

New Milford High School Distinguished Alumni Award Speech Presented By Raymond “Hap” Harrison to Adam Leitman Bailey:

Good Evening Members of the Board of Education, Professional Colleagues, Parents, Relatives and Friends, and most importantly Members of the Graduating Class of 2008.

I am honored this evening to introduce Adam Leitman Bailey, a 1988 alumnus of New Milford High School; and it is my distinct pleasure to present Adam with the 2008 New Milford High School Distinguished Alumni Award. Last year New Milford initiated the tradition of inviting a distinguished alumnus to speak at our high school graduation ceremony. Adam follows Dr. Susan Bukata as our second distinguished alumnus to speak at our high school graduation ceremony and I ask the graduating class to pay special attention to the words of wisdom in his speech.

In order to introduce this audience to Mr. Bailey, I would like to recount several of his many academic and professional accomplishments since he has left the halls of New Milford High School.

Adam is a 1992 graduate of Rutgers University. He is also a 1995 graduate of Syracuse Law School where he was chosen to serve on their Moot Court, an all-star team of litigators who competed in the courtroom against the best student lawyers from other law schools. Adam specialized in real estate law and began working for firms in New York City upon his graduation from Syracuse Law School. After arguing and winning most of his court cases for several years, Adam made the bold decision to strike out on his own, and he established his own real estate law firm, Adam Leitman Bailey, P.C., in the extremely competitive and traditional atmosphere of New York City.

Within seven years, his 13 attorney real estate firm received an AV rating by Martindale-Hubbell, the country's preeminent lawyer rating service. An AV rating signifies a firm that has achieved the highest levels of professional skill and integrity.

In 2007 Mr. Bailey himself became one of 223 New York Metro lawyers to receive Super Lawyer Honors. Law and Politics Magazine identified him as one of the top 5% of attorneys practicing in the New York Metro area based upon an independent survey of 90,000 attorneys. Mr. Bailey was recognized as a lawyer who had achieved a high degree of peer recognition and professional achievement based upon verdicts and settlements, transactions, and representative clients.

Mr. Bailey has prevailed in the court room in a number of significant real estate cases including a landmark case that led to changes in the way deeds are recorded. He has written and drafted agreements that have been adopted as standard practice by the real estate industry, and he has recently had four new comprehensive lease forms published by Blumberg Legal Forms.

Mr. Bailey is a prolific writer who has published numerous real estate law articles in such prestigious publications as The New York Law Journal, The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, The Daily News, and New York Magazine.

Mr. Bailey has the reputation of being a litigator with a conscience who provides a passionate voice for the needy against the wealthy and powerful. He has established the highest reputation for himself and his firm in compassionate legal work that benefits others. He currently represents a group of Harlem business owners who are in the process of being evicted to make way for a shopping mall. In a novel proposal to halt gentrification in Harlem, Mr. Bailey has proposed that 125th street from river to river be declared the "Harlem Historic District" which he believes would make it more difficult to tear down the neighborhood's historical buildings.

Mr. Bailey has also been dedicated to community service and charitable activities. He established a Building Foundations Internship Program to help improve high school students through educational opportunities, technology instruction, and leadership training. He is a member of the Board of Advisors for the Catherine Gibbs School where he advises faculty, lectures students, and assists students in finding meaningful jobs. He has been an enthusiastic fundraiser for the Leukemia Society of America and he has received their National Recognition Award.

My most intimate connection with Adam originated on the New Milford Track. Adam was a four year participant on the Cross Country, Indoor Track and Field, and Outdoor Track and Field Teams. He was a fierce competitor with a desire to excel and the determination to maximize his potential. During both his junior and senior years he earned first team All-League and Honorable Mention All County honors in Cross Country. As a senior he served as an extremely diligent Captain for the Cross Country team, and if you look at the wall in the athletic wing you will see his name on the Cross Country plaque as the recipient of the Coaches Award for both 1987 and 1988.

The accomplishments of his senior year are even more impressive in light of the fact that Adam was involved in a serious car accident during June of his junior year. Adam sustained head injuries from this accident that left both his academic and athletic career in doubt. When I first spoke with him at the beginning of senior year, however, I was impressed with his positive attitude. "The accident did not hurt me", he said "but it has made me tougher." His perseverance and his tenacious desire to compete and to excel have been transferred from his successes on the Track to his victories in the courtroom. Adam Bailey has been recognized by his peers as one of the most proficient and successful in his field of real estate law.

Tonight it is my sincere pleasure to welcome him home, to recognize him as one of our most distinguished graduates, and to thank him for his generosity to New Milford High School. Mr. Bailey has not only established a scholarship to benefit a worthy New Milford graduate who will attend his alma mater, Rutgers University, but he has also most generously provided each of our graduates with a backpack as a graduation gift.

I sincerely hope that his words this evening inspire the current graduates with the desire to achieve greatness with character which is what Adam Bailey has so admirably demonstrated through his professional career and through the generosity of his community service. At this time I am most pleased to present Adam Leitman Bailey with the 2008 Distinguished Alumni Award.