

2019 COMMENCEMENT

Former governor urges grads to elevate the legal profession

“Good lawyers are desperately needed” in today’s society, according to former Georgia Gov. Nathan Deal, who delivered the law school’s Commencement address.

He shared that lawyers are people to whom the public goes to in order to “make sense of the application of law in their lives.”

Deal then provided guidance on how the 2019 graduates could “elevate” the legal profession.

“First of all, always respect the law,” the state’s 82nd governor said. “Respect it, even if you don’t agree with it. And if you don’t agree with it, work to change it, because that is one of the great strengths of our system.”

Deal also encouraged the graduates to always respect the individuals who enforce the law as well as the other citizens who help make the legal system work.

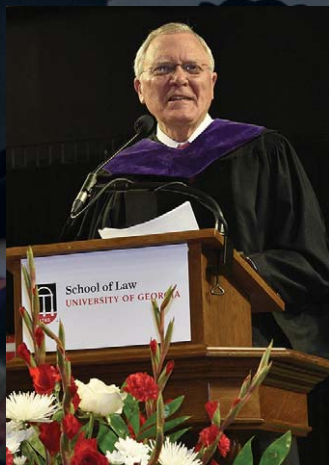
As an overarching principle, he noted that it is important to “always act in an ethical manner. . . [You] should have your own personal code of ethics that goes beyond the formal rules of conduct.”

Deal cautioned that there are “gaps” in the formal rules and cannons, and that they can be “difficult to adapt to changing situations.” He explained to graduates that by having their own code of ethics, they should be able to “avoid the image” that many people have of the legal profession.

Deal recalled early in his career researching an issue and concluding that the answer just did not seem to be fair. While discussing the matter with a senior partner, the elder told him that “you will find that the law does not always give you the answers you want, but your job as a lawyer is to make it work.”

In concluding his address, Deal said: “Our system of law and justice may not be perfect, but it gives us the power to change it in a constitutional manner. Sometimes, those changes come slowly or not at all, but our system is the best in the world, and we should all guard it carefully. For lawyers, our job is to make it work, and that now includes you.”

Approximately 200 students participated in the ceremony, including 185 Juris Doctor, 14 Master of Laws and three Master in the Study of Law candidates.



Nathan Deal, Georgia’s governor from 2011 to 2019. Photo by GradImages.



Class of 2019 President Brian Griffin (right) and Vice President Laura Golden (left) as co-chairs of the class’ legacy gift present a “check” – representing a historical class participation rate of 65% – to former Law School Association President Wade Herring (J.D.’83) (second from left) and Dean Bo Rutledge. Photo by Dennis McDaniel.

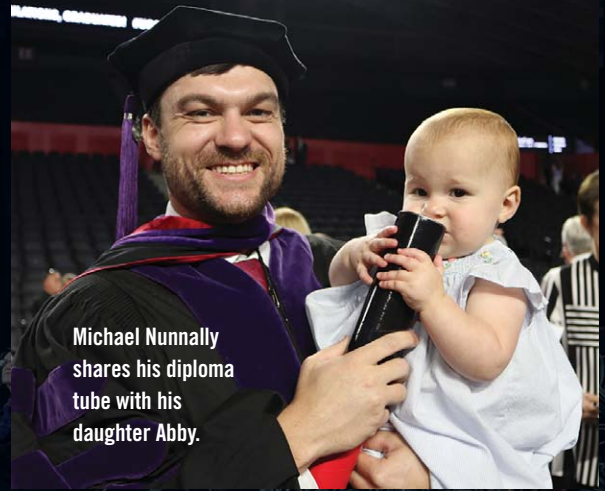


Posing for a selfie are: (l. to r.) Amanda Newton, Lauren Brown, Amanda Hoefer and Amanda Payne. Photo by Dennis McDaniel.



Madison Hahn celebrates the day. Photo by GradImages.

University of Georgia



Michael Nunnally shares his diploma tube with his daughter Abby.



In place, ready for the ceremony to proceed are: (l. to r.) Lindsey Woodard, Adam Wittenstein, Sydney Wilson, Kristin Williams, Eric Wilder, Ben Wilde and Brooke White. Photo by GradImages.



Trung Khuat is all smiles after the ceremony. Photo by Dennis McDaniel.

View more 2019 Commencement photos at law.uga.edu/photo-gallery. Watch the ceremony at youtube.com/c/UGALawSchool.