School of Law Commencement (1996- )

5-2021

School Of Law Grad Walk & Virtual Ceremony 05/21/2021

Roger Williams University School of Law

Michael M. Bowden

Jill Rodrigues

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School of Law Grad Walk & Virtual Ceremony

FRIDAY, MAY 21, 2021
12:30pm - 6:00pm
RWU Law
Bristol Campus & Virtual Ceremony

School of Law Commencement
Friday, May 21, 2021
12:30 p.m. ET

GRAD WALK:

- The Grad Walk will be organized in 15-minute increments with 25 students per increment starting at 12:30 p.m.
- The Grad Walk will be for Class of 2021 members only and will be livestreamed for family and friends to view.
- Viewing details will be communicated at a later date.
• You may sign up with your friends; alpha by last name is not required. Associate Dean Jared Goldstein will read all graduate names (those present and those virtual).
• A Graduate Portrait station will be organized as part of the Grad Walk experience.
• December 2020 grads who did not participate in May 2020 are invited to join.
• Graduates must always wear a mask and maintain social distancing.
• Participation will require a 72-hour negative COVID-19 test result prior to arriving on campus for the Grad Walk. Students who are currently in the RWU testing program should plan to take a test on the Wednesday or Thursday prior to Commencement. If a student is fully vaccinated, a negative test is still required per the RI Department of Health. Full details on these testing protocols will be communicated to students and posted on the website.
• Students that are remote may enter the campus testing two weeks prior and have a COVID test taken 72 hours prior, or have proof of a negative COVID test taken 72 hours prior to the Grad Walk on Friday, May 21, 2021.
• Please select your Grad Walk sign up time by Friday, April 23, 2021.

CHOOSE YOUR GRAD WALK SIGN UP TIME HERE

GRAD WALK GUEST(S):

• Each law graduate will be permitted to bring no more than two guests to campus for the in-person Grad Walk. Guests will be able to watch and celebrate as their graduate’s name is read as they process across the stage. For the health and safety of our campus community, graduates, family and friends, everyone must wear a mask at all times on campus (indoors and outside) and provide proof of a negative Covid test taken 72 hours prior to the day at check-in.

SAFETY MEASURES:

Under the guidance of the Center for Disease Control and the Rhode Island Department of Health, all safety protocols will be followed:

• Hand sanitizers will be available throughout the building.
• Students, guests, and staff will be socially distanced at all times.
• Students, guests, and staff will be required to always wear masks.
• Please view the COVID policy below regarding testing for students, guests, and staff.

Please be advised that RWU will continue to monitor the State of Rhode Island COVID-19 restrictions and be prepared to tighten protocols if necessary. Any updates will be communicated to students via email and posted on the website.

RWU SCHOOL OF LAW GRAD WALK COVID TESTING POLICY
**REGALIA:**

- Graduates who wish to participate in the Grad Walk must order their regalia, consisting of a robe, hood, and tam, through the bookstore on their online site.
- This souvenir regalia is yours to keep.
- Last day to order online to pick up at the bookstore: April 7, 2021
- Last day to order to ship directly to you: April 23, 2021
- Questions about regalia should be referred to Stephanie Rose at lawbookstore@rwu.edu.

**ORDER REGALIA HERE**

**VIRTUAL COMMENCEMENT:**

- The RWU Law Class of 2021’s virtual Commencement will take place on Friday, May 21, 2021 at 5:00 p.m.
- The ceremony will be hosted on YouTube Premieres, where you will have a chance to hear from your Class of 2021 Valedictorian and Commencement Speaker!
- Graduates and guests are invited to join Dean Gregory W. Bowman beginning at 4:50 p.m. for a LIVE Kickoff Zoom Celebration before the virtual Commencement.

**COMMENCEMENT PROGRAM:**

- The Commencement Program will be available online on Friday, May 21, 2021, in both PDF format and flipbook options. Additionally, five (5) printed programs will be mailed to each graduate after May 21.

**DIPLOMAS:**

- You may pick up your diploma in-person on Friday, May 21, 2021, after the Grad Walk. If you are not participating in the Grad Walk, the Office of Student Finance & Records will mail your diploma to the address that you have on file. Address updates may be sent to Ann Marie Thompson at athompson@rwu.edu.

**CALLING ALL CLASS of 2021 ARTISTS:**

- Would you like to design the RWU Law Class of 2021 commemorative t-shirt? Please email your intention to participate to 3L Rep Matthew Chatelain at mchatelain427@g.rwu.edu or RWU Law Events at lawevents@rwu.edu by April 1, 2021. Design submissions are due by April 12, 2021.

**CLASS OF 2020:**

- We are inviting the Class of 2020 to participate in the Grad Walk. More details for the Class of 2020 will be forthcoming.
Special Accommodations
Eligible graduates and guest(s) that require special accommodations to participate in the Grad Walk should email lawevents@rwu.edu prior to May 3, 2021.

Please go to this link to vote for the Class of 2021 Commemorative T-shirt design.

REMINDERS…

REQUEST FOR CUSTOM SLIDE/PERSONAL MESSAGE:
You have received two emails from StageClip sent from lawevents@rwu.edu, inviting you to create a custom slide and record a personal message as part of the virtual School of Law Commencement to be held on Friday, May 21, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. EST. You can upload photos, videos, and messages. It's a great chance to give a shout out to friends, family, and classmates. Send your response today! SUBMISSION DEADLINE: Friday, May 14, 2021 by 5:00 p.m. EST.

SNAPCHAT FILTER:
Use the special RWU Law Grad Snapchat filter and tag @RWULaw!
REQUEST FOR HANDICAP PARKING:
All handicap parking requests for the School of Law Grad Walk on Friday, May 21, 2021 must be received by the Office of Programs & Events, lawevents@rwu.edu, by Friday, May 14, 2021. Please indicate graduate’s name, driver’s name, vehicle make/model, and handicap plate number.

GUESTS:
If you have not yet pre-registered your two (2) Grad Walk guests, please do so by filling out this form. Pre-registration of guests is required.

Congratulations!

ATTN: RWU Law Faculty, Staff, & Adjunct Faculty

The RWU Law Grad Walk (including both the Class of 2021 and the Class of 2020) will commence on Friday, May 21, 2021 at 12:30 PM EST.
IN-PERSON VOLUNTEERS:

- Thank you for volunteering! This day would not be successful without your participation and assistance!
- Volunteer responsibilities have been sent to the team. Please review.
- A Volunteer Grad Walk zoom meeting has been scheduled for Tuesday, May 18 at 11:30 AM. Responsibilities will be reviewed at this meeting.
- PARKING: Enter through the North Campus Entrance at Ten Metacom Avenue. Park in Parking Lot D.
- On Friday, May 21, please check-in with the Office of Programs & Events, Suite 268 by 10:45 AM to collect your nametag.
- Volunteers may wear either a RWU Law t-shirt with khakis or professional attire. Please wear comfortable shoes. If you need a RWU Law t-shirt, please email Jane at jgovednik@rwu.edu
- See notes below regarding participation on campus and a 72-hour negative COVID-19 test result prior to arriving on campus.

IN-PERSON FACULTY PARTICIPATION NOTES:

- You have the opportunity to cheer & congratulate the graduates in-person.
- You may arrive on campus by 12:15 PM to greet the first group of graduates.
- The last group of graduates is expected to arrive on campus for 1:30 PM for their 1:45 PM timeslot.
- PARKING: Enter through the North Campus Entrance at Ten Metacom Avenue. Park in Parking Lot D.
- You will not be able to enter the Rec Center – Field House where the Grad Walk is taking place.
• Faculty may line up outside along walkway of the softball field/parking lot 10, socially distanced, masked, and provide a negative COVID-19 test result.*
• You may utilize the bleachers along the walkway.
• We have a limited amount of congratulation signs for in-person participants to hold. Signs may be picked up from the Office of Programs & Events, School of Law, Suite 268, on May 21 by 10:45 AM.
• If you have not already done so, please email lawevents@rwu.edu and indicate that you will participate in-person no later than Tuesday, May 18.
• For those enrolled in campus COVID testing, the testing center adjusted its hours of operation as follows:
  o Monday, May 17 to Thursday, May 20 from 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM

VIRTUAL PARTICIPATION NOTES:
• By joining this zoom meeting you will be able to ‘cheer & congratulate’ the graduates virtually AND watch the live-stream Grad Walk. Tune in starting at 12:30 PM EST.
  https://rwu.zoom.us/j/99428373687?pwd=UXR0bjhXWnRlZEtIeIByWRLSkcvZz09

  Meeting ID: 994 2837 3687
  Passcode: 026741

VIRTUAL COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY:
• The RWU Law Class of 2021’s virtual Commencement Ceremony will take place on Friday, May 21, 2021 at 5:00 PM EST.
• The ceremony will be hosted on RWU Law YouTube Premieres, where you will have a chance to hear from the Class of 2021 Valedictorian and Commencement Speaker!
• Graduates and guests are invited to join Dean Gregory W. Bowman beginning at 4:50 PM EST for a LIVE Kickoff Zoom Celebration before the virtual Commencement.
• The viewing link will be posted online.
• RWU Law will present honorary degrees to the Honorable Edward C. Clifton, retired Associate Justice of the Rhode Island Superior Court, and Lynette Labinger, a civil rights and employment law attorney.
HASHTAG:
- Share School of Law Commencement celebration moments...in-person and virtual...watch party fun & special festivities!
- #RWULaw2021

*Participation on campus will require a 72-hour negative COVID-19 test result prior to arriving on campus for the Grad Walk. Faculty and staff who are currently in the RWU testing program should plan to take a test on the Wednesday or Thursday prior to Commencement. If an individual is fully vaccinated, a negative test is still required per the RI Department of Health. Please provide a negative COVID-19 testing documentation prior to arriving to campus on May 21; an email may be sent to lawevents@rwu.edu

Thank you!
RWU Law Events

Judge Clifton to Address RWU Law Graduates

Commencement celebrations for RWU and RWU Law Class to feature in-person Grad Walks, graduates will be allowed to bring two guests to watch their processional and then depart campus
Lynette Labinger (left) will receive an honorary degree and Judge Edward Clifton will deliver the commencement address and receive an honorary degree as part of the RWU Law Commencement ceremony.

A day earlier, on Friday, May 21, the RWU School of Law will hold an in-person Grad Walk and virtual commencement ceremony for 153 students of the Class of 2021, as well as celebrate the graduates of the Class of 2020. The Honorable Edward C. Clifton, retired Associate Justice of the Rhode Island Superior Court, will deliver the commencement address and receive an honorary degree. A civil rights and employment law attorney, Lynette Labinger, will also receive an honorary degree from the law school.

Throughout his over 20-year tenure on the Rhode Island Superior Court, Judge Clifton presided over both civil and criminal trials and various calendar assignments in all counties in Rhode Island. In addition to presiding over his regular trial calendar, he was assigned to preside over the “Adult Drug Court” in Providence County, the first adult drug court for the state of Rhode Island. He retired from the Superior Court in June 2015.

Following his active-duty service from 1966-1968 in the United States Army, Judge Clifton began his career as an attorney in Providence, appointed as a Reginald Heber Smith Fellow at Rhode Island Legal Services, Inc. He has also been appointed as staff attorney to the Rhode Island Public Defender’s office and as City Solicitor for the City of Providence, in
addition to entering the private practice of law. He has served as a member of the Rhode Island Supreme Court’s Permanent Committee on Women & Minorities and as chairman of the Employment Sub-committee. He currently serves as a volunteer mediator for the Supreme Court Appellate Mediation Program and as a member of the Committee on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Rhode Island Courts.

Judge Clifton was a Distinguished Jurist in Residence faculty member at Roger Williams University School of Law from September 2015 until 2018.

Lynette Labinger has led a distinguished career championing constitutional and civil rights litigation throughout her many years of private practice and, since 2018, limiting her practice to cases sponsored by the ACLU. She has served as trial and appellate counsel in a wide range of high-profile civil rights cases involving discrimination based on race, gender, age, and disability, reproductive rights and First Amendment rights. Notably, she represented the plaintiff class in the landmark Title IX sex discrimination case challenging the treatment of women athletes at Brown University (Cohen v. Brown University). From 2004 to 2019, she served first as an Associate and later as Chief Judge of the Housing Court of the City of Providence. She has received numerous honors for her civil rights advocacy, including recognition in 2019 by the Roger Williams University Law Review as “Gender Equity Champion.”

“Judge Clifton and Lynette Labinger have dedicated their careers to working to promoting justice and fairness for all people in Rhode Island, especially those most in need of support and assistance,” said RWU School of Law Dean Gregory Bowman. “They have made an enormous difference for so many people, and we are very proud to honor them at commencement this year.”

RWU will be presenting in-person Grad Walks with virtual ceremonies for each of the commencement ceremonies. The Grad Walks will be livestreamed during the day of the ceremonies. Graduates will be allowed to bring no more than two guests to watch their processional, and then will immediately depart campus.

Due to Covid restrictions, RWU’s commencement ceremonies will not be open to the public and media will not be allowed on campus.

Each ceremony and livestream Grad Walk will be available for viewing on the university’s Commencement website at https://www.rwu.edu/academics/commencement

The RWU Class of 2021 commencement ceremony will include a livestream of their Grad Walk on Saturday, May 22, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The RWU Class of 2020 commencement ceremony will include a livestream of their Grad Walk, starting at 9 a.m. on Sunday, May 23.

RWU Law will present a livestream Grad Walk, starting at 12:30 p.m. on Friday, May 21. A virtual commencement ceremony will be held later that day at 5 p.m.
For additional information about commencement ceremonies (and to view any of the event videos), please visit https://www.rwu.edu/academics/commencement

The Honorable Edward C. Clifton: Doctor of Laws, Honoris Causa

RWU Law celebrates a leading Rhode Island jurist who has, throughout his illustrious career, displayed exceptional devotion to social justice and increasing access to justice for all.

May 17, 2021

Michael M. Bowden

This Friday, May 21, Roger Williams University School of Law will present the degree of Doctor of Laws, Honoris Causa, to the Honorable Edward C. Clifton, who served as an Associate Justice on the Rhode Island Superior Court for more than 20 years, before retiring in 2015.

Following service in the U.S. Army, and after completing his B.A. at the University of California, Berkeley, and his J.D. at the University of California, Los Angeles, Clifton first came
to the Ocean State to work at Rhode Island Legal Services under a national fellowship program that assigned service-minded young lawyers to poor communities around the country.

He later joined the Rhode Island Public Defender’s office, and in 1978 entered private practice as a partner at the firm of Stone, Clifton and Clifton. From 1985 to 1991, he was City Solicitor for the City of Providence.

Judge Clifton was appointed to the Rhode Island District Court in 1993, and to the Rhode Island Superior Court a year later. He presided over the state’s first adult drug court. Since his retirement, he has volunteered with the Supreme Court Appellate Mediation Program.

Judge Clifton served on the Rhode Island Supreme Court’s Permanent Committee on Women & Minorities for 17 years, including six as chair. In 2020, he was appointed to the Committee on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Rhode Island Courts. He is a member and past president of the Board of Directors of the National Consortium on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts. He was Distinguished Jurist in Residence at RWU Law from 2015 until 2018.

An original incorporator and past president of the Thurgood Marshall Law Society of Rhode Island, Judge Clifton has served on many boards and committees, including RWU Law’s Board of Directors from 2009 until 2020. Among numerous other awards and honors, he received RWU Law’s 2018 Champions for Justice Award, recognizing his “exceptional devotion to social justice and increasing access to justice for all.”

Lynette Labinger: Doctor of Laws, Honoris Causa

RWU Law celebrates an outstanding Rhode Island constitutional and civil rights attorney, who has made a successful career out of fighting for social change.

May 16, 2021

Michael M. Bowden
Lynette Labinger, Constitutional and Civil Rights Attorney; RWU Law Doctor of Laws, Honoris Causa ’21

This Friday, May 21, Roger Williams University School of Law will present constitutional and civil rights attorney Lynette Labinger with the degree of Doctor of Laws, Honoris Causa.

Attorney Lynette Labinger has made a career out of fighting for social change. She has been celebrated as “one of the region’s most successful and dedicated social advocacy lawyers, playing a significant role in cases and court decisions that have affected everything from equality in women’s athletics to the rights of prison preachers, avant-garde artists and same-sex couples.”

While visiting relatives in the Soviet Union in 1970, Labinger said, she “really came to recognize the importance of the First Amendment here in the United States [and] got very interested in what the law could do in terms of social advocacy. That’s where I still am today.”

Having received her A.B. at Mount Holyoke College and her J.D. at New York University School of Law, Labinger was first drawn to the Ocean State by a clerkship with the Honorable Raymond J. Pettine of the U.S. District Court for the District of Rhode Island, known for his groundbreaking decisions in the field of constitutional and civil rights. She went on to work at a law firm headed by Milton Stanzler, one of the founders of the Rhode Island affiliate of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).

Labinger continued to champion constitutional and civil rights litigation throughout her years of private practice, including a 35-year association with her partner John M. Roney. Since 2018, she has limited her practice to cases sponsored by the ACLU of Rhode Island.

From 2004 to 2019, Labinger served as an Associate and later as Chief Judge of the Housing Court of the City of Providence. A Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers, she has received numerous honors for her civil rights advocacy, including recognition in 2019 by the Roger Williams University Law Review as a “Gender Equity Champion.”
ATTN: Graduates
The RWU Law Grad Walk (including both the Class of 2021 and the Class of 2020) will commence on Friday, May 21, 2021 at 12:30 PM EST at the Bristol Campus in the Recreation Center.

The 12:30 PM EST live stream may be viewed here.

Parking for the Grad Walk:
- Graduates and guests may enter via the North Campus Entrance on Metacom Avenue and park in Lot D.
- You should arrive only 15-minutes prior to your scheduled Grad Walk timeslot.

Event Security:
- Guests and graduates are encouraged to leave all personal items (including bags) in their vehicles.
- RWU Public Safety will conduct security clearance checks before you enter the Recreation Center.
- No large/oversized bags or back packs will be permitted.

Check-in and COVID Test Results:
- Please enter the RWU Campus Recreation Center to check in along with your guest(s).
- Graduates are permitted to bring no more than two guests to the Grad Walk, and are required to pre-register the two guests here.
• When checking in to the Grad Walk, if not enrolled in campus COVID testing, graduates and guest(s) are required to show proof of negative COVID test results taken within 72 hours of the Grad Walk. We are encouraging test results to be shown on your cellular device so it a touch free process.
• For those enrolled in campus COVID testing, the testing center has adjusted hours this week: Monday, May 17 to Thursday, May 20, 2021 from 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM.
• Name Cards will be given to graduates during check-in. This card will be given to Associate Dean Jared Goldstein prior to the graduate processing across the stage.
• Honor Latin Cords will be given to applicable graduates during check-in.

**Programs:**
• In-person participants and guests will receive a program during check-in.
• Graduates who are not participating in person will have programs mailed to them.
• The program will be available online on Friday, May 21, 2021, in both PDF format and flipbook options.

**Masks:**
• A RWU Law mask will be given to any graduate who would like one at the check in table.
• All graduates and guests need to wear a mask while on campus.

**Diplomas:**
• Diplomas will be given out after the School of Law Grad Walk on Friday, May 21, 2021 from the First Floor Atrium – School of Law.
• If you are not participating in the Grad Walk, the Office of Student Finance & Records will mail your diploma to the address that you have on file. Address updates may be sent to Ann Marie Thompson at athompson@rwu.edu
• NOTE: Class of 2020 – Please still proceed to the School of Law – First Floor Atrium – after the Grad Walk so you may receive your t-shirt.
...the Grad Walk Continues...

- Each graduate should proceed to the School of Law – First Floor Atrium – after you exit the Field House.
- If you wish to take any photographs with your diploma cover that you receive from stage, please do so before you enter the School of Law – First Floor Atrium.

Regalia

- Orders that have not been shipped will be sent tomorrow via UPS Next Day Air and should be received by Wednesday.
- The regalia vendor has been keeping us up to date with their shipping challenges and they are aware that the late timing may mean that some graduates will have to travel prior to receiving their regalia. They are planning to have some extra regalia available in the RWU Bookstore for those who didn’t receive their delivery at their home address in time. If you may fall in this category, please alert RWU Law Events at lawevents@rwu.edu.

Class of 2021 Commemorative T-Shirts:

- Commemorative t-shirts will be given to graduates along with their diplomas after the Grad Walk.
- We will mail t-shirts to any graduates not participating in the Grad Walk.
- The Class of 2021 voted for the following t-shirt design submitted by Rachel Ricci ’L21.

Class of 2020 Commemorative T-Shirts:

- Commemorative t-shirts will be given to the graduates after the Grad Walk.
- We will mail t-shirts to the Class of 2020 who submitted their t-shirt size.
Safety Measures:
Under the guidance of the Center for Disease Control and the Rhode Island Department of Health, all safety protocols will be followed:
• Hand sanitizers will be available throughout the building.
• Students, guests, and staff will be socially distanced at all times.
• Students, guests, and staff will be required to always wear masks.
• Please view the COVID policies online regarding testing for students, guests, and staff.

Class of 2021 Hashtag:
Here is your Commencement hashtag!
Share your Commencement celebration moments, watch party fun, & special festivities!
#RWULaw2021

Class of 2020 Hashtag:
Here is your Commencement hashtag!
Share your Commencement celebration moments, watch party fun, & special festivities!
#RWULaw2020

Snapchat Filter:
Use the special RWU Law Class of 2021 Grad Snapchat filter and tag @RWULaw!
Direct Link here.
Virtual Commencement Ceremony:

- The RWU Law Class of 2021’s virtual Commencement Ceremony will take place on Friday, May 21, 2021 at 5:00 PM EST.
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- Graduates and guests are invited to join Dean Gregory W. Bowman beginning at 4:50 PM EST for a LIVE Kickoff Zoom Celebration before the virtual Commencement.
- The viewing link will be posted online.
- RWU Law will present honorary degrees to the Honorable Edward C. Clifton, retired Associate Justice of the Rhode Island Superior Court, and Lynette Labinger, a civil rights and employment law attorney.

Congratulations!

RWU Law Events
The RWU Law community, including friends and family of graduating 3Ls, gathered virtually Monday afternoon to celebrate the Class of 2021 Awards program. Dean Gregory Bowman, marking the completion of his first academic year as dean, opened the program, commending the class on its resilience on completing a most difficult course of study under the aggravating circumstances of an unprecedented public health crisis. RWU President Ioannis Miaoulis also addressed the class, noting that its collective experience would make them strong and resilient leaders.

The honorees included:

- Tatiana Maria Gomez: Class Valedictorian
- Sophia Weaver: Law Review Editor-in-Chief
- Nora Wells: Moot Court President
- Ethan Armitano: SBA President
- RWU Law Trial Team: Recognized as a Group
- Honors Program Students: Recognized as a Group
- Students Completing 100+ Hours of Pro Bono Service: Recognized as a Group
- Shahily Negrón: Public Interest Award
- Erin Ferry: Public Interest Award
- Anna Lynn Kramer: Pro Bono Collaborative Award
- Amanda Nagim-Williams: Clinical Legal Education Association Outstanding Externship Student Award
- Nirali Patel: Clinical Legal Education Association Outstanding Clinical Student Award
- Ivan Cody: Kathleen M. Birt Memorial Dispute Resolution Prize
- Alyssa Lauren Lemire: Marine Affairs Achievement Award
- Alyssa Lauren Lemire: Coffey Maritime Writing Prize
- Ann Marie Thompson: Staff Person of the Year
- David Coombs: Adjunct Professor of the Year
- Brittany Raposa: Professor of the Year

After a few concluding remarks from Greg Hoffman ’13 of Barton Gilman LLP, Dean Bowman brought the program to an end, congratulating the entire Class of 2021 on their outstanding accomplishment.
Jonathan Gutoff
Julia Wyman
Katie Ahern
Amanda Nagim-Williams
2021 Clinical Legal Education Association Outstanding Externship Student Award

Anna Kramer
2021 Pro Bono Collaborative Award
Erin Ferry
2021 Public Interest Award

Shahily Negrón
2021 Public Interest Award
Class of 2021
100-Hour Pro Bono Recognition

Leighann Bilson-Azenhat
Julian F. Alcada
Jonathan Clark Akers II
Sarah Ann Bagley
Thomas Andrew Butler
Ivan Lee Robert Clift, Jr.
Caroline Joy Villanueva Condon
Terence E. Davila
Natalie Edozien-Dyer
Alessa Nguen del Llano
Rachel E. Dinnamon
Bryan A. Dosanjh
Giuliana Marie Farrell
Eric Ferry
Michael D. Finn
Nicole Fishler
Sarah Jane Freeman
Yasmine D. Ganz
Tatiana Maria Gesner
Meghan Erin Harmon
Adam M. Harkenrider
Vanessa Alexandra Hurl
Jessica Jennifer Hwang
Tanner Lee Jackson
Gretchen Kacter
Jason Richard Karpinski
Anna Lloyd Kesser
Kaito Y. Lark

Ananya Marie LaBucca
Avery Laurent Leska
Emilia R. Lema
C. Lara Marie Liefker
Brendon Thomas Leitao
Lila Mirth
Andrea Brenna Nudiez-Williams
Sharon Nunez
Dana O'Brian
Carolyn Alexandra Orell
Ayesha Kloe Parikh
Nighi Rezaei-Peier
Olivia Anne Reihlhofer
Pheobe Pinckney
Andrea Stephanie Rais
Tiffany Romano
James Frederick Ross
Nicholas Joseph Savatos, Jr.
Keshia Saint-Johnson
Brian Michael Sebring
Alexa Nieves Smith
Devon Q. Terry
Sarah Andrea Vargas
Stephen Joe Westmore
Kathleen Elizabeth Zimmerman
Lucy Mo. West
Carla May Westmore
Amara M. White
Brittany L. Raposa, RWU Law Associate Director & Professor of Bar Support, has been voted by the Class of 2021 as Professor of the Year!

“Professor Raposa has been a transformational force for our law school,” said Dean Gregory W. Bowman. “Her teaching is excellent, and she knows that teaching and learning are not limited to the traditional classroom setting. Her work preparing our students for success in their legal careers has enriched our law school’s curriculum and our students’ learning experiences. Her scholarly research on law school pedagogy is also gaining well-deserved national recognition. Professor Raposa is an ideal colleague, and I am so pleased that our graduating students selected her for this singular honor.”

Raposa noted, however, that it is the Class of 2021 themselves who truly deserve special recognition.

“I will always carry this class with me because of their courage in getting through their law school journey during these trying times,” she said. “Courage isn’t always loud. Sometimes it’s that quiet voice at the end of the day saying, ‘I will move forward.’”
Professor Raposa graduated at the top of her class from UMass Law, where she was the Executive Notes Editor of the Law Review and Secretary of the Student Bar Association (SBA). She currently serves as the first female President of the UMass Law Alumni Association. After law school, Professor Raposa pursued her LL.M in Health Law and Policy, focusing her academic study and research on reproductive health and justice. She worked in private practice in the areas of family law litigation and estate planning.

While in practice, Professor Raposa also was a private bar exam tutor independently and for many different tutoring companies. She was a professor for Seizing Every Opportunity’s Law Fellowship program, where she taught first generation and underrepresented law students legal academic skills and writing prior to beginning law school. She currently is a guest bar exam lecturer for companies across the country and is working on her book, *The Ultimate Visual Guide to the Multistate Bar Exam*, which will be published by Wolters Kluwer in 2022.

Professor Raposa’s academic research and presentations focus on learning and teaching in law schools, as well as reproductive justice issues. Professor Raposa is the Associate Director of the bar exam program at RWU Law, and she currently teaches Applied Legal Reasoning, Legal Reasoning, Reproductive Justice, and Family Law.
Adjunct Professor of the Year 2021: David Coombs

As a seasoned JAG and private defense attorney, Coombs has represented countless soldiers (most prominently Wikileaks defendant PFC Chelsea Manning). As an adjunct professor at RWU Law, his classes have yielded many grateful alumni — but is he really the GOAT-A? Read on...

May 19, 2021
Michael M. Bowden

David Coombs, Roger Williams University School of Law's Chief Justice Weisberger Visiting Professor of Law, has been voted by the Class of 2021 as Adjunct Professor of the Year!

An internationally respected trial attorney and expert on military law, Professor Coombs has been a popular fixture at RWU Law since 2014. He teaches criminal procedure and coaches the RWU Trial Team, while also serving as the faculty advisor to the Military Law Society.

“We are so fortunate to have Professor Coombs serving as our law school’s Weisburger Visiting Professor,” said Dean Gregory W. Bowman. “He brings a wealth of legal practice experience and expertise into the classroom, including from his service in the U.S. Army JAG Corps and as a faculty member at the U.S. Army JAG Legal Center and School. Our students benefit
enormously from his knowledge and his dedication to their learning, and I am glad to see him honored by this award for the second year in a row.”

For his part, Professor Coombs, who also received this honor in 2017, 2018 and 2020 — and whose wife, Professor Tanya Monestier, was voted Professor of the Year in 2018 — was appreciative of the class's decision.

“I am honored to have been selected Adjunct Professor of the Year,” he said. “I love teaching at RWU Law. I enjoy getting to know all the different students, and feeling like I make an impact, however small, in their lives.”

Outside the classroom, Professor Coombs has often appeared in the news, both nationally and worldwide, as the lead defense counsel in the highly publicized case of United States v. Manning, the soldier who provided classified information to Wikileaks. Professor Coombs continued to represent PFC Manning until her release from military prison in 2017, after President Obama commuted her sentence (that commutation order now hangs in Coombs' home office). Coombs had argued passionately for the commutation.

He is also in demand as a speaker on national security law, classified information, military courts-martial, freedom of the press, and gender dysphoria rights. He has also spoken on national security law, classified information, military courts-martial, freedom of the press, and gender dysphoria rights at universities and on national and international media programs.

Prior to joining the RWU faculty, Coombs served for more than 13 years on active duty in the U.S. Army JAG Corps, prosecuting and defending over 130 cases. As a defense counsel, he achieved numerous acquittals and tried several high profile cases for the Army. For example, he served as the Army’s first senior capital defense counsel and tried the death penalty case of United States v. SGT Hasan K. Akbar.

In 2006, Coombs became a professor at the U.S. Army JAG Legal Center and School in Charlottesville, Va. There he taught evidence, capital litigation, high profile cases, trial advocacy, criminal procedure and criminal law. While on faculty, Professor Coombs was selected to deploy to Iraq in support of the Law and Order Task Force in Baghdad as a judicial advisor in 2008. In that position, he mentored and assisted 16 Iraqi prosecutors and 27 investigative judges to help build essential Iraqi capacity for independent, evidence-based and transparent adjudication of cases. He also developed and implemented a case management system that allowed the Baghdad court to track, monitor and manage its caseload of more than 1,600 criminal cases.

Following his return to the U.S., Professor Coombs transitioned from the active duty military to the reserves, serving for five years as a reserve judge advocate. He also established a successful military criminal defense practice, representing U.S. Army soldiers around the world. Having served in the Army for 22 years, he retired in 2018 as a Lieutenant Colonel.

Through more than 17 years of military service, Professor Coombs received seven Meritorious Service Medals, the Army Commendation Medal, the Army Achievement Medal, the National
Defense Service Medal, the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Army Service Ribbon, and the Overseas Service Ribbon.

Professor Coombs received his B.A. from the University of Idaho, his J.D. from the University of Idaho School of Law, and his LL.M from the U.S. Army Judge Advocate General’s School.
Staff Person of the Year 2021: Ann Marie Thompson

“Ann Marie fights so hard for our students. She is an advocate and really exemplifies the student-centeredness that we celebrate at RWU Law.”

May 18, 2021

Michael M. Bowden

The Class of 2021 has voted Ann Marie Thompson, RWU Law's assistant director of Student Finance & Records, as Staff Person of the Year!

“Ann Marie is a perfect example of how to be professional, kind, and personable,” said Dean Gregory W. Bowman. “She is excellent at what she does, and our law school runs more smoothly because of her. I am grateful to be her colleague, and I am so gratified that our graduating students have selected her for this honor.”

Thompson, who was also voted Staff Person of the Year by the Class of 2020, said she was humbled by the recognition.

“I am truly honored to have been recognized by our students during a year where we have all been faced with so many challenges,” she said. “My biggest challenge was to be able to provide the support that our students needed in a virtual environment. I believe our whole law school
community came together as a team and was able to provide our students with the resources they needed to succeed.”

A popular personality at RWU Law for more than a decade now, Thompson was born and raised in Barrington, R.I. She still lives there with her husband, Jim, and their two daughters Danielle, 21, and Grace, 18 (along with their rescue dog, Luna).

Trained in bookkeeping, Thompson spent the 90s working at Fleet Bank (now Bank of America). “I worked on all of their mergers and acquisitions, converting acquired banks' back-end general ledger operations to Fleet operations,” she said. Thompson took a break from the workforce to raise her daughters, but continued to work part-time, doing bookkeeping “for a few small businesses.” She also served for a while as a partner in the restaurant, The Nat Porter Inn, in Warren.

In 2010, Thompson joined the Admissions Department at RWU Law, where she quickly made an impression. “Ann Marie fights so hard for our students,” said Michael Donnelly-Boylen, assistant dean of admissions. “I saw it in the Admissions Office on a regular basis. She is an advocate and really exemplifies the student-centeredness that we celebrate at RWU Law.”

“We have all learned a great deal this past year of what we are capable of when put to the task,” Thompson said. “Our graduating class should be very proud of the resilience they displayed this past year. They were able to overcome many obstacles and stressful situations to successfully reach this moment. I am grateful to have been a small part of their success.”

Congratulations, Ann Marie!

**ATTN: RWU Law Community**

Below are the viewing links for both the RWU Law Grad Walk at 12:30 PM EST, the RWU Law Community LIVE Kickoff Zoom Celebration at 4:50 PM EST, and the RWU Law Virtual Commencement Ceremony at 5:00 PM EST.
**RWU LAW GRAD WALK – 12:30 PM EST:**
The **RWU Law Grad Walk** (including both the Class of 2021 and the Class of 2020) will commence on Friday, May 21, 2021 at 12:30 PM EST at the Bristol Campus in the Recreation Center. The 12:30 PM EST live stream may be viewed here.

**RWU LAW GRAD WALK WI-FI ACCESS:**
You may access Wi-Fi in the Recreation Center during the RWU Law Grad Walk with the following information. Please note that the password is case sensitive.

SSID: RWU_Commencement wifi
Password: classof2021

**RWU LAW COMMUNITY LIVE KICKOFF ZOOM CELEBRATION – 4:50 PM EST:**
- Graduates and guests are invited to join the RWU Law Community beginning at 4:50 PM EST for a LIVE Kickoff Zoom Celebration before the virtual commencement.
- You may view the Virtual Commencement Ceremony from this Zoom Celebration Link:
  - [https://rwu.zoom.us/j/99428373687?pwd=UXR0bjhXWnRIZEtlelByWRLSkycZz09](https://rwu.zoom.us/j/99428373687?pwd=UXR0bjhXWnRIZEtlelByWRLSkycZz09)
  - Meeting ID: 994 2837 3687
  - Passcode: 026741
    - One tap mobile
      - +13017158592,,99428373687# US (Washington DC)
      - +13126266799,,99428373687# US (Chicago)

Dial by your location
- +1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)
- +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)
RWU LAW VIRTUAL COMMENCEMTN CEREMONY – 5:00 PM EST:

- The RWU Law Class of 2021’s virtual Commencement Ceremony will take place on Friday, May 21, 2021 at 5:00 PM EST.
- Hear from the Class of 2021 Valedictorian and Commencement Speaker!
- The viewing link may be found here.
- RWU Law will present honorary degrees to the Honorable Edward C. Clifton, retired Associate Justice of the Rhode Island Superior Court, and Lynette Labinger, a civil rights and employment law attorney.

Congratulations!

RWU Law Events
School of Law Grad Walk & Virtual Ceremony

FRIDAY, MAY 21, 2021
12:30pm - 6:00pm
RWU Law
Bristol Campus & Virtual Ceremony

School of Law Commencement
Friday, May 21, 2021
12:30 p.m. EST

WATCH THE SCHOOL OF LAW GRAD WALK HERE - May 21, 2021 - 12:30 PM EST

WATCH THE SCHOOL OF LAW VIRTUAL CEREMONY HERE - May 21, 2021 - 5:00 PM EST
HONORARY DEGREE RECIPIENTS:

- As part of the commencement ceremony, RWU Law will present honorary degrees to the Honorable Edward C. Clifton, retired Associate Justice of the Rhode Island Superior Court, and Lynette Labinger, a civil rights and employment law attorney.

Lynette Labinger (left) will receive an honorary degree and Judge Edward Clifton will deliver the commencement address and receive an honorary degree as part of the RWU Law Commencement ceremony.

GRAD WALK:

- The Grad Walk will be organized in 15-minute increments with 25 students per increment starting at 12:30 PM EST.
- The Grad Walk will be livestreamed for family and friends to view.
- You may sign up with your friends; alpha by last name is not required. Associate Dean Jared Goldstein will read all graduate names (those present and those virtual).
- A Graduate Portrait station will be organized as part of the Grad Walk experience.
- December 2020 grads who did not participate in May 2020 are invited to join.
- Graduates must always wear a mask and maintain social distancing.
Participation will require a 72-hour negative COVID-19 test result prior to arriving on campus for the Grad Walk. Students who are currently in the RWU testing program should plan to take a test on the Wednesday or Thursday prior to Commencement. If a student is fully vaccinated, a negative test is still required per the RI Department of Health. Full details on these testing protocols will be communicated to students and posted on the website.

Students that are remote may enter the campus testing two weeks prior and have a COVID test taken 72 hours prior, or have proof of a negative COVID test taken 72 hours prior to the Grad Walk on Friday, May 21, 2021.

Please select your Grad Walk sign up time by Friday, April 23, 2021.

GRAD WALK GUEST(S):

Each law graduate will be permitted to bring no more than two guests to campus for the in-person Grad Walk. Guests will be able to watch and celebrate as their graduate’s name is read as they process across the stage. For the health and safety of our campus community, graduates, family and friends, everyone must wear a mask at all times on campus (indoors and outside) and provide proof of a negative Covid test taken 72 hours prior to the day at check-in.

SAFETY MEASURES:

Under the guidance of the Center for Disease Control and the Rhode Island Department of Health, all safety protocols will be followed:

- Hand sanitizers will be available throughout the building.
- Students, guests, and staff will be socially distanced at all times.
- Students, guests, and staff will be required to always wear masks.
- Please view the COVID policy below regarding testing for students, guests, and staff.

Please be advised that RWU will continue to monitor the State of Rhode Island COVID-19 restrictions and be prepared to tighten protocols if necessary. Any updates will be communicated to students via email and posted on the website.

RWU SCHOOL OF LAW GRAD WALK COVID TESTING POLICY

REGALIA:

- Graduates who wish to participate in the Grad Walk must order their regalia, consisting of a robe, hood, and tam, through the bookstore on their online site.
- This souvenir regalia is yours to keep.
- Last day to order online to pick up at the bookstore: April 7, 2021
- Last day to order to ship directly to you: April 23, 2021
- Questions about regalia should be referred to Stephanie Rose at lawbookstore@rwu.edu.

ORDER REGALIA HERE
VIRTUAL COMMENCEMENT:

- The RWU Law Class of 2021’s virtual Commencement will take place on Friday, May 21, 2021 at 5:00 PM EST. Watch here.
- The ceremony will be hosted on YouTube Premieres, where you will have a chance to hear from your Class of 2021 Valedictorian and Commencement Speaker!
- Graduates and guests are invited to join the RWU Law Community beginning at 4:50 PM EST for a LIVE Kickoff Zoom Celebration before the virtual Commencement. Graduates should check their email for the link.

COMMENCEMENT PROGRAM:

- The Commencement Program is available in both PDF format and flipbook options.

DIPLOMAS:

- You may pick up your diploma in-person on Friday, May 21, 2021, after the Grad Walk. If you are not participating in the Grad Walk, the Office of Student Finance & Records will mail your diploma to the address that you have on file. Address updates may be sent to Ann Marie Thompson at athompson@rwu.edu.

WIFI:

- You may access WiFi in the Recreation Center during the Grad Walk with the following information. Please note that the password is case sensitive.
  - SSID: RWU_Commencement wifi
  - Password: classof2021

EVENT SECURITY:

- Guests and graduates are encouraged to leave all personal items (including bags) in their vehicles. RWU Public Safety will conduct security clearance checks before you enter the Recreation Center. No large/oversized bags or back packs will be permitted.

CLASS OF 2021 HASHTAG:

- Here is your Commencement hashtag!
- Share your Commencement celebration moments, watch party fun, & special festivities!
- #RWULaw2021
Special Accommodations
Eligible graduates and guest(s) that require special accommodations to participate in the Grad Walk should email lawevents@rwu.edu prior to May 3, 2021.

From Facebook May 21, 2020

Commencement Day has arrived! Congratulations to RWU Law's Class of 2021: you can teach us all a thing or two about resilience and courage. You're no longer our students, you're our colleagues. #RWULaw2021

From Facebook May 21, 2021

Commencement Day has arrived! Today we celebrate the Class of 2020 and the Class of 2021. Check our stories through the day to follow along! #rwulaw2021
From Facebook May 21, 2021

This is a walk none of these #rwulaw grads will forget! That’s a wrap for our in-person ceremony! Join us later to continue the day with our virtual ceremony! #rwulaw2021
'Nothing Short of Extraordinary'

RWU Law's Class of 2021 celebrates a hybrid commencement as the nation emerges from the Covid-19 pandemic.

May 21, 2021

Michael M. Bowden

The sunny, moderately warm weather could not have provided a more perfect setting for Commencement exercises here Friday, as Roger Williams University School of Law’s Class of 2021 participated in an in-person Grad Walk, followed by a virtual ceremony in which a pioneering jurist urged the 153 graduates to “advocate for causes that you firmly believe in” and “educate where you can make a difference.”

In keeping with pandemic-emergence practices across the state and much of the nation, the law school community celebrated with a hybrid ceremony. At midday, students participated in a Grad Walk, marching in socially distanced groups with two guests each to receive their diplomas (and warm greetings from faculty and staff, as well as t-shirts and cupcakes!). A number of graduates from RWU Law’s Class of 2020 – which missed out on an in-person
ceremony due to the pandemic – also participated in the Grad Walk, receiving their diplomas from then-Dean Michael J. Yelnosky.

A virtual commencement ceremony followed at 5 p.m., preceded by a brief live “kickoff” on Zoom before the ceremony began on YouTube Premieres.

Following a rendition of “The Star-Spangled Banner” performed by RWU alumna Emily S. Rizzo ’19, Rhode Island Governor Daniel J. McKee opened the ceremony, noting, “I know this past year hasn’t been an easy one, and learning has been far from conventional, but you’ve all adapted to the challenges and made it to the finish line. I wish you the best and look forward to all you’ll accomplish in the future.”

RWU Dean Gregory W. Bowman next addressed the class.

“Law school is always hard, always challenging, always stressful,” he told them. “But to have gone to law school and completed it during a global pandemic – and to not have just survived but thrived – is nothing short of amazing and extraordinary. We are so very proud of you, and we hope you are proud of yourselves. This is a great accomplishment.”

Bowman added, “I am so pleased, honored and privileged to welcome you as colleagues in the legal profession. This day you become lawyers. So go and be great lawyers. Live greatly within the law, and change the world, one client, one project at a time. You earned this.”

The ceremony’s keynote speaker was the Honorable Edward C. Clifton, a pioneering jurist who served as an Associate Justice on the Rhode Island Superior Court for more than 20 years, before retiring in 2015. Judge Clifton opened his remarks by paraphrasing the ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus, stating that “a person’s character is that person’s fate.”

He continued, “This past decade in the United States, like others before, we have witnessed speeches and debates, divisions between people of different races, economic levels, political ideologies, and personal concerns. Throughout your education here at Roger Williams, you have been encouraged to become involved in social justice issues.” Referencing the late U.S. Representative John Lewis (D-Ga.), Judge Clifton encouraged the graduates to “engage in good trouble” as lawyers.

“You may find yourself in the midst of a controversy that causes you a dilemma – your ethical concerns versus other considerations,” he said. “Continue to be mindful of maintaining your good character. Take on the challenges [where] your career takes you. Advocate for causes that you firmly believe in. Defend individuals, businesses or causes that you determine are entitled to your professionalism. Educate where you conclude that you can make a difference. Do all of this work, but remember: how you do it will determine your fate.”

A honorary degree was also awarded to Lynette Labinger, a highly regarded constitutional and civil rights attorney based in Providence.
Valedictorian Tatiana Maria Gomez then took the virtual podium with a thoughtful and heartfelt address.

“Law school is notoriously challenging, even in the best of circumstance,” she said. “But our class persevered through more than the usual level of difficulty. Many of us faced additional struggles as well, whether we were taking care of our families, juggling jobs with our schoolwork, facing grief or loss, surviving physical or mental health concerns, or simply being the first in our families to attend this crazy thing called law school.”

Gomez then observed that there were two types of “difficulty” that she and many of her classmates experienced in law school. One was the substantive challenge of acquiring legal skills and knowledge.

The second, she said, was the “inner turmoil” caused by “reading cases that seemed illogical or incorrectly decided. It’s the feeling that arises when you – a law student who purposefully pursued a profession meant to bring justice – see the law used for anything but. I think we all know this feeling. … [But] we’re empowered now to go out and do something about it.”

Ioannis N. Miaoulis, Ph.D., President of Roger Williams University and Roger Williams University School of Law, then certified the class as eligible to receive their law degrees.

“There’s nothing virtual about all you have done over the last three years,” he told them. “You and your classmates have given so much and served the neediest members of society. You have been shaped by your professors, in the classroom and in the field, into outstanding practitioners. You have interned with the best judges, prosecutors, public defenders, corporations, and so much more. And the thousands of hours of pro bono work you have done [reflects] the dedication to giving back to the community that Roger Williams University School of Law has instilled in you.”

After a roll call read by Jared A. Goldstein, Professor of Law and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, the virtual ceremony ended with an extended series of video greetings and congratulations from staff, adjuncts and faculty members.

In the week leading up to the ceremony, Dean Bowman awarded the Dean’s Distinguished Service Award to Ralph E. Tavares, Jr., Director of Diversity and Outreach.

“Ralph’s work at the law school has been essential to our success this year,” Bowman said. “I have relied on his insights, his wisdom, his compassion, and his lived commitment to our mission and values. I deeply appreciate his support for our students, and in particular our students of color in this moment of national reckoning about race and racism. Watching him in action over the past year, I know that he views his work as a calling to make the world a better and more inclusive place for all.”

Chosen by the graduating class, Associate Director & Professor of Bar Support Brittany L. Raposa was honored as Professor of the Year. For the second year in a row, Chief Justice Weisberger Visiting Professor of Law David Coombs was honored as Adjunct Professor of the
For this year’s Best Staff Member award, the class selected Ann Marie Thompson, RWU Law’s assistant director of Student Finance & Records, also for the second year in a row.

On Saturday and Sunday, May 22 and 23, RWU will celebrate its commencement. Sagamore William Guy, chief of the Pokanoket Nation, and Lorén Spears, executive director of the Tomaquag Indigenous Museum, will jointly deliver the commencement address for the Class of 2020 and Class of 2021 during a weekend of safely designed celebrations.
Dean Bowman with 2021 graduate and her son
Dean Yelnosky with 2020 graduate
The Board of Trachers of the
Roger Williams University
School of Law
has conferred upon
Tito Arturo Saavedra Casas
the Degree of
Juris Doctor
with all the rights, privileges, and obligations appertaining thereto.
In the City of Providence, in the State of Rhode Island,
this Twenty-First Day of May, Two Thousand and Seventy-one.
Graduate with Dean Raquel Ortiz