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Boston College Law School

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Greco Addresses Graduates at 2006 Commencement

5/26/06--Addressing the Boston College Law School class of 2006, American Bar Association President Michael S. Greco (BC Law '72) urged the graduates to embrace the values they have learned in their three years of law school.

“On whatever path your career in the law takes you, remember the firm grounding in ethics, professionalism, and scholarship that you have received from Boston College Law School,” Greco said. “Some of the specifics you have learned may fade with time…but what must stay with you are the ideals and values that are now part of you: dedication to professionalism, to public service, and to serving the legal needs of your fellow human beings.”

Read full transcript of speech

BC Law Dean John H. Garvey praised Greco’s commitment to pro bono service work in many areas during his long career, saying he had “worked tirelessly” to reinforce a sense of idealism in the legal profession. “34 years ago today Mr. Greco graduated from Boston College Law School,” Dean Garvey said. “He was one of the most distinguished members of that class....but I doubt there were many in that crowd that day who imagined what immense good he would do in his chosen profession.”

Dean Garvey also offered a last word to the students before they entered the alumni ranks. “We have taught you for three years to make clear and correct judgments, about what acts are legal, right, good, and just; and what are their opposites,” he said. “But you must guard against extending this habit from acts to people. Your clients may be people who have done bad acts. Your opponents may be lawyers, judges, politicians who see matters of concern to you in the wrong light. That is not all they are. You should try always to look right through them and still love them for what they are.”

Two hundred and eighty-four graduates received degrees at the Law School’s 74th Commencement exercises. Receiving the school’s highest awards, the Founders’ Medals, were John J. Neuhauser, David C. Weinstein (BC Law ’75), and Greco. Neuhauser, a former Academic Vice President and Dean of Faculties of Boston College, is currently on the faculty of BC’s Carroll School of Management and a trustee at Saint Michael’s College. Weinstein, Chair of the Board of Overseers Development Committee and Chair of the Reunion Gift Program, is Executive Vice President for Governmental Relations at Fidelity Investments and serves as a trustee or on the boards of a number of schools and colleges and charitable organizations.

The Founder’s Medal is the highest honor bestowed by the Law School. The Medal is named after the Reverend John B. Creeden, 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.

Greco became President of the American Bar Association in August 2005. He is a partner in the Boston office of Kirkpatrick & Lockhart Nicholson Graham, LLP. A trial lawyer with more than 30 years of litigation experience, he has also served as arbitrator and mediator in complex
business and other disputes on both the state and national levels.

He earned his J.D. from Boston College Law School in 1972, where he served as Editor in Chief of the Boston College Law Review and as class president, and then clerked on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit. He earned his B.A. in English from Princeton University in 1965. Prior to law school he taught English at Phillips Exeter Academy in Exeter, N.H.

He has long been active in the ABA, including serving in the House of Delegates since 1985 and as the elected State Delegate from Massachusetts during 1993-2004. He has chaired the Association’s Standing Committee on Federal Judiciary, Section of Individual Rights and Responsibilities, Executive Committee of the Conference of State Delegates, Steering Committee of the Nominating Committee, the ABA Day in Washington Planning Committee, and other committees. After September 11, 2001, he served on the ABA Task Force on Terrorism and the Law, and also served on the ABA Standing Committee on Law and National Security and the ABA Commission on Women in the Profession.

In Massachusetts he served as president of the Massachusetts Bar Association, the New England Bar Association, the New England Bar Foundation and the Board of Trustees of Massachusetts Continuing Legal Education. As MBA president he and the governor appointed a blue-ribbon Commission on the Unmet Legal Needs of Children, whose report and recommendations led to enactment of new statutes protecting the legal rights of children. He chaired the first-in-the-nation Massachusetts Legal Needs for the Poor Assessment and Plan for Action, and was co-founder and co-chair of Bar Leaders for Preservation of Legal Services for the Poor, a national grassroots organization that helped preserve the Legal Services Corporation in the 1980s. By appointment of the Justices of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court he chaired the Court’s Committee on Pro Bono Legal Services.

He also served on the Board of Overseers of the Newton-Wellesley Hospital, and as Vice-Chair of the Board of Bar Overseers of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court. He served for eight years on Gov. William Weld’s state Judicial Nominating Council, and on the Commission on Federal Judicial Appointments. 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 27th in the country 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. Nearly 6,000 applicants competed for 250 seats in the entering class this year. The law school’s 10,000+ 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.