



CHOATE
ROSEMARY HALL

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March 2, 2021

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard J. Durbin
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles F. Grassley
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Schumer, McConnell, Durbin, and Grassley:

It is my honor to write to you in support of the nomination of Kristen Clarke for Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice.

I am the Head of School of Choate Rosemary Hall, Kristen Clarke's high school. A graduate of the Class of 1993, Kristen has been a dedicated and involved alumna, and as a result, I have had the opportunity to spend significant time with her, to learn from her, and to witness her inspire our entire community with both her actions and words.

In 2017, I presented Kristen with the Choate Rosemary Hall Alumni Award. As background, this award, presented to alumni who have made significant contributions to their profession, is the highest award bestowed by the School to a graduate, and was first awarded in 1958 to John F. Kennedy '35. During her acceptance speech, Kristen reminisced about her Choate experience including a field trip with her American Political Institutions class to a hearing in Hartford in connection with *Sheff v. O'Neill*, one of the milestone cases on school desegregation, which, she says, sparked her interest in civil rights lawyering. She also spoke to her recognition that much that she has been able to do and accomplish in her career traces back to having had the opportunity to attend Choate which, in turn, has left her to imagine what our country would be like if, in her words, "all kids had access to the incredible opportunities that a place like Choate provides." An awed member of her audience that morning, I was struck when she asked this question of all of us, "How can we create a world in which there is more justice, greater equality, a more level playing field, and equal access to opportunity?"

Perhaps not surprisingly, I would suggest one answer to her question would be through education. Another would be through service. It is abundantly clear to me that Kristen epitomizes the difference one individual can make when they value and promote both

education and service; indeed, we at Choate have been direct beneficiaries of her commitment to these priorities. In the span of three very tumultuous and challenging weeks for our nation in the spring of 2020, Kristen gave up her (what can I only imagine to be very limited) personal time to be with the Choate community. First in late-May, she co-led a conversation on *Current Challenges in Social Justice* as part of our Choate ConnectsUS webinar series during which she addressed a myriad of issues including voter rights, incarceration, and the impact of COVID-19 on social justice. Then on June 5, in an effort to help our students, faculty, and staff grapple with recent events involving race, we held a *Day of Conversation and Reflection* during which Kristen spoke and beseeched each of us to be allies to one another and to be willing to have courageous conversations about topics that may very well make us uncomfortable. Finally, just a few days later, she participated on another webinar panel (alongside several other Choate alumnae including Stacey Plaskett '84) entitled *On the Road to Women's Equality* about how the collective impact of the varied human rights movements can serve to bolster support for the ultimate goal of equality for all people, and the need for feminists, leaders, and legislators to be intersectional in their approach to crafting public policy.

Every time Choate called on Kristen to address our community, she enthusiastically agreed. Every time she did, she spoke to integrity, responsibility, and the importance of being thoughtful contributors to society. Every time she did, she showed a willingness to see, hear, and consider all sides of an issue and prioritized fairness of approach. Every time she did, she inspired. Every time she did, she generated hope for the future.

Certainly, others are far more qualified to speak to Kristen's remarkable career achievements, but I hope that by sharing my experiences, I have been able to shed further light on her commitment to education and service in pursuit of justice and fairness.

Having the privilege to know Kristen Clarke and to witness her impact on hundreds of young adults from around the world, I strongly support her nomination to lead the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice, and I look forward to the opportunity to celebrate her confirmation – and this history-making appointment – with the Choate community...and with the nation.

With gratitude for your leadership, service, and consideration,



Alex Curtis
Head of School