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Class of 1967 Fifteen Year Report

University of Michigan Law School

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University of Michigan Law School
 Alumni Survey
 Summary of Findings
 Class of 1967

In the spring of 1982, the law school mailed a survey to the 345 persons who graduated from the law school in calendar year 1967 and for whom we had current addresses in the United States. Two hundred and fifty-nine persons, or 73%, completed and returned the questionnaire, a high return rate for mailed surveys, although below the 75% average return rate for mailed surveys generally and average for the other 17 sent questionnaires 15 years after graduation.

Here then is a brief report of our findings. We begin with a few tables that provide a profile of the class fifteen years after graduation, and follow with some additional explanatory text. We end with a compendium of the comments class members wrote in response to an openended question on the survey asking for views "of any sort about your life or law school or whatever."

As you will see, fifteen years after law school most of the class is married, practicing law in private settings, living prosperously, contented with their personal lives and careers. On the other hand, there is much diversity. Although most class members have been married once and remain married, one in every five has been divorced at least once. Similarly, although most class members work in private practice or in corporate counsel's offices, a third of the class either is not practicing at all or is practicing for the government or other nonprofit entity.

A Profile of the Class of 1967 in 1982

Total respondents: 263 of 355

<u>Family Status</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Never Married	7%
Married Once, Still Married	72
Divorced	7
Remarried After Divorce	13
Other or Missing	<u>1</u>
	100%
<u>Children</u>	
None	16%
One	12
Two	45
Three	18
Four or More	<u>8</u>
	100%
<u>Nature of Work</u>	
<u>Class Members Practicing Law</u>	
Solo Practitioners	9%
Partners in Firms	48
Counsel for Business or Financial Institution	9
Government	5
Other or Missing	<u>6</u>
	77%

Class Members Not Practicing Law

Judge	5%
Legislator (1 person)	0.4
Government Executive	1
Business Owner or Manager	8
Teacher	4
Other	4
	<u>23%</u>

Earnings in 15th Year

under \$40,000	9%
\$40,000-60,000	22
60,000-100,000	32
over \$100,000	37
	<u>100%</u>

Life Satisfaction*

Portion of Class Who Report Themselves Very Satisfied With:

Their Legal Education at Michigan	66%
Their Current Family Life	81
Their Career as a Whole	70
The Intellectual Challenge of Their Career	67
Their Ability to Solve Problems for Clients	81
Their Income	56
The Balance of Their Family and Professional Life	57

Politics

Portion of Class Who Consider Themselves:

Very Liberal	<u>12%</u>
Somewhat More Liberal Than Conservative	24
Middle of the Road	24
Somewhat More Conservative Than Liberal	30
Very Conservative	10
	<u>100%</u>

Vote in 1980 Presidential Election

Anderson	15%
Carter	26
Reagan	57
Other or Not Voting	2
	<u>100%</u>

Attitudes On a Few Issues

	<u>Favor</u>	<u>Neither Favor</u>	<u>Oppose</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>Nor Oppose</u>	<u>%</u>
Reducing Federal Regulation	36	15	48
Intended to Improve Environment	46	22	32
Passage of Federal ERA	44	17	38
Increase Funds for Legal Services Corporation	23	13	64
Mandatory Pro Bono Work for Lawyers			

*Questions asked on a 7-point scale. We have combined responses 1 and 2 as indicating person to be "very satisfied."

More Information on the Class of 1967

Life Before Law School

White males constituted 97% of the class of 1967, which had only 2% white females and 1% minorities (most of whom were Asian-Americans). Most were from the middle west and from small towns or cities. About 45% of the class members grew up in Michigan, another 25% in other Great Lakes States, and 20% from the Northeast. A majority of class members grew up in communities of less than 100,000 population, but a quarter in communities of over one million. About 10 percent had a lawyer father and none had a lawyer mother. Over 75% went directly from undergraduate school to law school, and nearly all those who had a hiatus spent it in the military, although 8% had some graduate school.

Three-quarters of the class had never been married when they began law school, and nearly all the rest were married for the first time. Only 5% had any children. Over three-quarters retained the same marital status during law school, with nearly all those who changed status getting married for the first time. Only 8% of respondents had any additional children while in law school.

The Law School Experience

Nearly half of the class began law school with no well-formed long-term career plans. The most common plan remembered was working in a large law firm—one-sixth of the class had this initial expectation. The major changes in long-term career plans during law school were a substantial reduction in the proportion who had no plans, and a substantial increase in the proportion planning to work for a large law firm, although the changes were much more complex at an individual level—more than half had changed career plans during law school.

Most respondents relied primarily on their families for financial support during law school, receiving over half of total support from that source; employment was a distant second, at about 23% of total support, and law school loans and grants third at 12%. Only half of the respondents had employment at any time during law school, though the proportions and hours involved increased from the first to the third year, and most of this employment was not law-related. For those who did have employment, the average weekly number of hours employed varied from 12 to 17.

Over 85% of the class of 1967 indicated they were satisfied with their law school experience, intellectually, as career training, and overall, with most of those indicating high degrees of satisfaction. Less than 10% indicated dissatisfaction on any of these aspects. The highest levels of satisfaction were found among those who were most satisfied with their careers and those who had higher law school grade-point averages.

Respondents from the class of 1967 recommended changes in the law school curriculum primarily in terms of increasing course offerings in "skills" areas such as negotiation clinical law practice, trial techniques, legal writing, interviewing, counselling, discovery, legal research, and office administration. Among "substantive" courses, only two areas—banking and corporate and commercial—had even 10% of respondents recommending increases.

Life Since Law School

Geographic relocation since law school graduation has resulted in a decrease in the proportion of the members of the Class of 1967 (compared to parent's residence at law school entry) living in Michigan and other Great Lakes States, and increases in the proportions on the Pacific Coast and the District of Columbia. Only one-quarter of respondents now live or work in the same communities in which they grew up and less than half in the same region of the country.

Three-quarters of respondents in the Class of 1967 have married once and remain in that first marriage. Another one-eighth remarried after a divorce, 7% never married, 7% are divorced. Forty-nine percent of respondents have the same marital status as when they left law school, and 31% went from never married to a first marriage, and the remaining 20% had experienced a divorce since law school. Respondents averaged two children (half had exactly two, only 6% had none and 8% had four or more), nearly all born since law school.

A high level of satisfaction with family life was indicated by 81% of respondents in the class of 1967, with the highest levels among married persons, senior partners in law firms, and managers in non-firm settings.

Only 23% of respondents in the class of 1967 were still in the first job they took after law school; the average number of jobs since law school was 2.7. Almost 30% had had one or more non-legal jobs, usually military service. Forty-two percent had had three or more legal jobs. Most job-changing seems to have taken place in the early part of these respondent's careers, since over 60% have now spent more than half their careers in their current jobs. About one-third of respondents had spent at least some time since law school in law practice other than private practice.

Seventy-seven percent of respondents in the class of 1967 are now lawyers, with only a few percent being judges, government officials, business owners or executives, or teachers. Five percent are are judges. Most of them are state and local trial judges, the rest administrative law judges.

Among the lawyers, 79% worked in law firms, 11% in business enterprises, 7% in government. Of those in law firms, 14% were solo practitioners, 81% were partners, and 6% associates. Slightly more than half of those in business and government were managers.

The typical law firm in which respondents from the class of 1967 worked had 14 attorneys, 2 legal assistants, and 14 nonlegal staff, although the range was great. One-fourth of firm respondents were in firms with over 50 other attorneys.

The average lawyer respondent in the class of 1967 reported working the equivalent of a 52-week, 42 hours per week year. The activities on which this time was spent varied widely among individuals, with drafting legal documents and client counseling being the only activities on which the average respondent spent more than 10% of his or her time. Similarly, substantive specialties were widely varied. If a "specialty" is defined by spending more than 25% of one's time on a substantive area, 58% of respondents had one specialty, 33% two, 3% three, and 5% had none. The most

common specialties were corporate and commercial law (36% of respondents), torts and personal injury (15%), and real property (11%).

As to clientele, respondents in the class of 1967 averaged 25% of their time on work for individuals, 20% for small businesses, 37% for larger businesses, 17% for government and other organizations. Despite UM Law School's image as a producer of lawyers for large firms serving large corporations, 41% of respondents spent a majority of their time serving individuals and small businesses.

Earnings from principal occupation reported by members of the class of 1967 averaged \$8,500 in the first year after law school, \$23,000 in the fifth year, \$51,900 in the 10th year, and \$84,400 in the 15th year. (In 1982 inflation-adjusted dollars, the amounts were \$23,400, \$53,000; \$82,500; and \$84,400.) In 1982, only 1% of the class of 1967 had incomes below \$25,000, 17% in the \$25,-50,000 range, 44% in the \$50,000-100,000 range and 37% earned over \$100,000. Lawyers tended to earn about 10% more than nonlawyers, solo practitioners and firm partners more than others, persons in larger cities more than those in smaller, those in larger offices more than those in smaller.

The majority of respondents were highly satisfied with their career overall and with the balance of family and professional life, income, ability to solve problems for specific clients, intellectual challenge, prestige in the community. There was one area of dissatisfaction: only 22% were highly satisfied with their ability to bring about social change. Overall, 92% of respondents were satisfied with their careers, and only 2% dissatisfied. Lowest levels of satisfaction were associated with low incomes, associate status in a firm or nonsupervisory status elsewhere, and being unmarried. The six aspects of career satisfaction appear to make fairly equal contributions to overall satisfaction, with intellectual challenge and prestige having somewhat more weight than the others.