



COMMENCEMENT 2016

THE HONORABLE THOMAS E. PEREZ, SECRETARY OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, RETURNED TO MARYLAND CAREY LAW, WHERE HE ONCE SERVED ON THE FACULTY AND DIRECTED THE CLINICAL LAW PROGRAM, TO MOTIVATE THE CLASS OF 2016 AS IT EMBARKED ON ITS JOURNEY AFTER GRADUATION.



Orchestrating Your Legal Path

During his remarks to the 215 graduates, gathered with friends and family at the Hippodrome Theatre on May 20, Perez relayed personal and professional stories about a subject traditional commencement speakers don't typically address: failure.

“Life, in my judgment, is the search for both knowledge and wisdom. If you have one without the other, you will not have enough... Books and lectures give you knowledge. But your life experiences make you wise. And if you want to get some wisdom, you're going

to need to try and fail a few times. You're going to need to get knocked down and come back stronger. You're going to need to take some educated risks.”

Perez urged graduates to act and address social disparities with their new legal degree—something he called a tool and instrument each lawyer employs.

“Get those instruments out. Play those instruments with a fierce urgency of now. Never hesitate to challenge yourself to learn a difficult song. Don't

be afraid to play the wrong notes every once in a while—and if you do, get right back to playing.”

A seasoned civil rights lawyer, Perez has spent the past 30 years promoting access to democracy in Maryland and across the country. He credits his legal training for allowing him to tackle inequality issues in health care, the mortgage crisis, and labor—and urged graduates to do the same.

“We need you in the orchestra, here in Baltimore and around the country... With

the remarkable educational foundation you have received from this institution, and the remarkable wisdom you have gained in your life, and will continue to gain in your life, I frankly can't wait to hear the music that you are going to create. Make it loud, make it often, and make it soon.”

Other speakers included Dean Donald B. Tobin, 2016 evening class president Holly Leasure, and day class president Hilary Tebeleff. Graduate Alisha Duggal also spoke at the University of Maryland, Baltimore Commencement as the 2016 student remarker.