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## RWU School of Law eNewsletter

Roger Williams University School of Law

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# eNewsletter

## A Message from the Dean:



**David A. Logan**  
Dean and Professor of Law

Commencement is a special time in the life of a University – especially for the graduates, their family and friends. Commencement 2009 at RWU Law was yet another memorable event – or actually, a series of memorable events.

Kicking off the festivities was the annual ceremony sponsored by the Feinstein Institute for Legal Service recognizing students for displaying leadership in an area at the very heart of our mission

– public service. A highlight is the award given to the graduating student who displayed the greatest devotion to public service. This year's winner, **Amy Peltier '09**, was a tireless volunteer for the Association for Public Interest Law. She helped plan the first Student Hurricane Network trip to New Orleans and has represented juveniles and criminal defendants at the Alaska Public Defender's Office and the Committee for Public Counsel Services.

Next up was an elegant affair at the stunningly beautiful waterfront estate of Glen Manor in Portsmouth, where a range of graduates were recognized for various accomplishments, including the Dean's Achievement Award and the John Birnberg Memorial Award.



This year the School of Law recognized the **Honorable Federico Hernández Denton**, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Puerto Rico, who spoke on "The Rationing of Justice in Times of Economic Downturn"; **Louise Durfee**, a trailblazing lawyer and an early champion of legal protections for the environment in Rhode Island; and the **Honorable Jacob Hagopian**, Senior U.S. Magistrate of the United States District Court of Rhode Island.

The capstone, of course, was the Commencement Ceremony itself. The tradition of having our "Professor of the Year" lead the faculty procession continued, with **John Chung** carrying the ceremonial mace. Faculty Marshalls included newly renuned Professor of Law **Niki Kuckes**, as well as **Kathleen Miller**, who is completing her first year on the Legal Writing faculty. Highlights of the ceremony included comments from the Valedictorian **Jessica Stanford '09**, and recognizing the graduation of our first father-daughter team of RWU Law graduates, **Mark D. Sokol '00** and **Carly Sokol '09**.

Another important Commencement tradition was continued: awarding Honorary Doctor of Laws Degrees to lawyers whose careers reflect dedication to public service, and who thus are excellent role models for our graduates. Past Honorary Degree recipients have included the Honorable Shirley Abrahamson, Chief Justice of the Wisconsin Supreme Court; Linda Greenhouse, the Pulitzer-Prize winning *New York Times* correspondent who covered the Supreme Court for decades; Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court Anthony Kennedy; the Hon. Bruce Selya (United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit); and Rick West, founding Director of the National Museum of the American Indian.

*(click on Jessica Stanford's name to listen to her speech)*



**Amy Peltier '09**



**Jessica Stanford '09**



Professor **Niki Kuckes** receiving a ceremonial flower from Professor **Robert Kent** to recognize her recent promotion to renuned Professor of Law.



**Carly Sokol '09**



**Professor John Chung**