Programme Co-ordinator, Guests and Colleagues,

On an occasion like this, it is appropriate to reflect on the achievements of the past and applaud the prestigious milestones achieved. Prof Boraine, and while we do that, allow me to congratulate you on behalf of all the staff members in the Faculty of Law on your contribution to the current accomplishments.

Looking back we need to acknowledge that we had (and I believe, still have) colleagues that were ahead of their times, stood tall when their views were not held by those in power and pursued truth and righteousness. Their footprints are indelibly embedded in the visionary leadership and academic citizenship that this faculty has produced. Time has proven that the fruit of our labour far outlives the mortality that all humankind eventually succumbs to. We should therefore take some guidance from the examples that we had, and still have, in this faculty and critically evaluate our own outputs to establish whether these are scientifically sound, truly relevant and add to the existing knowledge.

I would also like to look forward and translate the inspiration that has so far been achieved into a vision of what the way forward could or should entail. For this faculty, true greatness is not when accolades or titles are bestowed on any one individual. It is the collective effort that is able to provide a powerful force and new direction. What stands testimony of the work that we do in this faculty is the difference that we have made in the lives of our students and in the communities we serve. It is the values that we instil in our students that ultimately uphold the integrity of the legal profession and respect for the judicial system.

The law is the tool with which to achieve justice for all who live in this country. This faculty has taken up its role as the best in Africa and is amongst the forerunners in the world to equip those through whom the aspirational principles of our Constitution are to be realised. We should all pause for a moment and do some introspection.

Now is the time to reflect on our contribution to burning issues such as access to basic education, land reform, the exclusion of children with disabilities and social cohesion, to mention just a few. We should closely scrutinise the impact of our individual and collective effort to evaluate the progress towards the goal of a united South Africa with improved quality of life freeing the potential of all. What has been achieved should inspire us to do even more.

I thank you!

Trynie Boezaart