



office of the president

**HONORARY DEGREE CONFERRAL
JUDGE GUIDO CALABRESI
MOUNT ALOYSIUS COLLEGE COMMENCEMENT
CITATION DELIVERED BY PRESIDENT TOM FOLEY
MAY 9, 2015**

Judge Guido Calabresi you are an internationally celebrated “prophet of the law,” a revered senior judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, a beloved former Dean of Yale Law School, a ground breaking legal scholar and a careful tender of torts and of life. Even these singular descriptives only begin to touch the breadth and depth of your lifelong story, still in the making.

Where to begin? Born in Milan, Italy in 1932, your family—active in the resistance—escaped the fascists for America in 1939. You were seven. You became a naturalized citizen in 1948. You were 16. You graduated first in your class from Yale University. You were not yet 21. A Rhodes Scholar, you earned a Master’s degree in Politics, Philosophy and Economics (PPE) from Magdalen College at Oxford. You were 22. Returning to Yale, you graduated first in your class from its law school. You were 25. You clerked for Justice Hugo Black on the United States Supreme Court. You were 26. Then, in 1959, you joined the faculty at Yale Law School. You were about to turn 27, and just about two decades removed from your parents’ fight with their colleagues in the Resistance and your family’s flight from the clutches of Mussolini. What a story, even had it stopped right there.

But it didn’t. In the five decades since becoming—still—the youngest professor in the storied history of Yale Law School, you have literally written or re-written the casebook in multiple fields of law. First, you established and became the leader of an entirely new branch of the centuries old field of torts law. You did this by conceiving brave new economic theories and welding those theories to your personal determination to prevent accidents and injuries—and not just “sort out” plaintiffs and defendants. Your common sense approach—finding the “least cost avoider”—has promoted “the good life” for literally millions of people whose uncommon injuries from commonplace accidents were “avoided” by your brilliant application of economic incentives directly on those in the best position to prevent that accident from happening again.

Second, you challenged, four decades before we ever even heard the term “death panels,” the very notion of delivering health care on a purely economic model. Your seminal text on the subject, your numerous articles in law journals and the popular press and your prize-winning lectures on what you termed “tragic choices” literally wrote and then rewrote the textbooks and the case law in this field. Before anyone else was even worrying about how to apportion scarce health care resources—like kidney dialysis machines, artificial hearts and the like—you were inciting a generation of us—lawyers and doctors and policy makers alike—to identify, address and resolve these “tragic choices” in ways more palpably humane and less purely economic. Your first book on the subject is still required reading in law, medical and public policy schools across the country, whenever they address the notion of fair distribution of dwindling resources.

Judge Calabresi, in your ongoing career, you have written six seminal books and more than 100 peer-reviewed articles. You have delivered dozens of prize lectures to college audiences, institute think tanks and governments around the world. And you have received over 50 honorary degrees from universities in the United States and abroad.

But your contributions to your profession did not stop with brave new theories of law, unprecedented mergers of economic theory and common sense, or prize winning lectures. During your career as legal scholar, professor and Dean at Yale you have attracted and taught an amazing number of notable legal minds and people who became game changers in fields far apart from the law. They are too numerous to mention here, but many of the students whom you personally mentored during your five decades as *professore* have gone on to the highest levels of service in our country and in our world, serving as leaders of both for and non-profit law practices, as deans and directors at some of the foremost institutions in the world, as Cabinet members and policy makers in governments at home and abroad and as Presidents of countries and colleges. As we stand here today, three of your students sit on the United States Supreme Court.

Indeed, when Yale created the Guido Calabresi Professorship of Law, they recognized not just your sterling contributions to the law, but your mentorship of so many generations of future leaders. You challenged each of them with that famous, formidable intellect but you also wrapped them in the warmth of that Calabresi smile and in the mantle of fierce affection that is your hallmark.

Today, we *recognize and applaud* the achievements that mark all the decades of your life—some of these achievements public and unprecedented, many of them quiet and personal, all of them remarkable. But Mount Aloysius *honors* you today for your essential personal story—the lifeline that began for you in 1939. Since emigrating to this country, you have built a “good life” in the law and in your home by synthesizing faith with learning, by developing competence with compassion, by putting your talents and gifts at the service of others and by assuming leadership in the world community. That is our Mount Aloysius core philosophy; many of our students know it by heart; you have taken it to heart in your five decades of service to your students, to the law and to your adopted country. And

it is your humanity, your generosity of spirit, your pursuit of “excellence with decency” that makes you a treasure for those whose lives you touch.

We recognize here today your ongoing quest for a just world that is not blinded to those least among us. That quest and your devotion to it has marked your own life as truly a Good Life—both in the context of the world of law and in the artful way in which you touch those people in your life as son, scholar, teacher, judge, husband, father, and friend.

Finally, we want to acknowledge your family today, those touched most deeply by The Good Life you have created—your wife, Anne Gordon Audubon Tyler-Calabresi, a social anthropologist, freelance writer, social activist, philanthropist and arts patron, and your three children— Dr. Bianca Finzi-Contini Calabresi; Dr. Anne Gordon Audubon Calabresi, and Massimo Franklin Tyler Calabresi. Your story is also their story to an extent, and we acknowledge their part in this honor that we bestow this day.

We Now, Therefore, confer upon you, Judge Guido Calabresi—scholar, author, judge, and good friend to so many—the degree of Humane Letters, honoris causa, this Ninth Day of May, Two Thousand and Fifteen.