



Supreme Court of Illinois

Joseph R. Tybor
Director of Communications

222 North LaSalle Street, 13th Floor
Chicago, Illinois 60601
Telephone (312) 793-2323
Mobile (312) 636-0479
Fax (312) 793-0871
jtybor@illinoiscourts.gov

May 15, 2015

CHIEF JUSTICE RITA B. GARMAN TELLS GRADUATES PERSISTENCE PROPELS SUCCESS

Chief Justice Rita B. Garman told graduates of Parkland Community College that persistence is what propelled her from small town girl to chief justice of the Illinois Supreme Court.

"If one door closed, I knocked on another until I found a way forward," Chief Justice Garman said during her keynote address at Parkland's commencement ceremony May 14 in Urbana.

The Chief Justice said a changing society and the support of family and mentors also helped her get to where she is today, but stressed it was her own persistence that pushed her past male professors who told her she didn't belong in law school and was only there to catch a husband.

"You do not need validation from anyone else," Chief Justice Garman said. "You are the source of your own confidence, your own ambition and your own persistence. Obstacles may be placed in your way, but no one can make you quit. No one can make you give up on your dreams."

Although society has changed since she graduated from University of Iowa College of Law in 1968, at a time when women and minority attorneys faced challenges and prejudice in the legal profession, the Chief Justice said some people are going to encounter more obstacles than others.

"You cannot wait for change to open the door for you. You must forge ahead," Chief Justice Garman told Parkland's graduates. "If you cannot get past an obstacle, you must find a way to go around it."

The Chief Justice encouraged the recent grads not to waste their time bemoaning the fact some people may appear to have an easier path in life.

"You do not know what burdens other people," Chief Justice Garman said. "Run your own race. Envy of others weakens you; it does not strengthen you."

MORE

CJ Garman Tells Graduates Persistence Propels Success Add One

Earlier in her commencement address, the Chief Justice reminded Parkland's graduates that life is a journey and "no one rides for free." In the end, she said, everyone reaches the same destination so "what matters is what we do along the way."

Chief Justice Garman also encouraged the grads to find allies on their journey. Whether it's the family you are born into or one built with friends and mentors, the Chief Justice told the group it is important to have support, encouragement and help to navigate the working world.

"In the end," the Chief Justice said, "I would like to leave you with the words of that great early Twentieth Century philosopher, Winnie the Pooh, a bear of a very little brain, but a very great heart, who said: you are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think."

In addition to Parkland Community College's commencement, Chief Justice Garman will speak at the May 16 convocation for the University of Illinois' Department of Economics. The chief justice received her undergraduate degree in economics with highest honors from U of I in 1965.

--30--

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT: Joseph Tybor, director of communications to the Illinois Supreme Court, at 312.793.2323 or Bethany Krajelis, senior communications specialist to the Illinois Supreme Court, at 312.793.0870)