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**ALUMNI TAKE THE LEAD AT CONCORD'S SUMMER 2009 GRADUATION**

*A decade after the launch of the nation's first online law school, graduates from across the country boast prosperous and diverse careers*

**Los Angeles, CA, Aug. 1, 2009**—In a twist on the traditional graduation ceremony, Concord Law School's 2009 summer graduation was led by its alumni from previous classes who are enjoying successful new careers thanks to their legal education. A dozen alumni from around the country inspired the graduates, proving the power of online education by sharing their success stories during the ceremony at Los Angeles' Skirball Center. The graduation celebrated the achievements of 49 juris doctor and 27 executive juris doctor graduates.

"More than 10 years ago when the law school launched there was a lot of skepticism about Concord. Back then, everyone asked 'How can you teach law online?' Today, Concord students are making the final rounds of national moot court competitions and our graduates are being admitted to the Bar of the United States Supreme Court. Our graduates are also earning awards for their pro bono work and blazing new trails for non-traditional law school graduates," said Concord Dean Barry Currier, J.D. "We are extremely proud of the caliber of legal education we provide and even prouder of our graduates' successes."

The summer 2009 graduates reflect the typical Concord student: a mid-career professional, in his or her mid-40's, who plans to use the legal education in their current work or a related field. The graduates include an airline pilot who plans to use his degree in the field of aviation legal services, a policewoman who will combine her law degree with her mediation certification to oversee complaints from citizens and police personnel, a CPA who wants to enhance his practice, and a doctor who will mesh his legal education and medical experience to work in health policy.

Leading the keynote speakers was **Joy Nonnweiler**, Ph.D., a 2007 Concord graduate with a 30-year career in the healthcare industry who practices criminal and social security disability law; **Ross Mitchell**, one of the first online-educated attorneys admitted to the U.S. Supreme Court Bar; and **Michael Justen**, the National Freedom of Information Act Coordinator for the National Marine Fisheries Service.

Following the conferring of degrees by Dean Currier, academic awards were presented by **Laura Collins**, a 2002 graduate who runs a divorce mediation law practice with her husband, a psychotherapist; **Floyd Chapman**, a 2003 graduate who serves on the Committee of Bar Examiners of the State Bar of California; and **Farzad Naeim**, Concord's 2002 valedictorian, who serves as General Counsel for John A. Martin & Associates, Inc., one of the nation's largest structural and earthquake engineering firms.

**Sarah Farmer Earll**, a 2006 graduate who works for Walt Disney Imagineering introduced two alumni who have recently passed the bar exam. The alumni were sworn-in to the State Bar of California by **Rhetta Vander Ploeg**, a 2005 Concord graduate who now serves as a Deputy District Attorney for Lassen County, CA.

Presiding over the event was **Larry David**, a 2004 Concord graduate who was selected as an Angel Award winner in 2008 by the editors of *California Lawyer* for “his commitment to pro bono work fighting for the rights of the most vulnerable.” A retired businessman, David now runs a general law practice.

“As Concord enters its second decade, it seems wonderfully fitting to have such a terrific group of graduates return to celebrate the accomplishments of the Summer 2009 class,” noted Dean Currier. “They represent more than 1,000 Concord graduates who are showing every day both the need for and success of our online law school program.”

### **About Concord Law School**

Concord Law School of Kaplan University boasts an enrollment of 1,500 students across the country and around the world. More than 1,000 have completed the JD and EJD programs since the school’s inception in 1998. The formal merger of Concord into Kaplan University in the fall of 2007 made Concord the first online law school to be part of a regionally accredited institution of higher education. Kaplan University is accredited by The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) and a member of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. Concord is also accredited by the Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education and Training Council, a nationally recognized accrediting agency. Additionally, Concord is an institutional member of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation and the International Association of Law Schools. For more information, visit [info.concordlawschool.edu](http://info.concordlawschool.edu).

Concord Law School is part of Kaplan Higher Education, which serves more than 100,000 students through more than 70 campus-based schools across the United States and abroad. It also has online programs through Kaplan Virtual Education and Concord Law School of Kaplan University. Kaplan Higher Education schools offer a spectrum of academic opportunities, from high school diplomas to graduate and professional degrees, including a juris doctor degree. Kaplan Higher Education is part of Kaplan, Inc., a subsidiary of The Washington Post Company (NYSE: WPO). To learn more, visit [www.portal.kaplan.edu](http://www.portal.kaplan.edu).

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