



HOODING CEREMONY

MAY 8, 2026





**UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN LAW SCHOOL
2026 HOODING CEREMONY**

1 P.M. FRIDAY, MAY 8

**Monona Terrace and Convention Center
Madison, Wisconsin**



Welcome!

Dear friends,

Today, we partake in a joyous occasion that many of our students have been looking forward to since starting law school three years ago: the hooding ceremony.

During this special recognition, faculty members place the hood over the heads of the graduates to signify their success in completing their law degree.

This event is in addition to, and does not replace, the university-wide commencement.

More broadly, hooding ceremonies are generally held for anyone receiving a master's or doctoral degree.

The tradition originated in European universities in the 11th or 12th century. Hooded robes, often required for warmth in unheated medieval libraries, were first used as a sort of practical uniform for scholars as they studied and produced written works. Over time, the robes became largely symbolic. Universities then added colors to the robes to differentiate students by their



academic majors, and the hoods later became detached ornaments, presented to graduates as part of the commencement. Hoods are still used today to represent a commitment to a scholarly life and to show their continued pursuit of knowledge. Such hoods are an expression of tradition and are used to communicate the wearer's school, degree and field of study for the rest of their lives.

At this ceremony, our graduates will be proudly wearing University of Wisconsin colors, but a fun aspect of the ceremony is seeing some faculty representing the colors of their degree institutions. On behalf of the University of Wisconsin Law School community, we wish you a beautiful and memorable day.

On, Wisconsin!

DEAN DANIEL TOKAJI

PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION & WELCOME

Dean Daniel Tokaji

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Michelle Behnke '88

REMARKS BY STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

J.D. speaker Savannah Ahluwalia

J.D. speaker Justin Davis

LL.M. speaker Zhaoruo Li

REMARKS BY FACULTY REPRESENTATIVE

Professor John P. Gross

PRESENTATION OF CANDIDATES

Dean Daniel Tokaji

FAREWELL

Dean Daniel Tokaji

PLEASE NOTE:

1. Guests should remain seated until after the faculty and graduates have exited the Exhibition Hall. Following the ceremony, you are invited to a reception on the rooftop of the Monona Terrace, weather permitting.
2. Professional photographers will be taking individual photos of candidates on stage as well as during the reception.

#UWLAWGRAD

Share your 2026 UW Law School Hooding Ceremony memories using #UWLAWGrad.

 @WisconsinLaw

 University of Wisconsin Law School

 uwisconsinlaw

 @law.wisc.edu

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES





KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Michelle A. Behnke

Michelle A. Behnke has been a member of the Boardman Clark law firm in Madison since 2024, primarily practicing in the Business, Real Estate and Estate Planning Practice Groups. She is currently serving as the 2025-26 president of the American Bar Association (ABA), the world's largest voluntary association of lawyers, judges and other legal professionals. Prior to joining Boardman Clark, Behnke spent 26 years as the principal of Michelle Behnke & Associates.

Behnke's ABA experience is extensive. Her roles have included treasurer, chair of the Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Profession, member of the Board of Governors (including as Chair of its Operations and Communications Committee), chair of the Investments Subcommittee, chair of the Standing Committee on Bar Activities and Services, and member of the Standing Committee on Membership.

She also served as Wisconsin's State Delegate in the ABA House of Delegates and has been a member of the House of Delegates since 2008.

In 2004-05, Behnke served as president of the State Bar of Wisconsin. In addition to bar leadership, Mi-

chelle has served as the President of the International Women's Forum-Wisconsin.

Currently, Behnke serves on the University of Wisconsin Law School Board of Visitors and the University of Wisconsin Foundation and Alumni Association Board. The double Badger earned her bachelor's degree in economics from UW-Madison in 1983 and her J.D. from UW Law in 1988.

Behnke has been recognized for her work in the legal profession and her community, receiving the Charles L. Goldberg Distinguished Service Award and the YWCA Women of Distinction Award. She is active in her community and has served on a number of boards, including SSM Healthcare of Wisconsin.

In addition to the ABA and State Bar, Behnke is a member of the Dane County Bar Association and the Wisconsin Association of African American Lawyers. Her experience in the real estate area was recognized by her election to membership in the American College of Real Estate Lawyers; she has also been elected into The American Law Institute, the American Bar Foundation Fellows and the Wisconsin Bar Foundation Fellows.



FACULTY SPEAKER

John P. Gross

John P. Gross is a clinical associate professor and director of the Public Defender Project at University of Wisconsin Law School. Since arriving at UW Law in 2020, he has taught Introduction to Substantive Criminal Law, Defense Function, Ethical Issues in Criminal Defense and Trial Practice.

Professor Gross began his legal career in 1999 as a staff attorney with the Legal Aid Society in New York City. After eight years as a public defender, he joined the faculty of Syracuse University College of Law as a practitioner in residence and subsequently became director of the Criminal Defense Clinic.

In 2011, Professor Gross took the role of Indigent Defense Counsel for the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, where he worked on reforms and authored a series of reports documenting the failings of indigent defense delivery systems. Three years later, he joined the faculty at University of Alabama School of Law, where he directed the criminal defense clinic for several years. Before joining UW Law, he

worked briefly as the Defender Association of Philadelphia's director of policy and practice.

Professor Gross' academic research focuses on the structure of indigent defense systems, criminal defense, and police policies and practices regarding the use of force. He is sought after on a range of issues relating to criminal prosecution and defense, trial procedure and standards of judicial conduct.

He has shared his expertise as a criminal law expert extensively, appearing in dozens of media sources and writing several op-eds. Earlier this year, he was interviewed by the Minnesota Star Tribune, NPR, ABC News and the CBC regarding the fatal use of force by Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Customs and Border Patrol.

Professor Gross holds a bachelor of arts degree from Georgetown University and a J.D. from Hofstra University School of Law.



J.D. SPEAKER

Savannah Ahluwalia

Savannah Ahluwalia was born in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. She graduated from the University of Michigan in 2022, where she earned a degree in business administration.

After college, she pursued opportunities in public interest, moving to Oregon to work for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. There, she supported research efforts on watershed ecological epidemiology.

At University of Wisconsin Law School, Ahluwalia was the Diversity Committee Chair and an Articles Editor for the *Wisconsin Law Review*. She also competed in Mock Trial, held leadership roles for the Amer-

ican Constitution Society and the Environmental Law Society, and was a member of the Asian Pacific Islander American Law Students Association (APALSA). She was also involved in the Wisconsin Innocence Project during her 2L and 3L years, which sparked her interest in advocacy within the criminal legal system.

Ahluwalia received the Friends of the Remington Center Endowment Award for her commitment to social justice ideals.

After graduation, she plans to continue advocating for others as a public defender.



J.D. SPEAKER

Justin Davis

Justin Davis was born in Chicago and graduated from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in 2023, where he earned a bachelor's degree in accountancy and distinguished himself as president of the student accounting organization.

During his undergraduate career, he also practiced at PricewaterhouseCoopers, where he worked on matters involving accounting compliance and tax law.

At University of Wisconsin Law School, Davis began his legal career by assisting small businesses in navigating bankruptcy and reorganization through his work with Krekeler Law.

He became a member of the Black Law Student Asso-

ciation (BLSA), competing on its nationally qualifying Mock Trial team during his first year. In recognition of his leadership and dedication, he was awarded BLSA's 1L Student of the Year. He continued to build on that foundation by serving as co-president during his third year, during which he helped lead mentorship advocacy initiatives.

Davis also competed with the University of Wisconsin Mock Trial program, earning the Susan Steingass Award for his advocacy and performance.

After graduation, he will continue his commitment to trial advocacy as a civil litigation associate at Jackson Lewis.



LL.M. SPEAKER

Zhaoruo Li

Zhaoruo Li is an international student from China, where she earned a B.A. in sociology as well as a J.D. and a master's degree, building a strong interdisciplinary foundation that shapes her approach to legal practice and advocacy.

After graduating in China, Zhaoruo worked as a compliance lawyer, assisting Chinese corporations in developing and improving internal compliance systems. Her work involved complex cross-border matters, including international sanctions compliance and overseas anti-corruption issues, which deepened her understanding of regulatory frameworks and global legal risk management.

Li has a demonstrated record of excellence in legal writing and oral advocacy. She represented her school in the John H. Jackson Moot Court Competition, where her team earned second place in the Asia-Pacific Region, received the Best Brief Award and advanced to the Top 8 globally—an experience that strengthened her passion for persuasive legal analysis and international legal problem-solving.

During her time at UW–Madison, Zhaoruo has remained deeply committed to public service. She participated in multiple pro bono initiatives, interned at Legal Action of Wisconsin and volunteered to assist attorneys on matters involving employment discrimination and related workplace claims. She is also a Dean's List recipient, reflecting her strong academic performance and dedication.

Beyond academics, Li is known among her peers for her energy, openness and willingness to support others—especially fellow international students adjusting to law school life in the U.S. She values building inclusive communities, meaningful networking and learning from classmates with diverse perspectives. Her experience at UW–Madison has been both challenging and deeply rewarding.

After graduation, Li will begin her legal career at a law firm in California, focusing on family law. She looks forward to continuing her commitment to client-centered advocacy and making a practical impact through thoughtful legal work.



CEREMONY EMCEE

Daniel Tokaji

Daniel Tokaji is the Fred W. & Vi Miller Dean and Professor of Law at University of Wisconsin Law School. He serves as the chief academic and executive officer of the school, with responsibility for faculty and staff development, personnel oversight, strategic planning and institutional vision, fundraising, budget planning and management, curriculum, and student academic affairs.

Before coming to UW Law six years ago, Dean Tokaji served on the faculty at The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law from 2003 to 2020; his most recent roles were Associate Dean for Faculty and Charles W. Ebersold & Florence Whitcomb Ebersold Professor of Constitutional Law.

Dean Tokaji has taught a wide variety of courses, including civil procedure, civil rights lawyering, comparative constitutional law, election law and voting rights, federal courts, First Amendment, legal analysis

and writing, legislation and regulation, and the U.S. legal system. He has also taught at Harvard Law School, Hong Kong University and Oxford University.

A leading authority in the field of election law, Dean Tokaji's scholarship addresses questions of voting rights, free speech and democratic inclusion. He has published over 50 law review articles, book chapters and other scholarly papers. He is the author of "Election Law in a Nutshell" (2d ed. 2016) and co-author of "Election Law: Cases and Materials" (7th ed. 2022). His recent scholarship addresses the challenges facing democracies around the globe, including the free speech issues surrounding digital disinformation, the need for trustworthy electoral institutions, and the role of law schools in strengthening democratic governance.

Dean Tokaji earned his J.D. from Yale Law School and clerked for the Honorable Stephen Reinhardt of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

GRADUATES



CANDIDATES FOR JURIS DOCTORATE DEGREE

- A** Mariam Abushamaa
Savannah Ahluwalia*
Ileaha Anderson*
Susanne Garvey Anderson
Jason Archbold
Oliver Argueta
Jacqueline Rae Au*
Ana Avendano Martinez
- B** Aislinn Bailie
Caleb Baird*
Jiayue Bao
Tori Baranowski*
Isabel Batley
Samuel Bauckham
Nolan Bedwell
Allyson Berri*
Nicole Bezella
William Boatman
Marne Boehm*
Elisabeth Boer
Harry Broderick*
Ava Brogan
Anastasia Bruss*
Garret Buechler*
Liam Byrnes*
Joonseob Byun
- C** Dian Cai*
Anthony Cartagena
Margaret Cavanaugh*
Xi Chen
Kelly Choren
Ethan Clouser*
Glenn Cofer
Shane Conley*
Carl Creager*
Joel Cruz
Benjamin Curwin*
- D** August Darrow*
Justin Davis
Carissa DeLain Lohrenz
Michael DeLeers*
Elliot Depies
Jacqueline Dixon
Kevin Duffy
Caleb Dzierzynski*
Emma Dzwierzynski*
- E** Geron Eatherly*
Andrew Ells
Kate English*
Irene Evans*
Bethany Everts
- F** Parker Fiedrich
Jasmine Fields
Lauren Smith Finnell*
Hannah Flemke*
Garrett Fortin*
Meauntay Foy

**Students earning a cumulative grade point average of 3.5 at the end of their penultimate semester receive the Dean's Academic Achievement Award and qualify to wear an honors stole at the commencement ceremony.*

The appearance of a name in this program is presumptive evidence of graduation, but it is not to be regarded as conclusive.

CANDIDATES FOR JURIS DOCTORATE DEGREE

G William Garcia
Halle Geiger
Greer Gentges
Savannah Georgian
Joshua Gienapp*
Lindsey Govan*
Kameron Grayson
Christian Groenewold
Marisa Gummin

H Jenna Heil
Jakob Hein
Larisa Hendrix
Tonee Henslee
Emmett Herr*
Grace Herrmann*
Andrew Hillis
Jewel Holsten
Jane Hoyer*
Elizabeth Hunt*
Tamara Hyman

I Carmen Ibarra
Christin Iniguez
Matthew Iverson

J Parker Jorenby*
Steven Jotterand
Jessica Jurcek*

K Allison Kallin
Colton Kamysz
Casey Kim
Jalen Kirkland
Cameron Kohlmann
Jennifer Kornreich
Holly Krabbe
Jacob Kruchten*

L Madison Larson*
Christopher Lawson*
Hailey Leal
Daniel Levan
Matthew LeVene*
Jiongyue (Henry) Li
Brandon Loreda
Erin Lyman

M Channing Manske
Claire Manthe
Emily March
Sean M. McArthur
Liam A. McLean
Meghan McMahon
Justice Moore
Ivan Alexis Moreno
Emalyn Morouney
Katrina Morrison
Travis Mullins
Morgan Christiana
Murchison*
Shannon Myers*
Maxwell Myrhum

N Casey Needham*
Patricia Needham
Bryce Nelson
Coleman Newsom*
Jianda Ni
Regan Norton*

O Seamus O'Connell
Kendell Oelschlaeger
Nicholas Orihuela

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CANDIDATES FOR JURIS DOCTORATE DEGREE

- P** Jill Patzner
Iva Petrova*
Eva Plomb
Madison Polack*
William Pollard
Brandon Pope
Kristina Noahl Pope
Carlos Puga
Cora Purdue
- Q** Anna Quade
- R** Caroline Rachow*
Andrew Reed*
Makayla Romundstad
AnnaSage Rothe
- S** Corey Saffold
Tanner Sarauer
Raabia Sheikh
Haiyue Shi
Sophia Siebert
Stephanie Simon*
Beeta Siwik
Aaron Snyder
Kaitlyn Spiegl*
Edward Steigerwald
Dara Stichert*
Jackson Stoffer
Taylor Sunke*
Jason Sutherland
Alicia Swagger
Elise Swenson*
Mairead Swyney*
- T** Alexandra Thomas*
Abigail Tomczyk
Genevieve Torrey*
Jackson Truman*
- U** Kathleen Ujdak
- V** Colyn Van De Hey
Erika Vasek*
David Vessel*
Luke Voegeli
- W** Matthew Wallace
Madeline Walth
Zihan Wang
Grace Weaver*
Adam Weber*
Bianka Weiland
Michael Weinrib*
Claralleyne Westmore
DeMarcus Williams*
Benjamin Willstein*
Aaron Wolf*
Nicholas Woods*
- X** Lauren Xiong
- Y** David Yanda
Colin Yandam
Chad Yeager
Madelyn Yergler

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CANDIDATES FOR MASTERS OF LAW

- A** Abdullah AlHabshan
Ticiana de Aquino Amaral Alves
Neda Asadzadeh
- B** Mankon Benyabawongs
- C** Laura Castellanos
Ying Chien Chang
Joy Chefu
Xi Chen
Biaolin Cheng
Bhumika Chirumamilla
Susan Chomba
- D** Maiara da Silva Albuquerque
- E** Omer Ergincan
Kamola Eshchanova
- F** Felipe Faria de Castro
- G** Marcos Guillen Diaz
Selen Gulnihar
Shokhrukh Gulomov
- H** Yihan Huang
- I** Ismail Ibrahim
- J** Qihao Jiang
- K** Shokhabbos Kholmurotov
- L** Cornelis Lengkong
Ling Li
Zhaoruo Li
Anna Lotan
- M** Maria Moran
- O** Nicholas Ofori
- P** Aleex Parmar
Damisa Prommas
- Q** Mohammad Qureshi
- R** Tao Ren
- S** Ismadiiar Samaganov
Siwapat Sansnapongpricha
Kokouvi Sedjro
Emanuel Serrato
Xiaoyun Shen
Pongdanai Sirithakulpong
Xuanshu Sun
Minkyu Sung
- T** Phusanisa Tempaibulkul
- X** Wenzhu Xiao
- Z** Qihui Zhang
Dingyuan Zheng
Abubakar Zubair

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CANDIDATES FOR DOCTORS OF JUDICIAL SCIENCE

P Dandan Pan

U Tian-ngern Uttarachai

The appearance of a name in this program is presumptive evidence of graduation, but it is not to be regarded as conclusive.



STUDENT AWARDS

Congratulations to all the students who have earned accolades for scholastic achievement, contributions to their community, and outstanding service to the Law School and the legal profession.

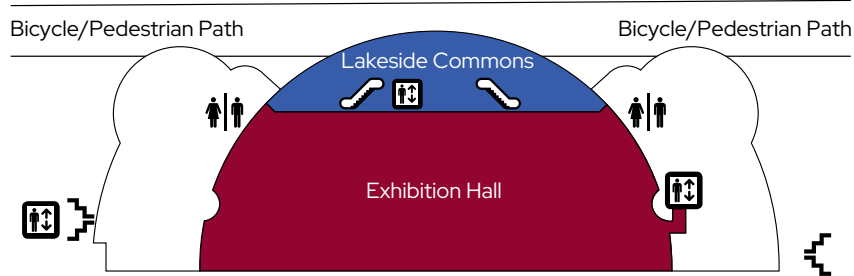
At law.wisc.edu/commencement/awards/, you can find awards listed by the year given, award descriptions and a search box to find listings by student name.



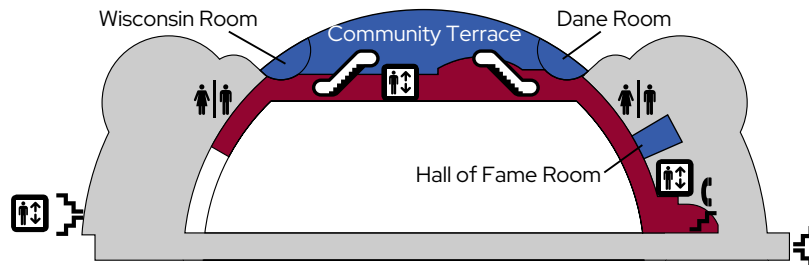
EVENT DETAILS



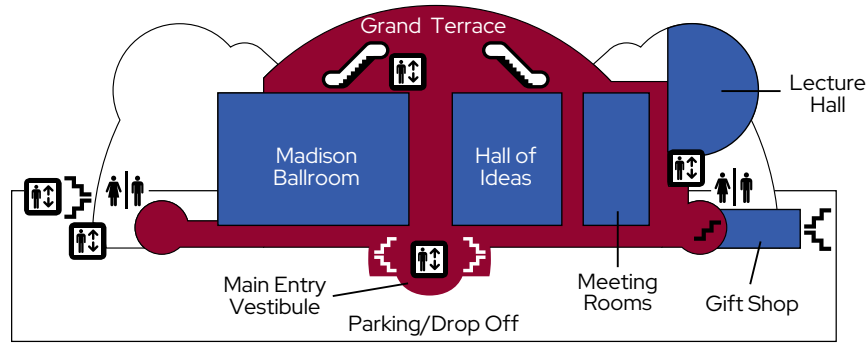
MONONA TERRACE MAP FOR VISITORS



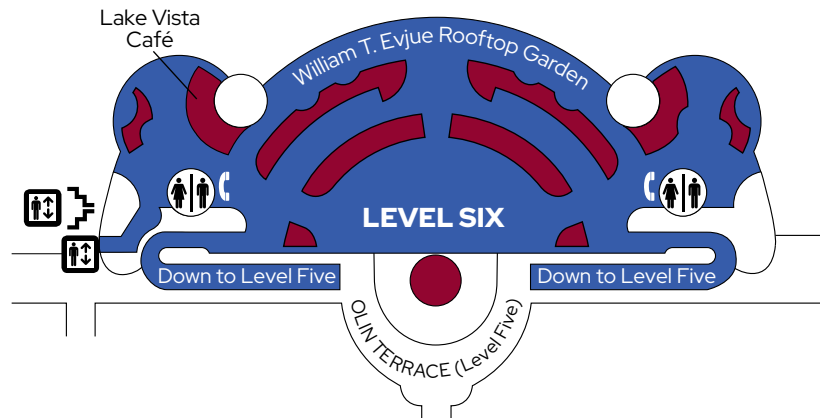
LEVEL ONE



LEVEL TWO



LEVEL FOUR



- 
Escalators
- 
Restrooms
- 
Stairways
- 
Elevators
- 
Telephone

FAQ

Q What is the ceremony etiquette?

A The UW Law School Hooding Ceremony follows the same etiquette rules as the UW Commencement Ceremony.

Respect for all attendees is essential for the enjoyment of this special occasion. Feel free to cheer, but disrupting university events, including graduation activities, is a violation of state law and will not be tolerated. Violators may face suspension, holds on degrees, registration and official university records, as well as potential arrest and criminal charges.

Please ensure all electronic devices are silenced during the ceremony.

While we have photographers capturing important moments today, you are welcome to take your own pictures as long as you keep the aisles clear and only approach the front when your graduate's name is going to be called, to be polite to all guests.

Q Where are the bathrooms?

A The closest bathrooms to the hooding ceremony are located in the back corners of both sides of the Exhibition Hall on Level One. There are additional bathrooms on other levels. Please see the map of Monona Terrace for further details.

Q Is there accessible seating available?

A Yes. There will be designated accessible seating at the front of the room. Ushers will be available to assist those with mobility needs by removing a chair to make space.

Q Is food available for purchase? What about water?

A Yes. Concessions (food and drinks) will be available for purchase in the Exhibition Hall from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. In addition, snacks will be provided to students in the student lineup room.

Water is available for free in the back corners of the Exhibition Hall.

Vending machines are located on the west end of Levels Two and Four for additional cold drink options.

A free reception will also follow the ceremony on the rooftop of the Monona Terrace, weather permitting (indoors otherwise).

Q Will the ceremony be livestreamed?

A Yes, the ceremony will be livestreamed on Zoom. Go to <https://law.wisc.edu/commencement/zoom-info.html> or use the QR code.



QR code for livestream

- Q** Is foreign language captioning available?
- A** Yes, foreign language captioning is available via Zoom’s automatic caption translation feature. Go to <https://law.wisc.edu/commencement/zoom-info.html> or use the QR code.



QR code for livestream

- Q** Will video from today be available to watch later?
- A** Yes, the video will be posted on the UW Law YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/WisconsinLaw likely within a week of the ceremony.
- Q** Will photos be available later as well?
- A** Yes, a company photographs each graduate at the stage; graduates will be contacted individually. Additionally, UW Law will post a photo gallery and share the link on social media.
- Q** What happens in case of an emergency?
- A** In any emergency, Monona Terrace staff are trained to dial “0” on the house phones to ask the Command Center to dispatch 911. Guests can do so as well if needed.

If there is a fire or other need for evacuation, building staff will escort folks to safety.

If someone suffers sudden cardiac arrest, staff have been trained to use the AEDs placed throughout the building.

CLASS OF 2026





UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN LAW SCHOOL

Statistics from the incoming 1L class of Fall 2023,
many of whom are graduating today.

169
CLASS SIZE

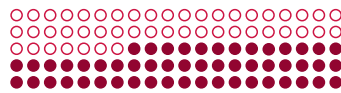
49
DIFFERENT
MAJORS

92 UNDERGRAD
INSTITUTIONS

LANGUAGES
SPOKEN **14**

24
AVERAGE
AGE

47% MEN **53%** WOMEN



STUDENT POPULATION

20-45
AGE RANGE

28
WISCONSIN
COUNTIES

26
STATES AND
TERRITORIES

50% FROM OUTSIDE OF
WISCONSIN
states with the most students enrolled:
IL, MN, CA, MI, TX, NY, NC, GA



The Class of 2026's Cane Toss

On Oct. 11, 2025, over 100 3Ls ran across the field at Camp Randall Stadium before the UW Homecoming game kickoff. In following with the longstanding tradition, 3Ls wore bowler hats and threw their canes over the goalpost in the south end zone.

As legend goes, those who catch their canes before they touch the ground will win their first case as lawyers. The origins of University of Wisconsin Law

School's Cane Toss seem lost in the mists of time. Most believe that the tradition began with the arrival of the legendary Professor William Herbert "Herbie" Page from The Ohio State University Law School in 1917.

Regardless of the history or each student's individual outcome during the toss, we wish good luck to all of our graduates! We can't wait to hear about the great things you will do.





Scan this QR code to see the 2025 Cane Toss gallery.



THE NEXT CHAPTER







KEEP IN TOUCH, BADGERS!

The UW Law School community extends far beyond Bascom Hill and Madison. You are joining more than 15,000 alumni worldwide who are serving their communities in every capacity, from government work to nonprofits and public interest law to private firms.

You are our greatest ambassadors for UW Law and law in action.

And you are always welcome to return, not just for homecoming and reunion.

No matter where you go, you can always call UW Law home.



law.wisc.edu/alumni/

Our support for you doesn't end here. As new alumni, you can find a hub of resources at law.wisc.edu/alumni/, whether you want to:

- Attend UW Law events
- Share updates about your career
- Read about other alumni in the news
- Volunteer
- Make a gift
- Sign up for Continuing Legal Education
- Seek career assistance

In a few months, you'll receive your first *Gargoyle* magazine in the mail to keep you connected with all the latest UW Law news. We publish each fall and spring.

Of course, you can also follow UW Law on LinkedIn or your preferred social media platform.

Congratulations, again. We can't wait to see where your career will lead.



Go forth and practice
law in action.



What's next
begins today.

