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Professor Anthony J. Bellia, Jr., Diploma Ceremony Address

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Commencement 2008

Law School Dean Patricia O'Hara awarded diplomas to 210 graduates on an unseasonably chilly afternoon on Sunday, May 18 at 4:00 p.m. in front of the Hesburgh Library reflecting pool. Faculty and staff were on hand to celebrate the major milestone with the graduates and their families and friends.

Preceding the diploma ceremony, an ecumenical prayer service and hooding ceremony took place in the

Basilica of the Sacred Heart. Rev. John J. Coughlin, O.F.M., professor of law at Notre Dame, presided. Notre Dame's President, Rev. John I. Jenkins, C.S.C., also attended.

During the diploma ceremony, Anthony J. Bellia, Jr., selected by the Class of 2008 as Professor of the Year, shared some of his wisdom and advice with those in attendance. An excerpt of the talk is on the next page.





AN EXCERPT FROM
“Reflect a Great Light”

NOTRE DAME LAW SCHOOL
DIPLOMA CEREMONY ADDRESS

*Anthony J. Bellia, Jr.,
Teacher of the Year*

May 18, 2008

You will find many ways in your professional lives to reflect brightly the same light that Notre Dame aspires to reflect, pointing the way for others to do the same. Some ways are grand, and you have rightly been reminded today of the noblest aspirations of the profession. Some ways, however, are more modest, and it is worth reflecting on them as well.

When you recognize the value of doing a task right rather than valuing the need for recognition, you reflect a great light.

When you embrace the tedium that can mark aspects of this profession, rather than despairing of it, acknowledging the systemic benefits to society from the ordered processes you are performing, you reflect a great light.

When you realize that you have the power to make the work of others more fulfilling and worthwhile, and you make it so, without realizing any gain to yourself, you reflect a great light.

When you discern that you have been called to something in life other than

what you are currently doing—that there is another good toward which you could more fruitfully direct your energies—and you pursue that calling, perhaps a humbler one, rather than lament complexities that keep you from doing so, you reflect a great light.

These are small things, to be sure. For many, however, these small things mark the difference between a satisfying and an unsatisfying professional life.

Of course, no matter what you do professionally, you will have multifaceted callings, rich lives of which the law is only some measure. The physical arrangement of this very event is beautifully symbolic of this richness. You have in front of you the faculty of the Law School, symbolic of your pursuits in law that lie ahead. You have behind you people who have always been behind



you—families and friends. Especially those among you who are first-generation lawyers: Do not ever leave behind the wisdom and goodness of those who have lived to serve your well-being.

When you appreciate what many of those behind you well appreciate—that there will always be people above and below you on the ladder of career success, but that as far as your children are concerned, you (and perhaps only you) hold the very ladder of their lives—you reflect a great light.

When you do not allow your shine in the legal field and with the jury box to sanitize you from the grime of the soccer fields and the sandbox, you reflect a great light.

When you do not allow your trials as first chair to insulate you from the trials of a parent confined to a wheelchair, you reflect a great light.

When you lack the kinds of relationships that you presumed you always would have—with parents, children, spouse, or other loved ones—because of death or other all too real circumstances of life, and you replace despair with a love and commitment that enables you to live a life that transcends in value anything you initially envisioned for yourself, you reflect a great light.

Read this speech in its entirety by visiting law.nd.edu/news/518-professor-of-the-year-commencement-address



2008 Commencement Awards

ALI-ABA Scholarship and Leadership Award

David Timothy Raimer
San Mateo, California

Edward F. Barrett Award

Joseph George Fiorino
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

Kyle David Smith
Elk Grove, California

Joseph Ciralo Memorial Award, Jessup International Moot Court Award

Benjamin Capen Runkle
South Bend, Indiana

The Farabaugh Prize

Andrew James Soukup
Holland, Michigan

The Colonel William J. Hoynes Award

Joshua D. Dunlap
Vassalboro, Maine

International Academy of Trial Lawyers Award

George Franklin McDonnell, Jr.
Leawood, Kansas

Jessup International Moot Court Award, The Judge Joseph E. Mahoney Award

Krishna Anita Thomas
South Bend, Indiana

Conrad Kellenberg Award, Dean Konop Legal Aid Award, David T. Link Award

Daniel P. Cory
South Bend, Indiana

William T. Kirby Award

Eric Parker Babbs
West Lafayette, Indiana

Matthew Robert Dornauer

Tiffin, Ohio

Clinical Legal Education Association Outstanding Student Award

Geoffrey Francis Gasperini
Richmond, Virginia

The Jon E. Krupnik Award

Annabelle Mary Therese Pereira
Charlotte, North Carolina

The Arthur A. May Award

Nicole Renee Tlachac
Grand Haven, Michigan

Captain William O. McLean Law School Community Citizenship Award

Connor M. O'Brien
Seattle, Washington

The Dean Joseph O'Meara Award

Aaron James Rogers
Rockwall, Texas

The A. Harold Weber Moot Court Awards

Sherene Walid Awad
Jerusalem, Palestine

Akia Aisha Haynes
Indianapolis, Indiana

Jeffery Robert Houin
Plymouth, Indiana

Matthew James Morrison
West Hartford, Connecticut

The A. Harold Weber Writing Award

Nicholas James Nelson
Owatonna, Minnesota