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## 150TH ANNIVERSARY GALA STUDENT ADDRESS

*October 1, 2022*

*Imara Joroff\**

Thank you all for choosing to be here tonight to celebrate BU Law's 150th anniversary. I believe that having a choice is one of the most important aspects of my life. For the majority of this country's history, people that looked like me—people of color and women—did not have many choices for their future. Whether due to racism, classism, or sexism, our choices for our futures were relegated to just a select few.

When it was first established, Boston University School of Law opened its doors to all people regardless of race and gender. In doing so, this law school increased the number of choices people of color and women could make for their future. I will not pretend that the possibility of a choice is the same as having the ability to make the choice, nor is it the same as thriving once the choice is made. However, creating that possibility is the first step—and it's a step that BU took when few other law schools did.

I am directly benefiting from the choice BU made way back in 1872. I am also benefiting from the hard work of those who came before me, including BU alumni who chose BU, chose to pave their own way, and chose to take a stand against injustice.

When I was younger, for various reasons, I made the conscious choice to not become a lawyer. I was a relatively dramatic child, so I probably said something along the lines of "I will never, ever, ever attend law school."

However, at age twenty-two, I made the choice to apply to law school. At the time, I was living in a state where I did not feel a part of, nor supported by, the community. Therefore, in deciding where to apply, I looked for schools with a strong sense of community, excellent academics, and a collaborative environment. It was, and still is, extremely important to me that I, and all others in the school's community, are accepted, supported, and given the best opportunity to excel.

In order to determine if BU passed my two-part test, I spoke to many current students who were either student ambassadors, members of the Black Law Students Association, or members of the Women's Law Association. The stories I heard varied—students shared their real thoughts about the BU community, including the good and the not-so-good. Fortunately, there was a common thread

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among all my conversations—these students were proud to be at BU, the professors cared about them as human beings, and they lifted each other up, they didn't tear each other down. After finishing my first year and beginning my second, I can confidently say that these threads are tightly woven into my BU story as well.

Since stepping into the law tower on September 2, 2021, I have been extremely confused, I have cried over the IRAC structure, and I have felt alone. However, during that same time, my professors met with me on Saturdays and Sundays, lawyering fellows helped me work through my writing, and I made lifelong friends. When people ask what law school I attend, I too am proud to say BU.

I make my own choices. But I do not make my choices in a vacuum. My choices depend on the work of those before me, the experiences of those around me, and the institutions that commit to providing equal opportunities to all. I chose BU, but before I was able to make that choice, BU chose people that looked like me, and, in 2021, BU chose . . . me. For that, I will be forever grateful. Thank you.