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Chief Judge Mahon, President Cost, President Ahmed, distinguished guests, including our law and University faculty, senior administrators, including Provost Sapienza, and especially the parents, families and friends of our inaugural class of law students; well, never let anyone say that your College of Law wastes any time getting our students into court.

These halls of justice will become very familiar to our aspiring lawyers because of the privilege they have been given to study and do library research here and in the nearby federal courthouse. They also will learn by regularly observing law in practice as they watch judges and lawyers work.

I am sure they will be grateful and prize the lessons conveyed to them by the members of our honorable profession who every day bring the law and this imposing, inspiring courthouse to life. Congratulations and Godspeed to Jacksonville University's fabulous first fourteen law students.

Today you begin the formal part of your legal education. After earning your J.D. – which we are confident you can and will do –and after you join the ranks of the best lawyers – which we expect you to be –you will become lifelong learners of the dynamic and ever-changing demand for law and justice.

So far over two days of orientation, you have heard a lot about how to navigate the long days and short years that will speed by as you graduate and then begin worthwhile careers, meaningful lives, and service to others.

It will not be easy and you will work hard but you would not have been chosen for the first fourteen if you were not capable of graduating, passing the bar exam, and landing a job that is a good return on the effort, time, and resources you, your family, and the Jacksonville community invested in your legal education. To do so, you won't have to be –and should not be –all consumed by work.

Do not be like that lawyer at the pearly gates who told St. Peter he was too young to die. Peter replied, "not according to your time sheets." St. Peter added, "what about that day you billed clients 27 hours?" Being fast on his feet, as lawyers are and as I have already seen all of the first fourteen are, the lawyer explained, "I was flying to the west coast from Jacksonville and gained another three hours to work that day."

So please remember, on their death bed no lawyer ever wished they had billed more time to clients. Also, remember that you do not have to go it alone. You will have the support and encouragement of our faculty and staff, of the entire University community, of the local bench and bar, and of the greater Jacksonville community to an extent that I sincerely believe is second to none.



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Personally, I and our entire dedicated academic team, feel an enormous responsibility to demonstrate that your bold, astute and shrewd decision to begin your legal career with us was warranted. Together, with your own conscientious effort, your future should be marked by success, satisfaction, and service as you perform both the dual private and public roles of attorneys.

All law schools have to teach the basics of legal principles and the nuts and bolts of law practice. We are going to do that efficiently, affordably, and purposefully, but every lawyer should also carry within themselves a code of ethics that guides every decision, infuses every choice of objective, and every relationship with clients and the courts. That compass of ethics and values will keep you on course in the service of others as you use to good effect, the most powerful tool in the history of the world: a legally trained mind.

We are determined that our Jacksonville University graduates will be distinctive, be80580rtrained mind.



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Next week when we meet in the “Introduction to the Fundamentals and Study of Law” classes, I will ask you to compare and contrast the Pony Express riders to your future as the fabulous first fourteen. Hint: they were small in number (there were only a little over 100 riders) yet managed never to be forgotten and captured the imagination of Americans ever since as the embodiment of the essence of our heroic spirit. On the other hand, at least in Jacksonville, we will not be delivering legal education as a death-defying or frightening exercise. We are determined that you will not be overtaken and rendered outdated.

Our immediate, practical goal is to provide our students with education, training, and support that is in the vanguard of what future lawyers will need. We do not want our graduates ever to be passed by developments like the Pony Express riders who were supplanted by the telegraph and electronic communications. At the same time, I am confident that our path-clearing first fourteen students’ performance will help gain the College of Law credibility, visibility, and support, not to mention energize and advance its pursuit of accreditation. Our future is in your hands as much as yours is in our hands. Think of that.