

BRIDGET MARY MCCORMACK

TRINITY COLLEGE CLASS OF 1988

Doctor of Laws

Presented by Frank Kirkpatrick '64, Ellsworth Morton Tracy Lecturer and Professor of Religion

Escorted by Howard DeLong, Brownell Professor of Philosophy, Emeritus

A Trinity alumna, you majored in political science and philosophy and graduated with honors in 1988. Both of your siblings—Mary Catherine McCormack and William McCormack—are also Trinity alumni; she in 1991, and he in 1996.

Three years after you graduated from Trinity, you received your J.D. from the New York University School of Law, where you were a Root-Tilden scholar and where you won the Ann Petluck Poses Memorial Prize for advocacy. For the first five years of your legal career, you worked in New York. At first you worked with the Legal Aid Society. Later you served with the Office of the Appellate Defender, where you represented more than 1,000 clients in the state's trial and appellate courts.

In 1996, you became a faculty fellow at Yale Law School. Two years later, you joined the faculty of the University of Michigan Law School, where you taught criminal law and legal ethics. Supervising the law school's General Litigation Clinic, you focused principally on the professional benefits of clinical legal education. Building on that experience, you created additional clinics at Michigan Law, including two focused on domestic violence and pediatric health advocacy.

Your exceptional work in that area was rewarded when, in 2002, you were named associate dean for clinical affairs. In that capacity you were responsible for ongoing development of the law school's practical education, and you continued to introduce new clinics that provided a range of legal services while affording students real-world learning experiences. Thanks to your leadership, students were soon able to hone their skills in clinics focusing on mediation, low-income taxpayers, international transactions, human trafficking, juvenile justice, and entrepreneurship.

At the same time that you were developing and introducing these innovative programs, you conducted and supervised a wide range of civil and criminal litigation in both the Michigan and federal courts. As a result of your investment in these programs, they are now nationally acknowledged to be among the best places for a young lawyer to develop his or her skills.

Additionally, you founded the Michigan Innocence Clinic, the first such clinic in America to handle exclusively non-DNA evidence cases. Students provide counsel to state residents who have been wrongly convicted. Thanks to that clinic, seven people have been exonerated in the past five years. So successful has the clinic been, in fact, that you were honored in 2010 with the Justice for All Award of the Criminal Defense Attorneys of Michigan. A year later, the Washtenaw County Bar Association presented you with the Patriot Award. And in 2012 you were honored by the Cooley Law School with the Distinguished Brief Award in recognition of the best brief filed in the Michigan Supreme Court that term.

In November of that year you were elected to the Michigan Supreme Court.

For your exceptional devotion to legal education, especially your passionate commitment to developing clinical opportunities for law students to learn while serving the public, I have the honor of presenting you, Bridget Mary McCormack, for the degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*.