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Speech - 2022 Commencement Speaker Introduction

Michael M. Wuest SBA President 2021-2022

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Good morning,

My name is Michael Wuest, and it has been my distinct honor to be your Student Bar Association President. I now have one final privilege: to introduce this year's commencement speaker Judge Zahid N. Quraishi. Judge Quraishi embodies what I believe is one of the most important character traits in the law: courage.

Coming to law school requires courage. Courage to face challenges inside and outside the classroom. Courage to take on the loans necessary for this degree. In his book, *Profiles in Courage*, President Kennedy stated "*the courage of life is often a less dramatic spectacle than the courage of a final moment; but it is no less a magnificent mixture of triumph and tragedy . . . and that is the basis of all human morality.*" There is no one moment that defines a courageous life, as President Kennedy attested to, but a mixture of moments.

And no one better represents these moments like our commencement speaker. Judge Zahid N. Quraishi was appointed as a United States District Judge in June of 2021. Being, of Pakistani ancestry, he is the first Muslim American to serve as an Article III judge in the United States. Judge Quraishi previously served as a United States Magistrate Judge for the District of New Jersey in the Trenton Vicinage since 2019 where he was the first Asian-American to serve in the federal court in New Jersey.

Before his appointments to the federal bench, Judge Quraishi also has a long history of litigation experience. In private practice, Judge Quraishi served as the Chair of Riker Danzig's White Collar Criminal Defense and Investigations Group and as the firm's first Chief Diversity Officer.

Prior to Riker, Judge Quraishi served as an Assistant United States Attorney in the United States Attorney's Office for the District of New Jersey for over five years; represented the United States as an Assistant Chief Counsel and trial attorney with the Department of Homeland Security; and served as a military prosecutor, achieving the rank of Captain, in the U.S. Army Judge Advocate General's Corps. In the Army, Judge Quraishi was assigned to the First Infantry Division stationed in Germany and deployed to Iraq in 2004 and 2006 before he was honorably discharged.

Judge Quraishi graduated from the other New Jersey law school -Rutgers Law School - Newark in 2000 where he was the *Managing Business Editor of the Rutgers Computer and Technology Law Journal* and a member of the *Rutgers Moot Court Board*. Like many of us, he clerked, for the Honorable Edwin H. Stern, Presiding Judge, Superior Court of New Jersey - Appellate Division (retired). Then, turned to private practice as a litigation associate at LeBoeuf, Lamb, Greene & MacRae, LLP. His first day of work was September 11, 2001.

Soon after, that day, Judge Quraishi made the courageous decision to leave his new job and serve his country and that is when he signed up to serve the US Army as a JAG officer and continue his service as a Homeland litigator. He knows what it is like to begin a legal career thinking a certain way and then having to change course. He had the courage to change career paths when he felt it was right, to enter the unknown, to pick up the phone when history is on the line. The courage Judge Quraishi has exuded in his various roles in public service is exactly what I hope the class of 2022 will demonstrate as we go forward.

Whatever the challenges in our careers or personal lives, may we all remember that true courage, to do what we know is right in the face of adversity, “is the basis of all human morality.” True courage, like that exhibited by Judge Quraishi.