



SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW

February 7, 2023

Dear Friends,

The School of Law has developed an extraordinary partnership with the [Family Action Network \(“FAN”\)](#). FAN brings to our community the world’s thought leaders and best-selling authors for presentations and conversations on issues such as education, law, psychology, wellness, social change, and racial justice. Please watch for messages about all of the wonderful upcoming FAN events available to us. Most of the programs are virtual, and the members of our community are welcome to attend and often invited to participate in a small-group, after-event dialogue with the speakers.



Recently, FAN presented a remarkable conversation between Dr. Dachner Keltner, bestselling author of *Awe: The New Science of Everyday Wonder and How It Can Transform Your Life*, and Susan Cain, author of the #1 New York Times bestselling books *Quiet* and *Bittersweet*. In his book and [his beautiful dialogue with Susan Cain](#), Dr. Keltner describes his research into the science of awe — the shared human experience of encountering mysteries that are beyond the self. At every age and in every culture, human beings report experiencing awe most often when they are together with others in the presence of “moral beauty”—bearing collective witness to selfless acts of kindness by another person. Such experiences, which only occur in the midst of human relationships, bring to the observers tears of joy and a sense of wholeness, peace, love, and well-being.

As I reflected on Dr. Keltner’s book and his powerful conversation with Susan Cain, I recalled the many experiences of awe that I have enjoyed with our law school community. Our shared events like convocation, commencement, swearing-in ceremonies, concerts, and even dynamic class discussions often bring us goosebumps (autonomous sensory meridian responses), which are the physiological manifestations of awe. But I am particularly awe-struck by the moral beauty that happens in relationships in our community every day — acts of loving kindness that reach a spiritual dimension that transcends the self.

On February 16, at the [School of Law’s 17th Annual Diversity and Inclusion Celebration](#), we will lift up exemplars of this special kind of moral beauty. [We will publicly recognize Akshay Verma J.D. ’06 and Legal Education Access Pipeline, Inc. \(LEAP\)](#). Akshay has devoted his entire professional life to service, working to open doors and create opportunities for

students of color to attend law school, and thrive in the legal profession. LEAP has partnered with our law school to provide an incredibly successful pathway program to legal education for underrepresented students. The Diversity and Inclusion Celebration also allows us to honor our affinity groups, student leaders, Thurgood Marshall Civil Rights Scholarship recipients, and the wonderful sponsors and benefactors who have provided invaluable financial support for our students.

We know from our own shared experiences and from Dr. Keltner's research, that the examples of moral beauty set by our student leaders, donors, sponsors, Akshay, and LEAP will spur all of us to answer the call to join together to serve others, a call that is awesome and awe-inspiring.

With warm regards and great gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "M".

Michael J. Kaufman (He/Him/His)
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