

Good afternoon everyone,

My name is Samantha Hourican, and it has been my distinct honor and privilege to serve as your Student Bar Association President. I now have one final privilege: to introduce this year's commencement speaker, Judge Evelyn Padin. Judge Padin embodies what are not only the three pillars of Seton Hall Law, but what I believe to be some of the most important traits a lawyer could possess: Integrity, Loyalty, and Engagement. Each of these characteristics are essential to our most basic mission as soon to be lawyers: to serve others.

Choosing to come to law school, to become a lawyer, is a choice to become an advocate. To use not only the knowledge we possess, but all that we are: **to serve**. We serve ourselves by being true to who we are, and bringing our whole selves into the profession, we serve our friends, colleagues, and loved ones by providing the same support that they have shown us, and we serve our communities by giving a voice to the voiceless and working to promote justice.

How we pursue and achieve these goals may look different for each of us, what is important is that you, as Theodore Roosevelt once said, "Do what you can, with what you have, where you are." Each of us has different gifts, backgrounds, and interests, but each and every one of us are capable of achieving this goal.

There is no one who better exemplifies the pillars of loyalty, integrity, and engagement than our commencement speaker. Throughout the course of her long and distinguished legal career, Judge Padin has displayed a relentless commitment to service and equal justice under the law.

Judge Padin was appointed as a United States District Judge in May of 2022. She is the second Latina federal judge for the District of New Jersey, and also holds the distinction of being the first Puerto Rican and Latina President of the New Jersey State Bar Association.

Judge Padin previously served as a municipal court judge in Jersey City where she presided over nearly 3,000 cases and was a court appointed family mediator, directly serving the community she grew up in.

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Judge Padin's father, whom she says was a great influence in her life, always encouraged her to be an attorney. After working for several years as a social worker, she decided to heed her father's advice, with the understanding that a career in the law could be a powerful tool to serve others. She decided to attend Seton Hall Law School where she was a member of the LEO Program. After graduation she clerked for Judge Lorraine C. Parker before joining Linares and Coviello as an associate. Judge Padin then returned home to Jersey City with a mission to give back to her community. She decided to open her own firm, a practice focused on civil personal injury litigation and family law.

Judge Padin has been an invaluable contributor to not only the Seton Hall Law Community but to New Jersey as a whole. Judge Padin has served as a trustee to the Hispanic Bar Association of New Jersey, on the Board of Governors for the New Jersey Association for Justice, as the co-chair of the Diverse Attorneys of Seton Hall Advisory Committee, and the list goes on and on.

As we go forward, I am confident that the class of 2023 will follow in Judge Padin's footsteps, and remember what the late Justice Ginsburg once said, "Whatever you choose to do, leave tracks. That means don't do it just for yourself. You will want to leave the world a little better for your having lived."

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