

A good many years ago, I sat more or less where you are today, receiving my degree from Simon Fraser University, and looking ahead to the many unknowns of the days to come.

A year later, I was back in a classroom, listening to the Dean's introductory lecture as he welcomed my class to the first day of the first year of law school.

Here is what he told us:

"This year will be tough," he said.

"It will demand skills and abilities and levels of persistence that you may or may not have. "

And then he directed us to: "Look to your left. And look to your right. By the time this year is over either you or one of your neighbours will be gone."

And that's exactly what happened. Week over week, my little core study group of sixteen students dropped to fifteen, and then a dozen and then ten.

Who left? One was a mother of three who became overwhelmed. One got sick. Another ran out of money. Others, I can only assume, had burdens or barriers or distractions that made law school too much to take on at that point in their lives.

Some of the starting students in my class fell away for other reasons of course. They failed exams or

Before this year is over it is almost certain that you or one of your neighbours will need help.

When *you* need it, ask your classmates to help you. And when your friends need it, be ready to give them whatever assistance you can.”

In this alternative universe I'm describing, we would have ended the year every bit as bright and

certificate is the kind of accomplishment that builds competence and confidence and provides a springboard into further achievement.

Second, you become part of SFU's near and far network of alumni.

Just as you have had the opportunity here at SFU for an engage