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Who Are You, Class of 2001

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MLR 1998 Orientation Speech

Once again we express a sincere welcome to the class of 2001 - all 168 of you. I thought it would be appropriate, this morning, to tell you and the faculty who you are. Can you guess who is who? Well - you've got the next three years to find out!

You've come to us from 23 states and 2 foreign countries. Of those enrolled from out of state, 12 are from North Carolina and 10 from Pennsylvania. Others are from Texas, Mississippi, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Maryland, Maine, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, South Carolina, Tennessee, Utah, Wisconsin, West Virginia, and Virginia. Five of you are from California. Nearly half of you are from out of state.

Hold on to your socks - 54% of this entering class is female - 14% more than last year when only 40% of the class were women. The class's average age is slightly over 25. One of you is 21 and one of you is 72. Twenty-four of you are married.

You are graduates of 90 undergraduate colleges and universities in this country and 3 foreign universities in Dubai, the Ukraine and Korea - 15 more schools than were represented in last year's entering class. The highest number of our entering class - 16 have graduated from UVA followed closely by 11 from the College of William and Mary.

Thirteen of you have advanced degrees. 106 - 59% have been out of school at least one year and one of you graduated from their undergraduate school 53 years ago.

Your median LSAT places you in the top 26% of all those who took that test during the past 3 years. One of you scored in the 96th %ile. Your median GPA is 3.07 and the highest GPA in your class is 3.95. Forty-three different majors are represented, with the greatest number - 30 - graduating in - no surprise - Political Science. Twenty of you were History majors and 18 majored in English.

Twenty-Four of you worked as paralegals and several of you are CPAs. One female student is an US Army Intelligence Officer and there are three among you who are engineers, one student is a hydrologist. Several of you interned in the White House and for members of the Senate and Congress. One of you has a PhD in Chemistry and one of you is a doctor. One of you owns a mobile disc jockey business and one of you worked for NASA. Someone was a small town reporter who went undercover as a high school student to write a story about the local school system. That story won a first place feature writing award from the Virginia Press Association. One student had the interesting job of walking through cotton fields observing insect and weed populations. Interested in the former Soviet Union? One among you was part of a team who helped prepare the first land auction in that country. My hat's off to the woman in your class who is a certified mechanical engineer who not only designed and built her own large, 4 level home, but also was a self-employed artist who owned a retail arts and crafts store. Another of you was employed as an advocate for mentally ill and addicted people who had been put in a treatment facility through involuntary commitment proceedings. One gentleman here was an army attack and reconnaissance helicopter pilot. What an interesting job one of you

had as a member of the Irish Ceasefire Trust who participated in exchanges focused on ending cross border strife in Bosnia.

You have a serious commitment to public service. You gave hundreds of hours to Women's Shelters, Habitat for Humanity, Special Olympics, Big Brothers-Big Sisters, working with the elderly in soup kitchens, shelters and crisis hot lines. One of you has spent many hours working in a hospice with the dying another on a suicide prevention hotline. One of you volunteered much time at the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, another as a missionary in Mexico and the Honduras furnishing ophthalmic care to natives of Latin American countries. We have a volunteer fire-fighter in our midst and 4 certified Emergency Medical Technicians.

Many of you not only played a variety of sports but volunteered time to coach underprivileged children and inner city children so that they too might learn and love your sport. One of you shows quarter horses. Someone in your class was a member of the Virginia Riding Team. There is plenty of excitement in the life of your fellow student who was a whitewater raft and kayak instructor and the woman who pilots a Cessna. One of you played on a German Soccer Team. The Washington Post ranked one of you as one of the 8 best high school rowers in crew in the country. This person is also a professional bike racer and trained for a triathlon and a mountaineering expedition to the highest peak in South America. Someone needs to volunteer to keep our long distance runner company.

Many of you have been inducted into ODK and are members of a variety of prestigious honor societies. Three of you were inducted into Phi Beta Kappa and 3 of you have achieved the rank of Eagle Scout. Eight of you are John Marshall Scholars - our most prestigious scholars selected by a blue ribbon panel amongst whom were 3 Virginia Supreme Court Justices. One of you received a Foreign Exchange Scholarship from Rotary International. We were impressed by the student who won the Algernon Sydney Award which is given to one male and to one female for service to humanity each year at UVA and proud of the single mom who won the prestigious Kaufman Prize - carrying a \$5,000 stipend - for the highest qualities of leadership and service.

Some of you have been victims of crime. You speak many languages - Taiwanese, Chinese, Italian, Russian, Ukrainian, Spanish, Hebrew, Urdu, Korean, French, Arabic, Farsi, Hindi, and Mandarin Chinese - for some it was the first language they spoke.

You are avid travelers and many have studied abroad in such places as Australia, Scotland, Spain, Belgium, Taiwan, Mexico, Brazil, Japan, Korea, Dubai, Italy, the Ukraine and England. Some have taken their love of travel further and have spent at least one year teaching English in Japan. One of you has just returned after spending 3 years teaching in that country. One brave soul secretly left the former Soviet Union barely speaking English when arriving in this country.

The arts have not escaped your interest and one of you is an accomplished pianist and, since 1984, has been a semi-professional bassist. Another was the youngest member of a

professional theater group and another is a talented dancer. We have a talented singer and dancer in our midst and I'm anxious to meet the student out there who is the lead guitarist in the rock trio he established 9 years ago.

Who is the woman in your class who holds a black belt in karate? One of you has a brother who was a gold medalist in the Olympics - twice - and was lucky enough to carry the Olympic Torch. Who is your class was a Ranger and a parachutist. Did you know that someone in your class was an elected School Board trustee? I'd like to meet the gentleman in your class who has been a farmer for several years or the fellow who flies airplanes. And I have a few tasks for the accomplished carpenter amongst you. A novelist is in your midst and has already been published 4 times. Brave is the mother of 3 children who completed her degree at age 31 before coming here today. One in your class even admits to being overbearing and one has fought the battle of their life and is a cancer survivor.

Interesting - in this class are many who have family ties to the Law School - some are cousins, brothers, a grandson, son and a daughter who are proud alumni. For one of you out there the legacy extends to a grandfather and father who graduated from this Law School as well as having a cousin who is still at the School.

And so it goes - 168 different stories and 168 different factoids as they're sometimes called around here. But, half the fun is getting to know those who are going to become your life long friends so I'll stop now and wish you good luck and good fun on the adventure upon which you are embarking.