

As Virus Persists, Law Grads Urged to Rise to Its Challenges

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With invocations of legal trailblazers past and present and encouragement to find opportunity in trying times, 2020 law school commencement speakers urged graduates to address the long-standing issue of inequality made even more apparent by the coronavirus pandemic.

In delivering the commencement address at Northwestern Pritzker School of Law, Founding Partner Faith Gay called on students to embrace the darkness, similar to soldier Siegfried Sassoon, who wrote angry and compassionate poems about World War I, and author Zora Neale Hurston, who portrayed racial struggles in the early-1900s American South.

"I am reminded that times of human tragedy are times of utmost inspiration, creativity, value assortment and opportunity, dare I say it," Gay, an alum of the university, told graduates. "Our best genius does not come in sunshine."

Gay went on to say that the world needs lawyers and advocates perhaps now more than ever to help reshape and rebuild. She encouraged graduates to reinvent bankruptcy law, find a way to fix tax law to incentivize everyone from top to bottom, attack student debt, expand the right to education, protect access to the polls or enforce religious freedom in a coherent and equitable manner.

She concluded by saying, "What kind of world we have now is yours to decide, not mine, in your acts, in your words, in your rock-solid commitment to each other in the face of this demon pandemic that forces us to see that we must deal and we are connected to each other, whether we want to be or not."

Watch Gay's [full commencement speech here](#) (beginning 26:21).

Attorney

- Faith Gay

Practice

- Public Interest and Pro Bono