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Class of 1960 Fifteen Year Report Alumni Comments

University of Michigan Law School

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Class of 1960 - Comments:

XVIIC - Omits any mention of musical activities - Are these considered worthless endeavors, indicative of nothing good?

VIII A - It is not clear whether I fit better under category #2 or #6. I probably hold my present job because of my law degree, but it is not an absolute requirement. Similar jobs are held by non-lawyers, but they do not function in exactly the same manner.

IX B - I work for a bank employing 1,100 people in a trust department employing 120 people. Which answer do you prefer?

I am not sure why I went to Law School, I didn't like it much while I was there & didn't do very well but I am terribly glad that I went and made it through...increasingly glad as the year go by.

I felt when I went through Law School that the studies bore little relationship to legal practice other than firm corporation orientation. Nor did I feel there was awareness, or at least little effort, by the school to make students aware of the critical responsibilities of the legal community toward the general community. Hopefully, This modality has changed in recent past. If not, it must.

I can't answer F-2 - Michigan is fine; I'd rather see him or her at Harvard or Yale--if he/she wished. I had reasons for choosing Michigan and turning down Harvard (it was easier on the GI Bill) but perhaps those reasons won't apply to him/her.

(1) The instruction, i.e. the teaching, I received in law school was in general poor. Brilliant academic lawyers do not necessarily make good teachers. In "my law school" faculty members would be required to sharpen and then practice teaching skills. Too many of my instructors at law school were boring. There is no reason for that.

(2) 15 years later I question the almost total reliance on the case method. Perhaps it has been modified in the interim; if not, it should be. Some courses could be better taught via a textbook. As a supplement, a specific course on "appellate law and the technique of reading and understanding appellate decisions" in the first year might be helpful.

(1) Why didn't you ask "which teachers didn't contribute...?"

(2) There are many courses which I now wish I could have taken - but I didn't due to a lack of time. Perhaps law school should be a four year program.

Frankly I thought legal at education at Michigan was one of the most uninteresting experiences one could endure. While the law, as I practice it anyway, has many satisfactions, moral as well as mental, the curriculum when I attended law school was morally neutral and I think that accounts for the boredom it induced. It is pure accident the Watergate felons didn't come from the Quad, because the setting was ideal. Surely legal principles are not devoid of moral content! The best thing that has happened to me was opening my own office. My success, I feel, is quite unrelated to the legal education I received at the Univ. of Michigan.

The opportunities seem to be decreasing in my field.

I was accepted at U-M Law School despite some fairly dismal grades in high school and junior college, apparently because of several factors--ie..
1. Much better grades in later undergraduate years, 2. Maturity, with 4 1/2 years of service behind me ~~ff~~ and a wife and daughter, 3. Decent law school admission test score. So many schools put overall grades and test scores into a computer and never look at an applicant subjectively. I hope you are still doing this, and I am happy to show you by this questionnaire that you were justified in giving me the opportunity to become a lawyer. I believe it is the finest way to make a living, and I have never really disliked a day spent in practice.

I would hope that the child would study law, but only if the child at the time of entering law school has a strong desire to be a lawyer. Absent such motivation, there are more beneficial uses of the time and money. I would recommend to my child that he or she go to a law school having faculty and facilities of high quality, and, if possible, a program to counsel students periodically on an individual basis, especially during the first year. It is easy for a law student to feel "lost," to work hard, but never really understand what he or she should be attempting to accomplish while in law school. The University of Michigan Law School certainly has the faculty and facilities. If you also have a counseling program similar to that which I have described, I would certainly recommend that the child attend U. of M.

The most valuable aspect of law school training was development of thought process. I feel, however, that absence of "practice" training impedes development of lawyers. Clients have a right to expect that graduate lawyers are better trained than they are in fact. The law school did not adequately prepare students in area of ethics (legal) and duties and obligations of lawyers to public. There should, in my opinion, be formal courses for credit which are required for graduation in these areas.

Inadequate attention to practical aspects.
Inadequate dialog between professors and students.

I have been concerned about an alleged change in the Law School admission policy which severely curtails the admission of non-Michigan residents. I believe this impression should be publicly affirmed or denied as it affects contributions and continued loyalty or identification by non-Michigan residents who are graduates of the Law School.

I hate questionnaires. But hope this helps you out.

I believe that the large numbers of lawyers being graduated will result in lowered professional standards, increased competition for business, lowered income and general derogation of professional status. With respect to U. of M. Law School, I feel indebted to the school, its faculty and the taxpayers of Michigan for my professional education. I disagree with school admission policies particularly formal or informal racial quotas. (cont)

(cont from prev page)

If any of my children, disregarding my opinions, choose to apply to law schools for admission, I would urge attendance at Harvard, Columbia, Yale or Michigan, in that order.

Thank you for a wonderful education & memorable experience.

The honest practice of law is, without doubt, a jealous mistress allowing too little time for other interests.

Some practical experience i.e. making deeds, wills, filing suits would have been good.

Considered U of M curriculum deficient in corporate and commercial law at the time. Don't know enough about present curricula to comment otherwise.)

When I attended law school Michigan was extremely weak in the area of the financing of business enterprises through the sale of securities, borrowing publically or privately, and in all other ways. I believe courses in the area of fund raising for business ventures, including corporate, federal and state legal restrictions would be helpful.

I would be pleased if any of my three daughters became interested in the legal profession, although I would not seek to influence any career decision for my children. I do have one very substantial practical reservation about the future of the legal profession, and that is based on my belief that the profession will suffer from a substantial manpower oversupply in coming years. It is my present perception that there is a supply-demand imbalance which I believe will become far worse if law school enrollments are not curtailed. In my work I am coming in increasing contact with recent and prospective law school graduates who are unable to find satisfactory positions as lawyers.

I don't think we received enough exposure to the practical side of the practice of law although I believe the situation is different. Also there was insufficient discussion of ethics.

I am continually amazed at the high quality of education at Michigan Law School of which I benefitted. I did not appreciate that high quality until I started practice, when it became apparent that few of those I competed with or attorneys that I met, were imbued with the same ;knowledge, attitude & competence, as graduates of Michigan.

My legal education has been an invaluable experience in my life. I feel that I received an outstanding legal education at the U. of M. Law School which is the equal of that offered at any other school. It has given me an opportunity to pursue an interesting and rewarding career.

My three years at the Michigan Law School were the most valuable of my life!!

1. I have had contacts with lawyers from many law schools around the country. I have felt that my legal education equalled or surpassed that of any other lawyer I have met.
2. I was a mediocre law student, but an excellent lawyer. I seriously question whether success in Law School is correlated with ability in actual practice. That is, the grading process leaves much to be desired.

XVIII F-I would hope my child would study law if (and only if) he or she had a sincere interest and desire to do so, and not simply because "Daddy was a lawyer." If, however, that was my child's desire, I would hope, but not insist, that he or she would want to study at U. of M., and would qualify to do so.

My most naggy regret with regard to law school is a failure to take courses offered in AntiTrust and Patent. I had no idea antitrust law reached as much of general practice as it does. It should be required.

My legal training seems superior to my peers, most of which is gained at night in Washington D.C.

Teachers who contributed most were ones who gave practical business approach to problems as well as legal analysis. This was somewhat rare.

For all our sakes, REQUIRE:

1. Legislation (how to read, write, interpret statutes)
2. Administrative Law (philosophy, practice, judicial review)
3. Legal Research, research, research, organized and unorganized.

The consistently weakest area identified among recent law graduates whom we have hired is the inability to analyze a legal problem on an orderly basis and express it in writing. The tendency is to avoid any type of logical analysis and merely to seek "an answer" to "the problem." The quality of written work among law graduates seems to be deteriorating and I can't help but think that this is due in large part to the lack of emphasis in law school on developing work-habits based on in-depth analysis of legal problems and the orderly presentation of the analysis.

Question Sub-F is interesting. I do not believe I could be admitted to U of M Law today. Barely made it through and found it horribly boring except for a few areas where individual professors aroused me. However, I have enjoyed substantial success as a practitioner. I am considered an extremely able attorney. My case involvements are generally with very vital matters. There is high regard for my skill at Appellate Advocacy. I still don't love being an attorney. I would hope my children would do what they loved to do and be honest about it. Still, the money is very good but that's only a partial balm.

Paranetically, aren't the admissions chasing people like me away in favor of superior academic people? What's the effect of this on the availability of an attorney to serve in smaller areas - I don't know. Finally - the U of M degree is regarded very highly - next to my Brown degree and with it, many doors opened and open which might not have. A few thoughts of a fool addressing wise men.

My reaction to UM Law School is one of distinct gratitude. My practice is in a large metropolitan Community and brings me into daily contact with lawyers educated in the other major law schools. While it is difficult to identify any one element from my legal education as supportive of this conclusion, I have the distinct impression that the industry and humility before the law I learned in Ann Arbor has produced an approach to legal problems not imparted by the other major schools. I frankly give UM Law School credit for much of what modest achievements I have attained professionally.

The drudgery of Law School study (or my great difficulty with it at the time) has made me studiously avoid any further formalized law courses!

I would be delighted to have my eldest son (junior Phi Beta Kappa at Amherst this year) go to U of M Law School.

I am not convinced that public service in a non-political capacity is the most effective way to make a contribution to society. If I had the opportunity I would go into private practice in a medium sized community with the objective of establishing a basis for seeking elective office.

I sincerely believe that our society is becoming super saturated with lawyers. In California, particularly, there exists numerous "law schools" that do not have the financial backing, faculty excellence and student quality that is true at Michigan. As a result many individuals are receiving law degrees, and the corresponding right to take state bar exams, that do not measure up to the professional standards of our profession. This opinion is not merely that of one that is now on the "inside" - but is based on my concern that the public image of lawyers is declining because of an overabundance.

***. If a child of mine decided to attend law school, U/M would have my unequivocal highest recommendation.

Re last question - If he or she had the desire and ability, yes - and U. of M. is the best.

Perhaps because there are no lawyers in my background, I went into law school with very little perspective concerning what the practice of law was really like. I do not feel that law school brought me any closer to reality. In fact, I think it worsened my perspective. Law school stresses academic and theoretical performance across a broad range of subjects. My experience since indicates that lawyers do not operate this way. Instead, most know the practical, nitty-gritty details of a relatively limited number of subjects and are quick to admit they have forgotten most of what they once learned in other areas. I would prefer to have law school give a more complete grounding in a narrower range of subjects.

Presently employed as Corporate Secretary of several wholly owned foreign subsidiaries of a major U.S. corporation. Prior experience and future opportunities rest in the parent company's law department.

I do not really fit in your scheme. Approximately 50% of income derived from law. Used other answers because my trend is towards business interests as opposed to law.

After 15 years, I can see no aspect of my law school experience that I would prefer to have been any different than it was.

I feel that the law school provided me with an outstanding education for which I am deeply grateful and for which I will be indebted probably beyond my capacity to repay.

I think the most meaningful courses taught in law school were by Professors Wright and Smith because of their detailed analysis of the legal situation, and context in which problems arise. I found that many times I sit back and review as to their analysis of the situation to see how I should analyze particular problems.

1. The competitive educational standards and enormous financial burdens will probably preclude most if not all of my children from ever attending the U. of M. 2. This entire questionnaire is directed at non-judicial oriented response. Too little attention is paid to the development of capable young lawyers for judicial careers.

XVIII F I have answered as I have (both no) since it asks me to have foolishly narrow hopes for my children. I would tell my children or anyone else of Law School age that there is no better post-graduate education than a good law school and no finer Law School than the Univ. of Michigan Law School.

In the teaching of law, in my opinion, the Socratic Method is over-emphasized, especially after the first semester. Not enough attention is focused on law as it relates to problems of society. More attention should be directed toward how law may be used as a vehicle for improved social change and protection of individual and minority rights rather than protection of the status-quo.

I shall always be grateful to the University and to my father for endowing me with a superior legal education.

Law schools need to present some guidance in practical matters, such as dealing with insurance adjustors, office interviews with clients, the settling of lawsuits, etc.

The law education I received at Michigan has proven to be very satisfactory. I believe grades should be eliminated, either "Pass" or "Fail" and nothing else.

Do not believe Law School courses after first year have any particular significance.

Class of 1960

XVIII A. Postgrad Info. Most meaningful contrib.

Confidence in my grasp of legal knowledge & ability to see legal issues.

Tough to be precise - probably the general competence of my classmates which lead to thorough analysis in discussion. The mind retains this habit - also, the intense work in seminars which set a pattern for me.

The pressure of polyphasic tensions, and the development of a distinctly professional approach to legal problems.

Torts, Con Law, Conflicts.

Generally, exposure to the rational, systematic pursuit of excellence by examination of different views in the context of evolving precedent. Specifically, the contracts course and L. Hart Wright's courses.

The mode of thinking.

Two reasons, generally: 1. Very good broad based academic courses & method; 2. Legal research & methods taught during law school.

Because of continually expanding Federal, State and local governments with increasing budgets, all areas of domestic and foreign Federal income, estate and gift taxes for corporations, partnerships and other business entities, individuals, trusts and estates should be stressed. A survey course should also be included on state and local taxes.

Taxation

Legal writing, case analysis.

The constant striving for excellence. The competition and interaction.

Factual analysis.

Excellent, rigorous discipline & training in legal analysis.

Quality of instruction.

Problem analysis - Case study work. Decision style.

Development of analytic capability to identify issues/in a given situation and reach decisions.

Contracts, torts, procedure.

Sensitization to problem dimensions, ambiguities and policy issues; law as an evolutionary social phenomenon; emphasis on product excellence.

Everything I learned in law school.

Sound, well-balanced curriculum, with excellent professors, teaching fundamentals in law.

XVIII A. Postgrad Info. Most meaningful contrib.

The general legal background.

The Socratic method in class, as well as all other devices which taught me how to analyze a problem.

Analysis of problems & analytical reasoning; thorough grounding in basic legal principles in standard courses.

Training to be analytical, see all sides of an issue, marshal persuasive arguments for a point of view.

Contracts, Anti-trust, Property Law, Unfair Trade Practices.

Legal analysis & Trial Practice

Ability to analyze problems presented ~~of~~ as to issues & alternatives. Also habits of high quality, thorough work.

Ability to analyze & use legal materials as an advocate.

Evidence & Torts. Courses.

All of my courses. Moot Court has also proven helpful.

Basic legal concepts & analysis.

Taxation courses offered by Prof. Wright & Real Property course taught by Prof. A. F. Smith.

Most of it.

The general high standards & exemplification of quality practice.

Social awareness, research ability.

I cannot meaningfully single out single elements of the educational experience without giving undue emphasis to those elements.

The ability to Socratically think out solutions to problems, organize work.

Discipline of rational thought, legal analysis.

General approach to legal analysis.

The ability to research.

Taxation courses; Estate Planning.

Real Estate, Contracts.

Trial Practice courses (including Moot Appellate Court) & Evidence.

Antitrust. Taxation

XVIII A. Postgrad Info. Most meaningful contrib.

Analytical approach to problems.

Good basic theory.

Emphasis on theory & fundamentals.

Real property & contracts.

Taught me to read & analyze legal problems; to "separate the wheat from the chaff;" & how to look for the applicable legal rules to apply to the "facts!" Wright in Taxation - taught how to read The Code. Harvey in Contracts - taught how to analyze.

Real Property, Taxation, Estate Planning.

Trial practice course & seminar.

The emphasis upon basic principles of law and keeping things in proper perspective.

Ability to analyze issues.

Basic training in research and legal analysis (or, manner of thinking)

Tax courses and Estate Planning.

Disciplined study - necessity of concentrating.

The first year to year and one-half where the emphasis was on methods of analyzing legal problems.

An understanding that a rational approach to any legal problem (other than taxes) should provide a guideline to the answer, "What is fair?"

The ability to be capable of analyzing a problem, or set of facts, and arriving at the pivotal or crucial question.

The ability to analyze problems and apply policy considerations to their resolution.

Logical analysis of problem situations and application of concepts to problem solution.

Analytical ability.

The ability to recognize & analyze a given legal problem.

Excellent legal training, basic legal concepts, thoroughness. Relationship with excellent student body.

Writing training - Law Review.

Discipline in problem analysis, application of legal rules, & problem solving developed through Case Method & Socratic approach of professors.

XVIII A. Postgrad Info. Most meaningful contrib.

A practical course in "Conveyancing" which I audited.

The high standard of all courses.

Tax

The discipline of approaching, evaluating and solving problems.

Socratic teaching, and Case method.

With very few exceptions, all teachers, by conducting demanding courses, contributed to development of precision, thoroughness and speed, while also providing a basic background knowledge.

Logical thought process developed & refined by the Case Review method.

Ability to organize thoughts.

Chief contribution was in terms of legal method. A major contributing factor was the Law Review.

Real Property.

General study for all courses. Case Club work.

Broad legal background.

Thinking & writing.

No single area in particular--I feel I received a superior legal education in all respects.

/The degree.

Evidence, contracts.

Courses: Contracts, Antitrust, Unfair Trade. Technique: Emphasis on in-depth analysis.

Possibly reading comprehension & reasoning development.

Analysis of a legal question - specific framing of issues.

Case method and when effectively done Socratic dialogue aided development of necessary analytical technique; but there is need for increased research & writing under other than examination conditions.

Insistence of instructors on thoroughness in analyzing all facets of problems.

Commercial law courses.

Legal analysis - analytic skills developed in basic legal courses.

XVIII. A. Postgrad Info. Most meaningful contrib.

Analytical training, policy approach to law, law review experience, high standards of excellence.

Over-all training in in-depth legal analysis.

General background in basic course and Law Review experience.

I can't tell anymore - I suppose the fact of survival on a fast track.

The key is ability to see issues and apply law to given facts. I thought this was accomplished by U of M law professors most admirably, and the ones who didn't make it thru Law School couldn't do that.

Contracts

Legal "thought process"

Applying case law to the client's circumstances.

Evidence, contracts, anti-trust.

Conflicts, future interests, working for Paul Kauper.

Commercial-corporate-SEC

Logical, analytical thought processes.

The seminars in international law and trade I took during my last year plus the ability to seek the key elements in a complex situation which is drummed in in legal training.

All of it.

Law Review.

Exposure to excellent faculty and fellow students.

Atmosphere of living in law complex while attending Law School.

Developing ability to analyze as a lawyer; legal writing.

Case system analysis - plus core of basic subjects.

No specific training other than the high quality of the teaching.

Ability to "think like a lawyer," i.e. recognize and articulate issues.

Real Property, Contracts, Personal Property, Bills & Notes.

Real Property courses.

No specific subject - Ability to understand what I read and work through tough subjects.

Class of '60 -

XVIII. Postgraduate Information A. What of Law School training contributing most meaningfully to present job ability?

Law school gave little relationship to necessary practical ability.

Ability to analyze legal problems.

Study of Wills, Trusts & Estates; Fiduciary Administration; Real & Personal Property; Taxation.

The discipline of hard work and diligent preparation.

The mental organization and discipline needed to successfully complete a law curriculum.

Legal analysis, writing, research techniques.

Basic first year courses.

Employment as research assistant.

Analytical ability, ability to weigh evidence.

Evidence, Procedure

Writing skills; ability to stay awake in boring meetings.

Real property, taxation.

Analytical thinking and the ability to make analogies.

Criminal law esp. from Prof. Profitt, Bishop & George.

Tax courses:-

I am a trial lawyer. The evidence course from John kReed is #1; Torts #2. My "Trial Practice" course from C. Joiner was worthless. "Legal Research and Writing" the 2nd year of law school was helpful later on in practice. ~~/////~~ Edward Stein's current trial practice course is excellent. I have appeared a number of times as speaker or judge and I am very impressed with Mr. Stein's approach.

Constitutional Law, Criminal Law, Torts, Evidence, Civil & Criminal Procedure, Trials, Moot Court.

Labor Relations & Administrative Law.

The training received from the better Law School teachers.

Patent law, sales, business law.

Development of care and thoroughness in research, reading, thinking & writing

Analysis of issues.