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Audacia, saxa pyramidum

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CLOSING CEREMONY SPEECH, 1ST EDITION OF MASTER (JUNE 2012)

Academic Heads, Heads of administration, esteemed students of the Master, ladies and gentlemen.

The closing ceremony of the onsite element of the 1st edition of the Master in Animal Law and Society will go as followed:

I will firstly introduce today's guest speaker, Professor Steven Wise. Following his speech, we will pass over to student representatives of the Master: Alexandra Leitold and Juan Ignacio Serra,[1] and to a representative of the teachers, our colleague and close collaborator Dr Marta Tafalla. Finally, the session will be closed and everyone present will be invited to a small celebration.

It is an honour and a pleasure to welcome in our Law Faculty Professor Steven Wise. Professor Wise has already honoured us with his presence on two other occasions, which shows his intellectual generosity and commitment in support of this Master.

Any attempt to briefly cover the personality of Professor Wise would be futile; for this reason, I will highlight three aspects of his work that especially stand out:

- He is a brilliant writer, with books such as "Rattling the Cage" that have excelled in sales figures across the world;
- He is an excellent lawyer for the benefit of animals; through this he has gained a lot of experience in a field that is crucial for the development of Animal Law; the relationship with judges, and the study of the language of judges;
- He is a very valued Professor in the most important North American universities.

He was a pioneer in the teaching of Animal Law at Harvard University in 1991. Since then, he has worked tirelessly for animals, giving everything he has for them and assuring us that, as many of us have been able to learn, the best favour that can be done for animals these days is training ourselves and working professionally for them.

Thank you Steve, for your enthusiasm for the work that this Master has taken on!

CLOSING WORDS

It is now my turn to bring this ceremony to an end, and I would not let this opportunity slip to express my gratitude, especially for all those who have made this possible, the students and the professors, in that order. Everyone has given the best of themselves, and has tried to recreate the environment, typical of the university, which is to promote among one another a "superior form of learned cohabitation" (using the words of my mentor). We have discussed, we have questioned, we have opened doors to new interests, we have lived together and we have been refining these artists that occasionally flourish in groups with a passionate interest for something within a pleasant, open and tolerant

environment; which is to say, the environment in which we find ourselves. I would also like to mention those who are not here but have made everything possible. Among them, I would especially like to mention Carlos Contreras, our Student Coordinator. He deserves our admiration for this intelligence, his quiet and effective work, and for never being without a smile. Additionally, to all the personnel of the Postgraduate School, as well as of our Faculty, who have unreservedly been there for us the whole way; especially Teresa Armengol and Annamaria García, of the EP, and Lluïsa Romero and Gercasio García, from our Department.

A Master like this is a combination of individual pieces that make up the whole. We are here today because of this will to construct. When I started going around in circles with ideas on how to start, a fragment of text from Horacio came to mind, and it continues to inspire me now: “*audacia, saxa pyramidum*”. That is to say, audacity is the stone of which the pyramids are built.

I leave you with this reflection, because this is our achievement: that everyone here has had the audacity to believe and put their faith in this idea, on this Master. Thank you, with all my heart!

THE EDITOR

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[1] [Juan Ignacio Serra's Speech](#)