thankfully, now we're back to scrounging for free lunches around campus.

So many things have changed over the past three years. For example, we found out that we can now take classes online and pay even less attention than we did when we were in person. Of course, other things have stayed the same. Our tuition ranking is still number one. And after three years of getting a top-notch Ivy League legal education, I still have no idea what the rule against perpetuities is.

To get to this point, where we're sitting underneath these tents, we couldn't have done it alone. It takes a village. So let's give a huge thank you to all the friends, family, partners, professors, mentors, and everyone who helped us get to where we are today. [Applause.]

And, of course, let's also not forget the essential workers and staff, who put themselves at risk every single day to keep the school running. Thank you for everything you guys have done behind the scenes.

No matter how long we've been at Columbia, our time here has shaped us in ways that we will always remember. While I'm excited to move beyond Morningside Heights after 10 years, Columbia will always be a special place for the lifelong friends I've gotten who've taken me through these years and all the memories I've made as a Columbia student. Class of 2022, we haven't had an easy path, but we have forever made our mark on this school. So let's celebrate

this moment and all that we've accomplished to get here. Let's all stand up and give a cheer for yourselves, the Class of 2022. We made it! [Applause.]

I mean, sit down before they kick me off stage. It is now my pleasure to introduce to you Dean Gillian Lester, the 15th dean of Columbia Law School and the Lucy G. Moses Professor of Law. When Dean Lester addressed us during our orientation, none of us thought our law school paths would look like this. But Dean Lester has guided the school throughout its most trying times and in the process increased student financial aid, committed the law school to increasing diversity, and worked openly with students to improve the overall CLS experience. Thank you, Dean Lester, for your unwavering support and leadership of the Law School community.