How do you make a venue full of colleagues, classmates, friends, even enemies stand you for 5 minutes? That was the first question I asked myself as I prepared to write this speech.

What did I want to talk about? Over the course of the past few weeks, I began to look back on the past 3 years of not just my life but those around me to inspire me to write something great, but don’t assume I found it quite yet.

It’s hard to imagine that only 3 or 4 years ago, we were walking around Sargent Hall, bright-eyed and curious as to what the not-too-distant future would hold.

As for myself, I was dying to get to Suffolk. I’m a Boston guy and Suffolk was the Boston law school. ‘You can’t throw a rock from Boston Common without hitting a Suffolk Law grad,’ I was told. So I did what anyone else would do when I decided to take the LSATs and go to law school. I Google’d them.

And what did I find – little bit of a history lesson – Suffolk was founded by Gleason Leonard Archer in 1906. His goal was to provide those without an opportunity – immigrants, minorities, and the working class - to have one. And that opportunity was to study law.

‘Not much has changed,’ I thought to myself as I began to think about all the Suffolk Law grads I knew and whether I’d be joining them. My parents came to this country before I was born while my sister was a toddler. At that time, they didn’t have much and, as far as I can remember, they worked hard to provide for us. My parents weren’t only immigrants, but they were the working class. The fact that Mr. Archer’s goals were still resonating over 100 years later gave me chills. To say I had high expectations going into Suffolk Law is like saying you were only a little excited for today.
But as it turns out, during the first year, some of us tested how far we could mentally and physically go. Some of us found the material easy (or at least told our study group we did). All of us, however, appreciated what it meant to come out of – ‘the toughest year of law school’ – unscathed.

First-year summer – when I say those words, some of you think of a Legal Clinic, or a District Attorney’s Office, and for a qualified number, your first paid legal job, maybe even with a firm. From there on, as they say, was all “downhill.” I’ll never forget my second year because that was the first time I was mistaken for an attorney. I was in Taunton District Court, clerking for a firm, and an attorney who was not from the area, said, “Excuse me, Counselor?”

My head could not have spun faster. Maybe some of you didn’t have such a moment, but I’m sure most if not all of you finally said to yourselves, “Okay, I got the hang of this. I may not know it all, but I know something.” And by the way, I corrected the mistaken attorney; I figured it wouldn’t feel right until two days had passed: Today, and the day you’re sworn-in.

Unfortunately, I feel like it stops there. But we all know it doesn’t. I mean, we’re here. But what does that exactly mean? Obviously, the often over-exaggerated career forecast does not make it easy to fully enjoy today. I say, forget that.

For those of you that know me, I literally know almost every one graduating today and probably most of those graduating next year here. Now, don’t confuse that with popular; I’ve been called a social butterfly. I have the gift of gab. My point is, I’ve met close to hundreds of fellow students who sat in those same exact seats. And, from what I know from my relationships with those now-alumni, there is not just hope at the end of the tunnel, there is a new life. There is no cliff that just magically appears and you’re left to your own devices to survive. There is life after law school. In fact, it’s YOUR life after law school starting tomorrow. There is a new job, new co-workers and colleagues, and new memories to be made. And that is how I think I will wrap up this speech – that life is made up of memories, and law school will be one of them. At one time, it was just another new memory.

I’ll close off with a reading that Judge Fenton read to my class my second year and still resonates with me today:
"To laugh often and much;
To win the respect of intelligent people
and the affection of children;
To earn the appreciation of honest critics
and endure the betrayal of false friends;
To appreciate beauty,
to find the best in others;
To leave the world a bit better,
whether by a healthy child,
a garden patch or a redeemed social condition;
To know even one life has breathed easier
because you have lived.
This is to have succeeded." – Emerson

Thank you.