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2019 commencement speaker on behalf of JD Evening Division graduates at UConn Law

Within the first minute of law school, we knew that as evening students, our path would be a bit unique.

We sat down for contracts with Professor Birmingham. He'd say, "Ryan, tell us what a contract looks like. I've never seen one." We didn't have a book, it wasn't organized into neat little chapters. We read cases, whole cases written by great judges. Oliver Wendell Holmes, Learned Hand, Richard Posner.

We had to think for ourselves. Professor Birmingham, I think it stuck.

We've been thinking for ourselves and finding our own path these four years. We had to. We had jobs. We had kids. We had jobs and kids. But we did quite well, bright futures ahead of us. More than what we did, I am so proud of how we did it.

First, we did it together. We did everything together. We studied, mooted, debated, discussed, shared outlines. We even tried to give this speech together. A bit unusual.

Second, we worked hard. And I am working hard to pass that on to the next generation. My daughters, Olivia and Natalie, four and six -- about a year ago, they were watching me study and they decided to write their own book of laws.

The law book illustrated by Olivia and Natalie. Law number one: don't text while you're working. Law number two: always work hard. Law number three: always work hard. And law number four: always think hard.

So what's the point? What does it matter? Well, we're leaving the study of law and we're going into the profession of law. Is it so bad is it gonna chew us up and spit us out? I hope not. I hope that we take with us these memories of these four years, working together, working hard and do great things to come.

So to all the graduates today and especially the evening folks, congratulations.