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Commencement 2002

Boston College Law School

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Commencement 2002

5/24/02--In his address to the Boston College Law School class of 2002, Ambassador to Canada A. Paul Cellucci urged the graduates to public service, and in particular to embrace the idea of public diplomacy, which he defined as any activity designed to inform or influence public opinion.

"As Ambassador to Canada I see how others view our country...there is a significant need for public diplomacy," Cellucci said. "The United States is founded on ideals--life and liberty, the pursuit of happiness, freedom of religion and speech. These are fundamental to our success as Americans. But these are not unique to America."

Cellucci referenced the terrorist attacks of September 11, and described the important role of public diplomacy to counteract the impact of such acts. "There are people in this world who want to harm the United States. One of the key roles of public diplomacy is to counteract those messages of terror, and give others the opportunity to hear America's side of the story." Cellucci said he hoped he would inspire some graduates to public service, and even diplomatic service.

BC Law Dean John H. Garvey praised Cellucci's outstanding legal career and service to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. "The Law School takes great pride in the dedication and quality of its alumni," Garvey said. "He served with great distinction during his years as governor. And he has served the people of the United States well as our ambassador to Canada."

Two hundred and sixty eight graduates received degrees at the Law School's 70th Commencement exercises. Receiving the school's highest awards, the Founders' Medals, were Francis X. Bellotti, senior counsel at one of Boston's premier law firms, Mintz Levin, and Cellucci. Bellotti is a 1947 graduate of Tufts University and a 1952 graduate of Boston College Law School, and a former Law School Fellow. Cellucci graduated from Boston College in 1970 and Boston College Law School in 1973.

The Founder's Medal is the highest honor bestowed by the Law School. The Medal is named after the Reverend John B. Crendon, S.J. who was instrumental in founding the Law School in 1929 and whose dedication to academic excellence and professionalism was the inspiration for the Founder's Medal. Recipients of the Founder's Medal embody the traditions of professionalism, scholarship and service which the Law School seeks to instill in its students.

Dean Garvey, presiding over his third commencement, spoke of a special bond with this graduating class, and about how important it would be for them to keep everything in perspective.

"Love is the most important thing," he said. "You wouldn't know that if you had paid close attention these last three years, because we teach about law, not love. Justice is a wonderful virtue, and it is our preoccupation. I don't mean to demean it when I say it is not the most important thing...But keep a little perspective. Don't get so close to it that it seems bigger than anything else."

Commencement Speaker: Ambassador A. Paul Cellucci

Cellucci served as Governor of Massachusetts from 1997 through the year 2001. A strong advocate for smaller government and lower taxes, then-governor Cellucci signed one of the largest tax-cuts in Massachusetts history in 1998. During his years of service to the Commonwealth, he has worked closely with education reform, has increased access to health care, and has fought against domestic violence.

Ambassador Cellucci was born in Hudson, Middlesex County in 1948. By the year 1977, he had become a Member of Massachusetts State House of Representatives, and served in that capacity until 1985, when he became a member of the Massachusetts State Senate. In 1991, Cellucci received the position of the Lieutenant Governor of Massachusetts, and six years later was elected Governor.

Cellucci has over 17 years of experience in private practice, eventually serving as partner in the Hudson Law firm of Kittredge, Cellucci and Moreira, P.C. He received both his undergraduate and law degrees from Boston College in the early 1970s. While at the university, Cellucci served in the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC). He also served in the U.S. Army Reserves for eight years and was dismissed with the high rank of Captain.

Both natives of Massachusetts, Ambassador Cellucci and his wife Jan have two children. Jan has served as a librarian at Boston College. Their daughter Kate graduated from Boston College in 1999 and is now attending Boston College's Lynch Graduate School of Education. Their second daughter Anne graduated from Harvard University in 2000 and is now attending Boston College Law School.

About BC Law

Boston College Law School opened in 1929 in a small downtown Boston office building with 54 students and two full-time faculty members. Currently ranked 22nd in the country among 175 accredited law schools by the annual US News & World Report survey, the law school's highly qualified students are drawn from more than 230 colleges and universities across the United States, as well as in other countries. More than 7,000 applicants each year compete for 255 seats in the entering class. The law school's 9,200 alumni practice in 49 states and several foreign countries, holding positions in major law firms, corporate in-house legal departments, the judiciary, government agencies, private industry, academic and public interest organizations, and serving as elected state legislators and members of the U.S. Congress.