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Class of 1964 Fifteen Year Report Alumni Comments

University of Michigan Law School

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Comments - Class of 1964

✓ The field has challenges and there is much satisfaction in providing legitimate service. It is frustrating to be burdened by the demands of the practice and some clients, the increasing costs, resistance to fees and an increasing willingness of clients to question your integrity, your fees and the value of your services after they are rendered and before they are paid for.

✓ 1. I would choose U of M again. The most important asset is the first-rate faculty. 2. I would add a compulsory course in law office management as that has been my biggest single educational/practical gap.

✓ I look back on my law school education with a good deal of pride. It was difficult and painful, but worth it.

✓ I feel that my training 61-64 was as good or better than that offered at any other school, although quality of competition was clearly higher at several other schools. I suspect that the best disciplines I gained in law school came in law review and moot court work.

✓ I feel that the quality of instruction at the U of M Law School would be much improved if more of the instructors had much more training and actual experience in the practice of law. Much of what I learned in law school was of no value because it bore no close relationship to the realities of actual practice of law.

✓ The University of Michigan Law School made a major contribution to my life; it provided me with a first-rate legal education. I am proud to be numbered among its graduates.

✓ Because I left private practice to work for a public interest group after 7 years of practice and then started a small firm with a mixed public interest practice, I may not be very representative in terms of income levels.

✓ Presently work for Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, whose activities bear no relationship to any studies taken or could have been taken at U of M Law School, except Administrative Law. Administrative law course taken from Prof. Roger Crampton was very poor.

✓ I am in the process of phasing out of general practice and phasing into a business venture that I hope will become full time for me. I wonder if 15 years is the best time. It seems that around age 40 a number of people are making substantial changes. Mine started 4 years ago when I ~~was~~ resigned as partner (1 of about 12) of 30+ lawyer firm. Since then I have been trying to stay happy in practice of law-but found that my future lies out of practice. Maybe there should be a 15 yr. and a 25 yr. questionnaire....? One of the principal drives of most "young " lawyers is to make more money. I think that has an affect on how they act and react as lawyers to other lawyers--which is the most distastful part of the practice. My response to question XIX will be misleading. I have earned less in ~~the~~ last 4 yrs. than in preceeding 4 years. I am happier however!

My belief is that my law school education was an untimely experience. With a few exceptions, it was wasted by and upon me. I think I could gain as much today out of law school as I did 13-15 years ago, and would probably find it more useful in a sabbatical context.

It is my opinion--more strongly today than in law school,--that the case law study method is improperly used as a device to learn legal principles. Unfortunately the vast majority of law students seem to think of law practice only in terms of cases. We are beset by neophyte litigators and very few thinkers.

I think it is somewhat curious that you emphasize elected office and "civic" affairs in XVIII C & D, and inquire nothing concerning professional achievement or other involvements in service and charitable organizations.

I practice in a small suburb of Columbus, Ohio. Our county (Franklin) is flooded with lawyers - 3,000 lawyers for a population of 900,000. It is becoming increasingly difficult to make a decent living. Competition is cutthroat. Lots of newspaper ads offering discount prices for all common legal services.

The large law firms continue to prosper and always will. For those of us in the small firms, however, the future looks pretty bleak. I could not recommend that my kids choose law, although I love it myself. It (the practice) seems to be changing from a respected profession to a "beat the price" trade. Yet you people collectively keep turning out thousands of graduates each year for whom there are no jobs. The Columbus Bar Association conducted a survey of the income of Franklin County lawyers in 1978. The median income of those responding to the survey (60+% as I recall) was \$25,000. The guys who brew beer at the local Anheuser-Busch brewery earn that much under their labor contract.

I consider it a great privilege to have attended the law school and believe that I owe a debt to those who helped me become the trained lawyer that I am today.

Law School teachers who provided valuable experience but no contribution to knowledge: Sanford Kadish, Roger Cramton.

It was not clear to me what information was being requested by some questions on this form, such as XVIII E. Other questions (such as XII) do not have universal application. E.g., in many law firms antitrust counsel are trial lawyers, whereas in others, they counsel on antitrust matters but do not practice as litigators. The Questionnaire appears useful for the most part.

Re point "F" - 1. If the child wanted an absorbing, stimulating, insistently demanding & challenging way of life, yes. Otherwise, no. I'm not sure about my own children yet.

2. If, at the time, Mich is as good as when I was there, absolutely. We don't hire out of law school; so I have no personal experience. Those who do--or some of them--suggest there's been a decline relative to Harv., Yale, etc.

In connection with XVIII-F I would not mind if my children studied law and I would certainly have no objections to their going to the U. of M.

In connection with XVIII-F I would not mind if my children studied law and I would certainly have no objections to their going to the U. of Michigan law school if they chose law as a profession. "Hope" is too strong a word to use in the question.

I believe the traditional concept of practicing law is dying. Legislation, lengthy court dockets, legal clinics & other less identifiable factors are transforming the lawyer into a narrow specialist, & the practice into a production line. For these reasons I would not particularly encourage my children to become lawyers. However, the above comments are probably equally applicable to all other professions & aspects of society.

I appreciate the Socratic teaching approach more in retrospect than I did as a student. As a student I feel that after the initial first year jolt considerable time was wasted by the Socratic method. While a strict lecture format is not necessarily appropriate, neither is strict adherence to traditional law school teaching. It is good that some practical clinical programs are now included in the curriculum, but educators must be careful not to go overboard on such trendy programs at the expense of a legal education.

I am proud to have graduated from Michigan Law School & have enjoyed the benefits & prestige of its national reputation. I feel I was educated in the law even though I received little if any training on how to be a lawyer. Without sacrificing the intellectual experience & turning the law school into a "trade school" perhaps consideration should be given to more opportunities for non-law review students to engage in extensive research & writing projects & moot court or similar experiences. As a student I feel there was considerable guidance & opportunity for those selected for law review, but the rest of us were pretty much left to drift according to our own drummer. There were ~~probably much~~ certainly more of us in the "middle of the class" than at the top and I felt the faculty placed disproportionate interest in the "pride" of the school rather than the "product" of the school.

I have always thought Michigan to be a first rate, if not the best, law school. As Director of Policy Planning at the Federal Trade Commission and a partner with a medium to large Washington law firm, my experiences interviewing and employing recent graduates has underscored such beliefs.

Important source of income to the law school is not being recognized. Placement or replacement of the 5 to 15 year graduate. Proliferation of lawyer search firms staffed by non-lawyers who really do not understand the profession and its needs yet charge extremely high commissions point out a need for expanded placement service beyond the young graduate. Charging a reasonable fee to corporations or law firms that find an acceptable candidate not only a valuable source of income to the school but also a follow through service to graduates as well as help employers find needed talent from a reliable source.

I thought this was an excellent questionnaire and feel that U. of M. has contributed significantly to my present success.

Comments (4)

F is unanswerable, as the practice of law is:

1. overcrowded. 2. Viciously competitive with present advertising.
3. has deteriorating standards because of 1 & 2. 4. has decreasing financial rewards. 5. Little hope for improvement. 6. With union pre-paid legal (closed plan) will be nothing more than another job.

But: The U of M Law School preparation is about the best, save only its lack of public relations & old Boy System of other fine law schools. (A useless placement program).

U of M graduates succeed despite the disinterest of the school in its graduates.

Did not get into Harvard so came to Michigan--it was a great educational and personal experience for me--it addition met my wife there who was in undergraduate school so especially worthwhile.

My professional work since 1971 has been in private contractual consultations in crime control and prevention, and criminal justice system planning. My law school training was important and added to professional training & experience in social work; but I worked at typical attorney activities for only one year following graduation from law school.

For the past 2 years all my work activity has related to rescuing my "investment" real estate holdings from financial disaster...& with no income therefrom. I am about to return to professional work...in crime prevention policy & program development. Certainly, not a typical law grad...but I've no major regrets.

During my years in the law school many, but not all, professors seemed somewhat "removed" from the students. I understand now there is more interaction which I view as an advantage.

As to XVIII F. My daughter was not admitted, even though she graduated Magna Cum Laude from Hillsdale, scored 100+ points higher on LSAT than I did, and, at the time was a resident of Michigan (She is 9th in her class at Indiana University).

I continue to feel that the U. of M. Law School is absolutely 1st rate, topped by no other school. Hiring experience at my firm provides continued evidence of this.

I think my training generally at U of M was excellent. If, however, trial practice has not been expanded since 1964 then it should be!

I hated every day of law school. Yet I recognize the experience was valuable. My ten years of work as a lawyer (prior to my present assignment) were challenging and rewarding--in sharp contrast to the study of law.

In my opinion the so-called Socratic method was a joke as practiced in 1962-4 at U of M. I can see the teaching method may be designed to make students more assertive ("restrained aggressiveness" was the objective then) and be desirable; it made me resentful and damaged my self-confidence. I love the practice of law but I learned to love law after leaving Michigan Law School.

What a damn presumptuous statement to make in a questionnaire directed to lawyers! This questionnaire reflects either a) the values of its author or b) what its author perceives to be the values of his employer(s) (TS or whomever)..) It would seem to me that perhaps UML might be interested in whether, what & how much its graduates ever a) do any un-compensated legal work for indigent people and b) what in the way of pro bono [non-individual indigent] litigation is accomplished such as pollution, environmental, class action, civil rights, etc. are done. Q: Why not ask? A: a) we didn't think of it b) we thought of it but felt the responses would embarrass UML c) all of the above. Only thing I can say for sure is that I'll bet Joe Sax was not involved in writing this questionnaire.

There has been a marked decline of standards at Michigan in recent years. I have visited the campus on several occasions to recruit for our law firm and am surprised that the students--although having very high LSAT scores--do not have the poise, drive, energy or spark as those at Harvard, Virginia, Northwestern or Stanford. It is a shame. It seems as though my law school is one of the last to recover from the 1960's.

The opportunity to attend U of M Law was a rare privilege--I have good feelings about my legal training.

I have very warm feelings toward the school, and feel I have an advantage over my fellow lawyers as a result of my legal education. Almost without exception my classmates seem to be doing well in all aspects of their professional lives. However most seem to work too hard and are unable to fully enjoy the fruits of their labor. I would like to see more activities involving our class--reunions, etc.

I trust since Watergate that U. of M. Law has increased its focus on ethics and proper values--I received none of these. I also feel we were too divorced from the real world--intern or apprentice programs would help with firms/courts/corporations.

I would want a child to study law only if they were going to be involved in a personal type law practice and be community involved. The greatest advantage of law school is that a law degree enables you to have fluxability of employment, good earnings, and an impact position that is recognized in the community so that you can contribute your time and expertise to communitywide projects.

Not enough course curriculum was directed in law school to the ethical questions and professional responsibility areas we face on a day to day basis.

Modifications legal education: Case method effective but should be more exercises in practice either mock or real. Law school was too removed from practice.

037
My situation in terms of career in private practice has been substantially characterized by a public interest practice with the actual clients paying little and some organizations assuming some of my fees. Currently in a transition status between phasing out former practice and becoming full

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

Learning to think logically.

Exposure to intellectual competition.

General method of instruction--I find that the specific courses are not as important as the methods by which they are taught.

~~Taxation and commercial law courses.~~

Development of legal analytical and writing skills.

Discernment of issues in a particular legal problem.

Ability to analyze, imaginative thinking, creativity, mental discipline.

No single factor.

Discipline in logical thinking.

~~Const. Law, Antitrust, Procedure, Law Review, Campbell Comp.~~

Analytical thinking process and ability to understand legal contracts and concepts.

~~Contracts, administrative law, taxation, Moot Court.~~

The rigorous intellectual content of the curriculum & methodology of the teaching. Learning to be analytical, cogent, precise and rapid: "to think like a lawyer." Please do not let the press for clinical training ever undermine the current fundamental values and orientation of legal education.

~~Trust and taxation courses.~~

The entire program with no specific aspect having greater meaning.

Competitive atmosphere!

Very, Very little!!

Tax background and the overall training in legal problem solving.

The association with a high motivated and intelligent peer group.

Tenacity.

Legal analysis.

The extensive broad overview of the law resulting in an analytical approach to problem solving and decision making.

~~Estate planning, taxation.~~

~~Case Clubs competition, Law Review research.~~

Nothing.

~~Evidence, Trial Practice, Administrative Law.~~

It presented the means to develop the maturity that is the most important part of my "job ability." More clinical work would enhance that process.

~~Moot Court~~, courses of conceptual difficulty that taught me legal analysis.

Expansion of thinking process beyond the cases or rules of law traditionally observed; an opening to the discovery of the "logic", even in its aberrations, of the law and where it extends.

General instruction--broad view.

Ability to analyze and research.

Study discipline & competitive atmosphere; intellectual stimulation of classroom.

Ability to reason, to solve problems creatively.

~~Tax courses.~~

No one thing in particular.

Ability to analyze facts/issues.

Organized logical thought and issue identification coupled with an ability to research.

~~Contracts, tax, corp law.~~

~~Contracts, commercial and real estate.~~

~~Contracts, Legal Writing, International Law.~~

Diligence; the law school and the practice of law demand your very best effort--constantly.

Ability to identify legal issues from a set of facts & research their resolution.

Problem analysis; research ability; concept recognition.

~~Legal writing, trial practice, jurisprudence & prof responsibility.~~

Professional attitude instilled.

XVIII.A. (3)

Ability to analyze a fact situation.

Nothing specifically but rather the general intellectual exercise.

All.

All except ~~Torts~~ Prof--he did not cover the subject matter.

~~Law of evidence.~~

Problem recognition through analysis. ~~/s~~

Intellectual discipline.

Working with top flight students and faculty, development of good work habits.

Precision of thought, legal writing on Law Review & especially the unrelenting pressure.

Development of ability to analyze and determine legal issues and to mold existing norms to serve client's needs.

No specific course. Exposure to talented professors who provided inspiration and forced students to understand and try to reason out arguments set forth in the cases.

Basic first year courses.

Method of analyzing problems.

~~Trial & appellate courses, & Meet Court work.~~

~~Constitutional law, international law, legal writing.~~

General analytical training (rather than particular courses); also training in efficient use of time and sources of information.

~~Real estate and estate planning courses.~~

~~Contracts and property.~~

Training in legal analysis and reasoning.

Development of the ability to think and analyze precisely.

Hard work.

Necessity to work hard for prolonged periods of time to achieve desired results.

~~Courses in evidence, torts.~~

XVIII.A. (4)

Socratic method of teaching.

~~Evidence, trial practice course.~~

Training in clear analysis & thinking.

~~Business and tax courses.~~

~~Estate planning, Taxation, Trusts & Future Interests, Contracts,
Real Property.~~

The experience of the pressure of first year law school when 28 hours
(of 30) of final exams took place at the end of the school year.

~~Case Club and moot Court.~~

~~Law Review.~~

Training in "legal reasoning" aids in identifying, examining (from all
sides--without intellectual "blindness") and solving problems.

~~Trial practice and legal writing.~~

Writing and research; ~~case club & Campbell Competition.~~

Problem analysis & Socratic teaching/thinking method (as opposed to
lecture).

~~Analytical ability, ego survival, research.~~

Large variety of subjects studied.

~~Legal writing--emphasis on real property and contracts. Relations w/
Federal Adm Agencies.~~

Writing papers for seminars.

Training in legal analysis. Courses in comparative law, which gave me
insight into the underlying premises of the US legal system.

~~Course studies in contracts, torts, taxation and commercial law. Ability
to analyze legal problems in a thorough and systematic manner.~~

General broad substantive background in basic courses.

A foundation in the basics--the general courses of law.

Insistence upon clarity of analysis and writing.

The necessity of being prepared and the competition among classmates
made level of excellence.

XVIII.A. (5)

The ability to think clearly and logically.

While courses on trusts & estates were obviously helpful, I would still recommend basic required courses for an exposure to as many areas of the law as possible.

General tough legal training.

No particular courses with possible exceptions of trusts & estates, estate planning & legal writing; biggest contribution is training in analysis of legal problems.

Confidence that my overall training was second to none.

Analysis of complex problems.

Analytical ability & writing skills.

Analysis of problems and issues; marshalling of facts and ideas into sound and clear written and oral presentations.

Classroom interaction, association with multi-jurisdictional students.

Varied curriculum offered by U of M.

Graduating.

Patience and thoroughness.

Analytical ability, advocacy techniques.

Discipline of analysis, hard work, competition, historical role of lawyers.

In addition to the substantive courses--the degree of excellence demanded by professors plus the caliber of students and the competitive spirit.

General legal background and ability to analyze problem and present logical solution.

~~All commercial, business, tax, procedure courses.~~

Confidence; broad frame of mind.

Discipline and organization.

The so called black letter courses.

Critical analyses of the rationale of case law decisions.

Nothing specific--mostly contacts with great profs and ~~Law Review & moot court.~~-----

XVIII.A. (6)

Law school neither added nor subtracted any ability but, provided needed training.

"Bread and Butter" courses--~~contracts, property, torts, taxation.~~

General - Problem identification and solutions

Legal writing - very little else.

~~Criminal Law & procedure.~~

None - the technique was acquired at Michigan - the knowledge elsewhere.

The ability to analyze problems.

~~Extensive procedural training and sound basis in Contracts, Property Labor Law.~~

First year courses - ~~contracts, torts and criminal law.~~

Reading.

Analysis of legal problems generally; how to detect issues; how to use source materials and legal publications.

The Socratic classroom method.

Sound foundation in basic areas of law and learning to think critically.

Wide range of courses in diversified areas and, in particular, training to identify issues and analyze them.

Developing analytical thought process.

Traditional legal education.

1. Legal analysis ability, 2. Background knowledge of many areas of law, 3. Understanding of legal system and fact that law is not certain and is flexible.

Problem analysis.

Having the conviction drummed into you that you never have the final answer.

~~Property & contract & tax.~~

Ability to analyze problem & suggest correct legal answer.

The stress placed on meticulous research and careful drafting.

All of it.

~~Casebook approach.~~

~~Case method - organization of materials.~~

~~Trusts, estates, taxation.~~

Research training has been very helpful.

Problem solving, analysis of data.

The realization of the role which the law plays in the formation or codification of societal values--the ability to integrate the law into a client's conduct or course of business.

Very little.

All aspects contribute equally.

Recognizing and researching legal issues in all areas.

Legal reasoning - an awareness of what facts are available to support or reject a proposed conclusion or opinion.

Ability to analyze issues, and to find the way to balance issues and interests to reach satisfactory compromises.

~~Research & tax classes.~~

Analytic training.

Ability to communicate.

The training in analyzing an issue.

~~Real estate, corporations, contracts & UCC courses, taxation.~~

Nothing specific; just general overview.

Fundamentals of legal theory and method.

~~Legal writing--particularly Law Review.~~

~~Legal history and constitutional law.~~

No course in particular. Simply the rigorous competition.

~~Campbell competition and case club.~~

The thought that very little in the law is black and white and that different facts make different law.

Analytical ability.
