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Class of 1961 Fifteen Year Report Alumni Comments

University of Michigan Law School

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I feel Law is becoming less attractive as a means of making a living when compared to medicine due to recent trends which I feel are downgrading the legal profession.

I am proud to be a graduate of the University of Michigan Law School. My father, grandfather and now my wife are lawyers. Hopefully, my children will follow in our footsteps, and I hope that some or all are able to attend the U of M Law School.

I feel, however, that more emphasis ought to be placed upon the more practical aspects of the general practice of law by our law schools. Indeed, much of my required law training has been long forgotten and of little use in the private practice. More emphasis should be placed on client handling, professional responsibility, and on the old rules of fact gathering for later courtroom use.

Re XVI: As stated, your inquiry elicits something in the nature of "fine tuning." I think a more fundamental change would be very useful. If a year were provided between the second and third years of law school during which degree candidates would be required to work in law related fields (similar to the medical internship) followed then by the third year of academic training, the final academic year when elective specialty courses are typically taken, would be substantially more beneficial. The degree candidate would have a much better idea of the specialty fields which interested him and therefore would place his academic emphasis more intelligently. In short, it would tend to relate the law school experience more closely to the life which is to follow.

Perhaps a more practical alternative might be to make "post graduate" courses available to graduates for a period of years after they leave the school.

I believe I have had as fine a legal education as anyone I have had contact with. I think this is due to the fact that: (1) I was blessed with outstanding instructors in most of my courses, and (2) I was required to take a large number of basic legal courses with many credit hours such as Contracts, Property, Trusts, Torts, Evidence, Creditors Rights, Business Associations, Criminal Law, Const. Law, Securities, Taxation, etc.

Through the years, I have become increasingly concerned about the lack of sufficient training of young associates in these fundamental course areas. We are now getting associates with only 2 or 3 hours in Contracts and Property, none in Creditors Rights (inc. Bankruptcy), Trusts, Criminal Law or Evidence, and many hours in such things as Environmental Law, Civil Rights, Trial Practicé, and so-called "bread and butter" training and intern courses. They are intellectual cripples who have great difficulty handling great legal issues. I think there should be a return of emphasis to fundamental law.

The Law is a jealous mistress.

Great education even though I never wanted to practice law. Would do it again. Am deeply indebted to U of M Law School.

The one suggestion I have for the improvement of the Law School would be to, somehow, increase the personal contact between the professors and the students. Although there was an adviser system when I was in school, it did not work effectively, in my judgment. I feel that some sort of program where a student could lunch with his adviser, or for some personal contact, would be most helpful in establishing the confidence that sometimes is lacking in Law School graduates.

Proud to have attended U of M and particularly U of M law school. One can get as much out of U of M as the effort and time one puts into the job, unlike other schools. I feel I did not take ~~advantage~~ as much time or use as much effort as I should have. Married, year-old daughter, full-time job, out of school from 2/55 to 9/58. All of these things militated against the fulltime involvement necessary to get the most out of a fine school such as U of M.

With respect to Item 16, I have no opinion as to the need for an increase in course offerings with respect to any particular area and, thus, I have made no choices.

Insofar as a decrease is concerned, I would like to use all three of my choices to de-emphasize real property. In retrospect, I consider the eight semester hours that I spent studying that subject to be a tragic misuse of human resources.

I would hasten to add that the intellectual exercise offered by the course in Intellectual Interests was one of the most interesting and, I think, beneficial activities that I engaged in in law school.

Classes were too large when I was at the Law School. Too many lecture situations--not enough personal contact with professors. I benefitted greatly by being exposed to the extra-curricular activities offered by the University (Choral Society, plays, etc.) and by the diversity of the Law School student body. I met my wife (an undergraduate) at Michigan for which I will be forever grateful to the Law School and the State of Michigan.

More emphasis on the theory and philosophy of law. More experience in problem solving. We can show the students where the court house is and how to fill in the forms but we can't teach them to think critically if they haven't learned it in undergraduate and law school.

Law school was a drag for me. I went year-round and was bored to death. After 15 years of practice, however, I appreciate U of M's approach to the law as being a useful blend of practical and philosophical. I feel this has given me a certain edge over the average practitioners with whom we normally deal.

When is Blue going to beat Ohio State?

I well appreciate the excellent training I received at the law school. I hope that the standards never let up.

I enjoyed and value my education at U of M and enjoy the practice of law, but my hopes for my children do not narrow *them down* to a particular field or particular school.

✓ The only part of the law that interested me was the philosophy of law & laws, & the development of one's problem solving skills.

✓ A Michigan Law School Education is a step up for any lawyer -- The public and the profession respect our graduates.

✓ The limited Patent Law courses offered did not train me for patent work, primarily because not enough time was devoted to the subject. This means that, as of 1961, the traditional Patent Examiner--i.e. law school grad-- has a better initial grounding as a fledgling patent lawyer. The value of a Michigan L. S. education is somewhat diluted in the Patent practice.

✓ If some kind of summary or analysis of responses is prepared, I'd like very much to see it. Does the law school presently offer a course in securities regulation? If not, it should. And it should be offered by someone with acknowledged expertise in the field.

✓ My impression from interviewing is that calibre of students has deteriorated.

✓ Many, but I'll hope is getting more practical w/o losing academic quality. Perhaps bright professors who 1) have really practiced law 2) can teach law (not just be "brilliant") 3) want to teach (not "have to teach" & "suffer" with students).

1) To judge a person's potential by his earnings assumes that the amount of money he receives is the value to his family and community. While question XVIIIID briefly inquires as to contributions for civic activities, I hope your conclusions are not so slanted that the individual contribution or achievement or "success" is basically determined by the amount of money he's earned.

2) Inquiring about changes in curriculum almost prompted me to check professional responsibility but I understand some course is now required along these lines - if not it should be, while an ethical sense of responsibility cannot be taught after a person reaches 21, it can be directed and intensified if they person has the basic character and sense of service upon his admission to school. Unfortunately, no LSAT score will indicate the person's character or sense of service and can only be evaluated by personal interviews and examination of past activities.

✓ Questionnaire difficult for career Army lawyer. Difficult to remember what subject area coverage should be increased/decreased. Had the question been asked - what subjects in undergraduate training would you recommend - I would have stressed economics and literature.

✓ Hire real lawyers to teach; stop paying attention to the kind of phony grade competition; Law School isn't education, it's a trade school but certainly it can be an experience which is imaginatively presented.

✓ With few exceptions my law school teachers were totally lacking in teaching talent or skills. Their principal qualification was that they had high grades in law school. Few ever saw the ;inside of a courtroom, police station or prison. Most could have cared less.

Happily, I hear things are changing.

I feel that I received an excellent legal education at Michigan. (My answers herein are based on my experience from 1958-1961.) I hope there has been and will be no significant departure from the philosophy of legal education as it then existed.

I look back with gratitude on my Law School education. By concentrating on the Legal Casebook Method however boring and taxing I think the law school does a service and gives long lasting benefit to the student. Laws and conditions change, practices vary so fast that it is impossible and foolhardy to attempt to teach the student a body of law. The legal thought process and a few legal concepts gained through the casebook method stay with the student throughout his life and give him the essential tools to successfully practice law. They cannot and will not be learned later as can specific laws, practice techniques, etc.

None.

I have taken the N.Y. Bar exam about a year & 1/2 ago and it really was not very hard.

I, of course, did not pass, but this was due to failure to attend a cram course and lack of study.

My business ~~is~~ (Real Estate) is, at this point, totally demanding of my time--some day I would like to take bar again, object to pass.

Michigan was a wonderful educational and social experience. I am proud to have been a Law School graduate. ~~The University~~ The University atmosphere was great too. Difficult for me as a freshman - system unlike undergraduate school - but much more relaxed as a junior and senior. I thank the people of the State of Michigan for the Law School and the opportunity they give to out-of-state students. I could never have gone to an Eastern school because of finances.

Law School was a frustrating, unsatisfactory experience. It was merely a collection of widely varying courses - each taught as if they were a world of their own. With the possible exception of 2 or 3 courses, no effort was made to relate the law to some larger context. We were in school to make money - not to learn to perform some useful service of benefit to society (at least that's my impression of U of M Law School).

Furthermore, no effort was made to make contact with individual students. The faculty was as remote and inflexible as possible.

The University of Michigan Law School experience was the most meaningful in my life. I did not do well academically at the school. However, I received a fine legal education and learned for the first time to read well, think clearly and articulate my thoughts & feelings.

I use the principles & basic education I received there every day. The exposure to an excellent faculty and student body was broadening & enriching.

Out of 80 some lawyers in the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office, Michigan Law School graduates seem to have the best background knowledge of law. This is conceded by the non-Michigan grads, too.

I have entered the practice of law relatively late in life (qualified Jan. '75). U of M law training proved still fresh and sufficient enough to pass the bar 13 years after graduation.

I think my income and professional stature rank much higher than my law school class average, and I haven't yet figured out why. Perhaps it was because law school testing was an extremely abrupt change of pace. In retrospect Michigan was a wonderful and invaluable experience. Question XVfI was unanswerable with accuracy. Courses such as sales and workmen's comp are worthless but corporations and business organization should have been expanded. Legal ethics was woefully neglected. Michigan's physical plant, which brings students together, intellectually, for long periods, provides a superior three year construction period for a lawyer.

Considering: Big government and/or big unions providing more of legal services,
Automotive production eroding to other states and countries,
Gradually higher tax and welfare burden on Michigan practitioner,
Lack of meghanical ("How to do it" courses) and emphasis on theory,
The importance of learning where you intend to practice, and
The unpredictable economic, political, and environmental climate in Michigan,
I would suggest the medical field (where education is more flexible across political boundaries) and that other schools in better climates be considered.

Attendance at the U of M Law School was personally enjoyable experience, an excellent legal education, however, I personally feel the most beneficial aspect of the Law School was the stimulating intellectual environment provided by the exceptionally high quality of the student body. The most important thing is to maintain high admission standards to insure intellectual excellence within the student body.

To me, Law school conveyed little of the true intellectual excitement and none of the real feeling of helping people which one encounters in the practice of law. To put it another way, too much of the class work was a dry mental game with little or no emphasis on the real challenges and opportunities for service to people you find in the world of actual practice. While I well realize any school must - and should - emphasize theory I am sorry to say that most of the teachers at U of M were not lawyers. It was something like being taught surgery by a man who has never actually operated on a live human.

Further, there was virtually no mention made of the ethical problems common in the practice - again, I imagine, because most of the teachers lacked true, practical experience in day-to-day practice. Perhaps what I am trying to convey is that the practice of law is tough, hard work, but a grand way to make a living & serve people. Little of that kind of feeling ever got through to me in law school. And I think legal education is vastly poorer for this void.

Practicing law in the public sector for the City of Boston was the most interesting and enjoyable job to date. Court administration is more difficult and challenging, and law school education helps only as a reminder of the importance of improving how our courts function.

At the time I applied for admission to the University of Michigan, I had lived in 8 cities and towns in 3 states, was uncertain as to even the state where I might practice law in government or out. In those circumstances there was real value and merit in attending a "national" law school (e.g., the eastern group of Harvard, Yale, Columbia, or Michigan, Chicago or Stanford) where one might at least meet one's intellectual and professional peers and have the opportunity to learn the thinking and analytical tools and methods necessary -- and such remains true now for law school applicants. While I had no "legal clinic" experience at law school, I felt it best to learn from a master (now our senior partner --he's also a Michigan graduate-c. 1925 class) - now, of course, you offer such a program which should far better equip the graduating law student with the practical skills -- pleading and drafting, interviewing and counseling, practical experience in being a part of or managing a law office (clinic). Your primary value remains in training the mind--logically, competently, thoroughly.

U of M Law School is a great school. Keep up the good work. I'm grateful for the education I received there.

I take a great deal more pride in being a graduate of University of Michigan Law School than I do of my undergraduate school.

After practicing law for 14 years I am still impressed with the education that I received at U of M and would only urge that you include a clinic or course on the everyday practice of law. I understand you now have some involvement with legal aid and perhaps the students who participate in that program are getting a taste of the practical problems as opposed to purely academic problems.

I would urge the creation of some sort of internship program.

I have ducked ~~#XVI~~ in the conviction that different students have different needs. I never felt that I had exhausted the offerings in areas that interested me, but only that I lacked the time to try everything: my tray at the smorgasbord was too small. As to the areas that didn't interest me--they seemed to interest their share of students.

I believe the profession to be overcrowded, particularly among younger lawyers. If one of my children did choose to study law, I would certainly recommend Michigan.

Question XVIII B The best teachers at Michigan were as good as any in the country. On the other hand, the quality was too uneven, and the worst teachers at Michigan should not have been there (6-10 in my opinion.

An interesting questionnaire. I look forward to the report of the results.

As to F1 above - I wouldn't "urge"--but I wouldn't mind, either. The choice is the child's, not the parent's.

The earning power of our alumnae is, I am sure, a perfectly valid line of inquiry for a school in the process of continual self-examination. But why stop there? Surely the criteria by which lawyers are judged must contain non-secular elements. Law is not a profession as, say, engineering. Lawyers carry an obligation of trust bestowed by the community similar to that conferred on educators. If the legal profession is to carry out its ideals then what is needed most, and what is utterly lacking in this survey, is feedback from our alumnae as to whether our classroom studies adequately prepared us to recognize and deal with moral conflicts arising out of the practice of our profession. ¶ For my own part, I was fortunate to enter Michigan Law School with a well-developed set of values that were reinforced by several professors in particular -- Allen Smith, William Harvey, Paul Kauper and William Bishop. I hope that the values that these men have imparted to their teaching eventually will become indelibly stamped into the fabric of the Law School so that the community can point with pride to Michigan's role as the seedbed for leadership in the legal profession.

 The Law School very nearly refused to admit me because of my poor performance on the LS law school aptitude test. In fact, I was compelled to enter during the summer. I was not a good student particularly. If anything, I am a "late-blooming flower." I always felt the Law School placed too much emphasis on that test. I am curious to know the relationship between the test, performance in law school, and performance after graduation.

-----might
 Try as I might, I can think of no defects in the curriculum. The professors were the finest teachers I ever knew. The U of M law grads I know seem to lean towards litigation, and towards private practice. My impression is that they are as well prepared for the vigors of that pursuit as any other single group. Keep up the excellent reputation you have so well earned.

 Michigan is a great law school -- The faculty was not only brilliant but could teach -- and make it interesting. And the help with the loans made the difference in completing school. :-

 We have five children. All are excellent students with excellent marks and rather good academic accomplishments. The older two are at MSU at present and not headed toward law careers. That's fine and there has been no push and there will not be. The middle daughter looks like law is her bag (she says) and we will encourage that. Jury still out on the younter two.

(Response to XVIII F.)

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1. I suggest the Law School work more closely with the Paton Accounting Center Grad School of Business.
 2. The interdisciplinary approach of the University of Chicago should be carefully studied. In 1962 - it was an exceptional program.
 2. The rigor and discipline of legal education at Michigan is of real benefit to me in a closely related occupation at which I am competent and effective presently.
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Class of 1961

XVIII. Postgraduate Information

A. What of your Law School training is contributing most meaningfully to your present job ability?

Ability to reason

The Basic Legal Training I received.

Case method.

The high quality of the faculty & student body which made for a great intellectual atmosphere. Very strong 1st year basics.

The ability to organize, research and interpret complicated areas of the law.

Procedure & pleading classes - Domestic Relations classes.

Analytical ability; understanding of the role of law in society.

The 3 major aspects of my present job ability consist of knowledge, experience & judgement. As for knowledge, law school training gives you the ability to recognize a problem and either the answer to it or the skills to obtain the answer. Experience is only gained in practice and judgement, although influenced by 1 & 2, is substantially inherent in the individual.

Any and all work that involved research and writing.

Ability to write and communicate.

Problem analysis.

Contracts; property; evidence.

Training in Socratic method.

No one thing in particular as most procedural and substantive law has changed substantially since 1961. However I feel I had excellent academic training which gave me an overall feeling of confidence and competence.

Trials, appeals & Practice Court.

Tax courses & Contracts.

~~Wide~~ Broad training - analytical ability - ability to deal with broad policy issues.

Legal Writing; Torts; Practice & Procedure; Evidence.

General understanding of the law; Law Review work; antitrust law courses; Patent Law course.

Trial practice course. Property Course because of approach to material. Evidence because of approach to material.

~~Ability to think critically and to attempt to view all aspects of a~~

Ability to think critically and to attempt to view all aspects of a factual situation.

General knowledge of potential legal issues, drafting exercises.

Having been taught to reason from A to B without going by way of Z.

The professor who told me that "the greatest single phrase in Anglo-Saxon law is 'Give me the money - now!'"

Jurisprudence course; contracts course; creditors rights course; Law Review; antitrust course, in that order.

Training in analysis of fact situations and application of legal principles.

Fundamental Law School courses.

All of it.

Training - long hours.

Contracts; business associations.

Analyzing for facts. Problem solving. Great education.

Analysis and discipline in study.

Criminal law courses.

Courses designed by prof. to make students think out problems are the most valuable (i.e. Contracts by Prof. Harris and Conflicts by Prof. Bishop)

Academic demands:-

Process of analysis.

The ability to conceptualize legal problems and to attempt their resolution, i.e., "thinking like a lawyer"

Socratic method has helped analysis. General info on law (especially Estate Planning areas) has helped.

Case method; Legal writing (learned more in case club than in class!); Contracts; Corporate law; Accounting.

Seminars and classes in which - by design or accident - the groups were too small for individuals to hide.

Virtually impossible to say. General excellence of faculty, I would say.

Overall emphasis on excellence in profession.

Contracts and Property courses because of basic principles involved which are relevant in most legal problems. -----

Research Assistant to late Prof. Paul Kauper. Legal writing.

Antitrust law, seminar on Evidence/ Civil Practice.

Analytic ability.

Legal method - approach to legal problems (should have been stressed more)

Hard work - no specific course.

Analytical and research skills.

Critical analysis and writing and speaking ability.

The ability to think and reason within the framework of the legal system.

The ability to analyze factual situations in order to understand the problems and recognize the legal and factual issues.

1. Ability to interpret & analyze case law & statutes . 2. Reason rather than memorize. 3. Philosophical approach to law & legal problems. 4. Ability to sort out relevant issues.

Difficult to say, most criminal law and other now used - has been learned through experience, enhanced by law school background.

Analysis and recognition of legal problems.

Case method of teaching.

The thought processes we employed in the first and second year courses especially the care and reasoning requirements imposed on us. Law school should not be a trade or vocational school.

Courses in evidence, Trials & Appeals.

Analytic skill.

Legal writing & analysis.

Conceptual and factual analysis.

Legal writing, legal discipline and analysis.

Torts, Tax, Evidence, Pleadings & Practice, Trials, Case Club.

Contracts, Const. Law

I believe the basic academic foundation is making the most meaningful contribution.

Courses in Taxation & Estate Planning.

Stress on critical evaluation of Case law and need to both analyze and synthesize to come to solution of problems.

Training in analyzing problems with many legal issues, so as to be able to sort out and handle each issue and interrelate them.

Identifying key issues and organizing available options.

All of it.

I don't single out any one thing - I feel I got a good, well rounded legal education.---

Imaginative thinking to resolve legal issues by analysis of case decisions and alternative reasoning and results.

Ability to reason in legal context, knowledge of legal system.

I do not believe I can single out any one aspect of my training. I believe the entire program contributed to my present job ability.

Nothing in particular.

Estate planning and tax courses and property course.

Ability to reason analytically.

Demanding work standards of teachers.

Socratic teaching method, especially in first year classes; law review writing assignments in second year.

Evidence, Trials & Appeals.

Student - teacher dialog; ability to analyze problems.

Legal writing.

Corporation, Tax, & Trusts & Estates courses.

Training in problem solving.

"Grace under fire."

Moot Court Campbell Competition.

Legal analysis learned through the case method.

§ Constitutional Law.

Trial courses (Trials & Appeals, Evidence, Jurisdiction & Joinder, Admiralty, etc.d)

Ability to solve problems and relate financial problems to legal ones.

Legal writing; estate planning; analysis.

Capacity to analyze.

Thought process--reasoning.

Little.

Training in negligence law - in addition requirement of developing a questioning attitude - requirement that individuals think and write clearly and concisely.

The soundness of the education program with its exposure to many basic fields.

Basic courses in Contracts, Torts, Criminal Law, & Property. Legal Writing course most helpful.

Nothing specific - generally, the ability to analyze methodically.

Use of the Socratic and case law approach to legal education to teach proper legal analysis.

The high quality of the legal education.

Solid grounding in all basic courses / the experience of being pushed hard to achieve under pressure / some assistance in development of common sense and exercise of own independent judgment.

All courses - believe strongly in the value of the Case Method - thought process not legal facts is important.

Organization and analysis of problems and research training - rather general - I have never felt the school gave more than skills as opposed to specific preparation for the rigors of practice.

Ability to analyze problems and situations and get to the core area of the problem.

Analytical problem solving.

The Law School in a very real way really taught me how to think.

Real Estate, Contracts, Moot Court, research practice.

My degree! Change in method of thought!

Generally solid foundation.

Training in mental agility and communication fostered by student-professor exchanges in class.

The method of researching & exposing a legal problem.

Reasoning, exposure to competitive students and outstanding professors.

General classroom method & intellectual stimulation.

Understanding of reasons for & history of a particular rule, rather than mere rote memory.

Approach to analyzing problems; inclination to articulation of arguments for the other side.

Contracts, legal writing, business organization.

Administrative Law; Evidence.

Analytic ability; writing ability.

Experience in legal analysis; oral communication.

Basic courses (contracts & property); Business associations; Trusts and Estates I & II; Estate Planning.

Evidence.

It sounds trite --but all of it; the disciplines; the ability to do research; the development of intellectual curiosity: not specific courses or materials.

Discipline and analysis involved in first year courses--not necessarily their subject matter.

The quality of teaching and legal thinking, or thought process, which was consistent at Michigan.

Ability to analyze.

Over arching professional responsibility to the law.

Real property, Contracts, T & E I and II.

Legal analysis, class work and written work.

Ability to seek out the "important" points of a problem and to quickly and effectively put together the facts and results leading to a solution.

A general answer: The imposed discipline of analysis. Find the issue--a daily exercise now--splendid training in this vital procedure.

The learning of legal principles by means of the case method; the analysis of a fact situation to determine the issues which control.

The discipline of analysis and problem solution.

Legal analysis and writing - the rest was a waste!

 Problems & Research - Legal Writing. General exposure to numerous areas of the law to an extent that allows one to "know where to go" to get the answer.

 Recognition of issues.

 Procedure; Evidence; Constitutional Law.

 First year curriculum.

 Legal analysis skills; Law Review.

 The fine intellection required, as well as the quality of student & association

 Almost none. College got me through law school.

 The excellence of instruction in nearly all courses, particularly the basic ones.

 Spencer Kimball's course in the Introduction to Law stands out as the singular outstanding course. The experimental procedure program is also considered a success. The Law Review was the outstanding extracurricular activity. Case Club also rates high.

 Tax courses.

 Legal Analysis and Research (Case Club was valuable).

 "Thinking like a lawyer"

 That which is taught in all courses and is the subject of none--how to attack a problem, think, analyze, solve and persuade of the validity of the solution.

 Analysis, work habits, interest in and enthusiasm for the study of law, understanding and compassion toward others.

 Professional Ethics; ability to learn new (to me) areas of practice derived from overall excellence demanded of student by professors.

 Estate planning seminar.

 Basic understanding of principle areas of law.

 Basic law courses, legal writing requirement although course name escapes me (latter should be strengthened)

 Good background--good faculty & student body.

 The ability to analyze problems and to manipulate statutory & case law.

XVIII A Postgrad Info

Great teachers and stimulating discussion and interaction of fellow students.

Tax I & II, Trusts & Estates II, Estate Planning.

Reading & analyzing cases.

Training in logical thinking, legal analysis of problems.

Law Review research, writing & editing. And the ability to think like a lawyer garnered from many (but not all) courses/professors.

Noth8ng specific.

Ability to think through a problem thoroughly.

^The excellent professors, the quality of competition, the stress on case analysis.

Classroom questioning.

Emphasis on identifying legal issues.

The personal example set by men like Sam Estep, Spencer Kimball (for whom I worked) & William Harvey.

Analytical training.

Ability to organize and find authority to help resolve legal issues; to use the authority as correctly as possible.

Not much. I miss Prof. Kauper's Con Law courses, from time to time--but in court administration law is often distant.

Contracts, Torts, Constitutional Law, Bus Assoc's, Bankruptcy, and the way of approaching problems, as used in law school.
