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Class of 1985 Fifteen Year Report Alumni Comments

University of Michigan Law School

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Recommended Citation

University of Michigan Law School, "Class of 1985 Fifteen Year Report Alumni Comments" (2001).

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**Responses to Open-Ended Question:
“We would like your additional comments of any sort
about life or law school.”**

I loved law school. I have not enjoyed the practice of law as much as I had hoped, but I am pleased with my ability to control the amount and type of work I do. I am very happy with the group of lawyers with whom I work. I don't, however, often enjoy my professional encounters with other lawyers. I am not sure I would encourage my children to choose a legal career, but if they did, I would recommend UM as a great place to go to law school.

I had a great experience at Michigan, and I often look back fondly on the years I spent there.

Law schools need a reality check. Most law students practice law and law schools like Michigan do not prepare students to practice law. First, although my law firm hires from the top 30%, half of the law students can't write clearly and don't even proof read adequately. Second, their research skills are disappointing. Third, they know very little that is of practical use. Students who want to teach can obtain an advanced degree in law – a JD should have some practical value.

Michigan and other law schools can help to create a dialogue between law students (and lawyers) and law firms about how to restructure law firms to provide greater life satisfaction to lawyers. Law firms don't know how to deal with generation X'ers (and the baby boomers aren't happy either - just more quiet about their dissatisfaction).

Women partners are a small minority and discrimination, albeit in subtler forms, is widespread. What can Michigan do to help women partners share their experiences?

I would like to attend an “Alumni College” - 2 - 3 days of lecture and discussion on current legal topics by Michigan professors (e.g. feminist theory and TV law; the death penalty; recent trends in con law).

I find it interesting that in question #10, your inquiry about the degree of racism experienced after law school. I would strongly encourage you to include a question regarding the level of racism experienced while in law school. I believe that you may find the results quite enlightening.

Overall, I found my law school experience to be a challenging yet rewarding one. What I

quickly discovered after my first year was that I could judge a teacher's skill by the grade I received. I learned that the better teachers, even though they might teach the more difficult subjects, taught the classes where I did well. You may find it hard to believe, but all law school teachers are not created equal. I want to express my appreciation to the following individuals who made my years of study worthwhile:

The late Jim Martin stands out as one of the most gifted teachers I have had the privilege to meet. Mr. Martin was able to take complex information and bring it down to the level that anyone could understand and appreciate the beauty of the UCC. He made Commercial Paper and Secured Transactions a real pleasure. His death is a real loss to future generations of law students. Even Mr. James White, as respected as he is, cannot replace Mr. Martin.

My first year was made much easier due to Mr. Tom Kauper my Property teacher. He is not only an excellent teacher, he is also a wonderful person who took the time to work with this very frightened law student and helped shape me into an attorney who is always asking "what is really going on" when handling legal issues that arise. Due to his wise counsel, I have learned to be very discerning and very shrewd as I practice law.

I cannot forget Mr. Edward Cooper, my Civil Procedure teacher. Due to his skill, he was able to take the very amorphous area of civil procedure and make it take shape and form before our very eyes. Almost 10 years ago, before I became a Managing Attorney of Legal Services, I handled a complex case in the [court name] Court of Appeals that involved a service of process issue. Everyone, including the lower court judges thought it was a dead bang loser. I pulled out my old textbook and did some additional research that enabled me to marshal together several cogent arguments to convince the Court of Appeals to support the lower court decision. I was able to do that in large part because of Mr. Cooper's sound instruction.

Dean Sue Eklund is probably still one of the most popular individuals at Michigan. She is a warm and caring person who truly cares about the law students. It was my real honor and privilege to know her during my years at Michigan.

I know that Mr. Joe Sax is no longer with the law school, but I want to acknowledge this fine teacher who had such a real passion for environmental issues and passed this appreciation to so many other students and myself.

I do not think that law schools have really figured out what they want to be. The focus on case books full of appellate decisions renders the process intellectually boring. Yet at the same time, law schools, for the most part, are aggressively impractical. Therefore, law schools are not a place that challenges students to think "great thoughts" as would a normal graduate school, yet at the same time does not actually prepare them to be practicing lawyers.

I am a 41 year old single mother, expecting my second child at the end of the year. I just left my job at a mid-sized multinational corporation located in Europe, where I was General Counsel and last year appointed to the Executive Committee. As one of the top 6 officers of the company and the senior woman, I was highly compensated, engaged in a fast-paced and challenging work environment and respected by my peers. It's funny, I had just left my job in a big law firm ten years ago to come to Europe when I last completed this survey. I thought that change would provide me with career fulfillment as well as a better quality of life. What I found is that there is a growing and seemingly insatiable desire to make money in almost every corner of the globe today, at the expense of personal and family well-being, morality and integrity. Having been involved in political decision making processes in the US, Europe and the Middle East, I was appalled at the state of the global political system. As General Counsel, I encountered lawyers who would stop at nothing to make a buck, get a new client or win a litigation. Playing a role in US and European securities issuance and the subsequent rush to meet market expectations, I was underwhelmed by such systems' integrity. I myself met the challenges of my position, but became increasingly disillusioned that I rarely met someone I respected in my daily contacts. So I left, and the accompanying text from my company said "to spend more time with her child." Now I am looking for some work writing (I did one work tour as a journalist), am looking at opportunities in a community-based radio station, am doing some pro bono work for an environmental organization. All this is 3 months young - I will likely return to the US where I have a better chance of integrating into a community. So much for 5 - 15 years out. Too bad you don't ask at 30.

Law school was a great experience. I have nothing but fond memories of Ann Arbor. However, I do wish I could have spent more time evaluating alternatives to corporate/private practice.

I found law school an enormous waste of a great deal of talent and dedication. It took me one semester to realize that doing well in class required 2 weeks of study at semester's end, and the rest was often senseless drill. I suspect the vast majority of my colleagues realized the same thing and we spent 3 years marking time and looking for work, with the occasionally interesting course or professor to break the monotony. That was a pity.

I enjoyed law school a great deal after I figured out the game, but when I graduated, I knew next to nothing about how to practice my profession. I learned more substantive law in the summer bar review course than in law school, and more practical application as a summer clerk than in law school.

The law school still attracts a diverse and brilliant group of students. I think you should focus your mission on training them well (emphasis on clinical courses and internships, plus a faculty geared to teaching) and applying their talents (supporting participation in local, regional and national public interest projects). One can learn the basics in the first year, then spend the next years learning, applying and going good - emerging with not just a marketable degree, but a professional training and some solid experience.

Law school was great - intellectually stimulating, socially stimulating - but it didn't teach me anything about practicing law. I should have taken clinic, or some other practical courses! Writing and advocacy was great - but it didn't go far enough. I think students should be writing every term - you can't get enough practice. I also believe that an internship (like medical students have) would be beneficial.

- 1) Law School did not prepare me at all for drafting of legal documents.
- 2) Law school was easy, since it only required one final exam. It allowed me to coast until the end of the term. That was enjoyable, but possibly not in my long term best interest.
- 3) The environment was stimulating, and I still enjoy current legal issues.
- 4) More opportunity to pursue classes outside of law school, such as business classes, should have been available within the law school curriculum.
- 5) More information regarding current whereabouts of my law class should be available to us.

Lawyers need to focus more on life. Too many of my classmates and peers judge themselves solely by professional accomplishment. Be human and humane. Get a life.

Law school should have been two years long, not three. It should have focused more on the policy issues and on the nitty-gritty of practicing law. There is a reason why people can skip most classes in a course, but do well on the exam - they can "massage the facts" and ignore the underlying issues. Law school should involve reading fewer cases and more commentaries on issues, more social impact assessments, and more practical clinical work.

Law school provided a superlative legal education, but it was a hellish experience that I wouldn't wish on others. Fortunately, I did very well in law school, and my Michigan degree,

law review and grades have gotten me good jobs. Without these credentials, I probably would not have gotten some of these jobs.

I have worked part-time for most of my career in order to write novels. Unfortunately, law still takes up so much time, even on a part-time basis that I don't get much writing done.

I have not gotten much satisfaction from my legal career, which has all been at firms to date. By working part-time, I have basically tried to make the best of the law as a career and tried to have some balance in my life. Many items in your survey - e.g., legal accomplishments - have no applicability to me. My work has been mostly insurance coverage, because that's what's available part-time, and although it has some interesting points, it is fairly meaningless (even though it involved hundreds of millions of dollars).

On the bright side, (aren't you glad to hear there is one?) law pays so much that I can work part-time, make a good living, and help support family members. Nothing else would pay so much and offer some flexibility. I have just quit my job and will live on my savings while finishing a novel. Then, I hope to work for the government or in public interest, if I can afford it. By the way, another good thing about being a lawyer is working with smart people - usually interesting ones.

I must say that I do appreciate the effort undertaken for these surveys. I hope that the results assist you in your efforts to acquire insight into the experiences of Michigan Law School alumni. Hopefully, I will be able to provide more of my personal reflection with the next survey. I am in yet another period of transition. In a number of years, I think that I will have a fuller picture of my final career path. At least, that is my intent. Thank You!

Loved my time in Ann Arbor and my wonderful classmates. If I had it to do over again, I would do exactly the same thing! Thanks.

Given that the overwhelming percentage of the law school's graduates practice in a corporate law firm setting, the law school should require or strongly encourage a core of 2 or 3 business management courses.

In many ways I think I was well prepared for clerking and practice. I don't think I was as well prepared for an academic intellectual life in the law. Maybe it is due to the courses I selected, but I wish I had learned more about the different theoretical approaches to law and policy issues. I seem to have come away from a school that many think of as extremely "law

and..." with a heavily doctrinal education. But a thorough one!

My biggest disappointment with Michigan Law School was the lack of support when I entered the teaching market. The professors I asked for letters were very helpful. But those who were representing the school at the AALS recruitment conference were not at all interested in meeting me, let alone introducing me to other law faculty. To be fair, the Chair of the committee had not been on faculty during my years as a student, but a little psychological support would have been welcome. Other institutions seem to do a better job with graduates who have an interest in teaching.

That said, I am very pleased with where I ended up, I love teaching, and I hope to have many more productive years.

Good education. More emphasis should have been placed on interpersonal skills - negotiation, public service, ethics.

I find that the "game" of litigation has grown tiresome. This is probably due to the fact that there are so many things more enjoyable in life than billing time. If people acted more like grown-ups and lawyered on the front-end, there would be little need for commercial litigation and bankruptcy. I have frequently found myself wishing I had pursued a less time-consuming career.

Need to teach more practical skills at law school, especially relating to the business of the legal profession.

I found law school to be an intellectually sterile environment. The focus on appellate cases isn't particularly interesting or relevant to my experience as a practitioner and even less so to my experience as a legal philosopher. Most practitioners would be better off with an apprenticeship than a law school education.

I now perform many management/attorney functions for a mid-sized business entity. I have been doing this for about a year now, and I love it. Prior to this I worked for 2 law firms and had a solo practice. My current position is so far superior in every way: stress level, financially,

family/free time, fun. I thought I was happy before, but I now see how miserable I was, I actually feel sorry for attorneys practicing with law firms (partner or not), and in solo practice. I would strongly urge anyone in law school to take a job with a business when they graduate, and not with a law firm.

I also work part time as a photographer.

I was too young/immature to fully appreciate law school. What I learned in law school, and in practicing law, has made me a much better person in the overall sense. Thank you.

The discrimination I have felt is not so much as a result of gender, but rather as a result of motherhood. I had never received disparate treatment at my firm because of my gender, until I became a mother. Partnership track was much longer and I had to go an extra mile (or two) to prove I was still a serious and committed practitioner. The law is a terrible profession for working mothers.

The new technology is making it even more difficult. Clients are more demanding than ever.

While practicing law, I experienced discrimination due to race and child rearing.

Law school, for my first couple of years, was like an exclusive country club that I was invited to join, but kept on the outside. However, when my husband left me in my third year, the school administration, faculty and students were truly supportive and wonderful.

For the last 9 years, I have been an in-house telecommunications attorney in the [city name] area. Three years ago, I co-founded a start up telecommunications firm, which now has 1300 employees nationwide. We completed a successful IPO in 1999.

This has been a highlight of my career. I have the opportunity to retire whenever I want. Thus, I am quite thrilled with my law school and post-law school experience.

By the way, your survey contains few little boxes which reflect this in-house path or the varied types of compensation (i.e., stock) which characterize the Silicon Valley experience.

I have practiced law for 14 years and have "backed-off" the intensity level a little bit. I feel, however, that U of M Law School promoted and encouraged what I believe to be an inaccurate portrait of the financial rewards one can expect from the law practice in relation to the time, effort and stress level involved. This old school mentality has restrained lawyers from treating their practice like a modern service industry, which can benefit both the public and the lawyers.

I was treated very badly by [employee name] at Financial Aid. She made repeated "mistakes" in handling my application, for which she was repeatedly corrected by Sue Eklund. But of course, [employee name] then just made another "mistake" to achieve the same end.

I was bitter about being in difficult financial straits and having to hold a full-time job to pay for law school. I remain bitter.

I promised myself I would never contribute a cent to the law school - and I have remained true to that promise. I am not a hothead, conspiracy buff, or professional victim. I was treated very badly, and the law school continued that treatment.

Do a joint JD/MBA and become an investment banker or .com exec. Learn to say NO.

The most important class I took was a one week trial advocacy class over spring break in my third year. This class created a point of contrast for me when I was buried in boredom working in a civil firm. In the back of my mind, I knew there was another way to practice law besides working sixty hours a week answering interrogatories. After one year of drudgery, I left the civil world to work in the District Attorney's Office. I now prosecute murderers and serial rapists and feel I'm doing something challenging and worthwhile.

I think that the University of Michigan Law School is a great institution. I'm appreciative of the opportunity I had to attend.

I gave poor marks to the social aspect of school. However, I think that probably it was due more to the personality of the typical law student as compared to anything the University did.

I do have one additional impression of law school. It still amazes me after 15 years how irrelevant the classroom experience was. It was common for students only to show up for the

exam. Between pre-cooked outlines and meandering Socratic discussions, many simply tuned out of the day to day classroom experiences. It often made me feel foolish for trying to show up for class. I would suggest a greater emphasis on teaching.

Working at the US Department of [department name] has been a great job for me: intellectually stimulating, lots of responsibility, not particularly bureaucratic. I can't say that U of M prepared me for this job.

While I hated every minute of practicing law, I learned to love the law as an intellectual endeavor while at Michigan. Thank you.

I enjoy this work.

The most discouraging thing over the past 15 years was discovering the real level of integrity of a large portion of the lawyers at the top end of the litigation bar. We're not supposed to talk about it, because these folks are the system, but it's very disturbing. President Clinton then went and made it all seem petty with his contempt charge.

For me, law school was pure misery. However, on balance, it was worth the suffering because I have had a wonderful career. Although I have had job frustrations, I have loved my work. I love the law and truly believe that the American legal system, with all of its real and perceived flaws, is the best legal system in the world. I also believe that to be a lawyer is not only a worthy occupation that benefits society as a whole, but is one of the most intellectually challenging areas that a person could chose. I would recommend the law to anyone who is interested in justice and who has the desire to continually confront new challenges.

I am an eternal student and after 15 years of full time practice, during the course of which I have been awarded one mater's degree and am on the verge of being awarded a second, am "retiring" to pursue a Ph.D. in linguistics which will be my 5th college degree. My legal training and experience has enriched my (supposedly unrelated) academic studies in ways that I could never have predicted. I hope to bring my experience and the insights that I have gained in my practice to my new field of linguistics. Thus I am definitely not trimming back on the law, but rather, I hope to have the opportunity to examine legal issues from yet another perspective.

One issue that has concerned me as a lawyer and as a citizen has been the total absence from high school curricula of classes having as their topic the American legal system. I feel very strongly that knowledge of our legal system is an important aspect of citizenship. However, as matters stand, the average American does not have the faintest idea what the common law is. This is something that I think law schools may be in the best position to address.

One of the things I was told by the undergraduate professor who encouraged me to attend law school was that it will be a good background and open the door to many opportunities beyond legal careers. That was important to me at the time because I wasn't certain I wanted to practice law.

After 14 years of private and then in-house practice, I am now managing a \$300 million asset [industry name] company's operations, and enjoying my work more than ever. My mentor was right.

When I reflect back on my years at Michigan, I feel a tremendous sense of waste. Neither the professors nor the administration were dedicated to teaching the students. Instead, they were consumed by their own intellectual elitism. I would have found it very refreshing if I had encountered a single staff member who considered the students anything more than an inconvenience to their daily life.

At the time, I was quite unhappy with the law school experience, and Ann Arbor specifically. I liked the school, just not the overall life. 15 years later, I attribute much of that feeling to immaturity. I went straight from an enjoyable college experience, at [college name], and was disappointed that law school was not the same. By 2nd year, however, I found a good group of very diverse acquaintances that made life bearable.

My greatest personal and professional concern are the expectations of clients. We are expected to be "on call," available for work at all hours, all days and regardless of personal or family commitments. I can understand the demand for service above all at today's high rates, but clients cannot own our lives. Certainly technology has made 24x7 work possible, but client demands seem to go beyond what the technology can offer, to a level of total control. When I see people who work with youth leagues or activities that require a commitment to be present before 8 pm on a regular basis, I assume such people must be unemployed because none of my colleagues, or attorneys at comparable firms, has that luxury. This is not right, but I see no change, in fact, our small/mid size business clientele actually seems to work much longer hours than we do.

I have consciously tried to block out time for our children (12 & 2), but I fear I am missing much in life - time with my wife, time for serious reading (i.e., not professional journals, not the newspaper, not advance sheets or online news services).

I find that internet news services have totally changed business law. So much is available instantly that it is malpractice not to try to stay up to date on legal and business trends, but when is there any time off?

Practicing law is a constant struggle between the demands of your clients and your personal obligations to your family and yourself. Client demands are random and unpredictable, which makes planning and having a life difficult. I have tried to maintain a balance between these demands. Maintaining a sense of humor and a degree of perspective helps. This is not a career for everyone. Client demands and expectations have heightened and the pressures intensified. I am blessed to have a wife who understands and tolerates this lifestyle. I am also blessed to have wonderful partners and colleagues without whom the practice would be miserable.

When I graduated, I was idealistic and thought that I would have time to be involved in community service, with the demands of family and the practice, unfortunately there has been little time.

I also believe that the practice of law, at least doing what I'm doing, is not a lifelong career. There will be a time to step aside, hopefully in good health. That time is much sooner than I thought when I first started practicing.

I have never enjoyed practicing law, but I would not say that I regret going to law school. I had an interesting legal career working for the Antitrust Division of the Justice Department and at the U. S. [agency name]. But my current ambition is to finish my dissertation in legal history and obtain a tenure-track teaching job. I was just offered and accepted a 1 year temporary job teaching legal history at [university name].

My responses may be misleading in that last year was a transitional year for me (I changed jobs, my wife quit her job, and we moved).

I very much enjoyed the intellectual challenge of law school and my first decade of professional life. But as I get older (39 now and counting), I find myself gravitating toward

home, garden and nieces and nephews and aging relatives, and away from work. I am fortunate to have a satisfying work life and good colleagues, but at 39 I find myself already dreaming of retirement. I'm glad to have been an attorney, but I'm feeling like there is more to life.

PS. I'm disappointed that the survey's question don't reflect the possibility that the law school's graduates might be lesbian or gay. You have 6 different options under "marital status" - couldn't one of these options reflect the possibility of being gay?

I served in the U. S. [military service] for over 24 years, therefore I have not devoted attention to pro bono work the last two years. However, I have continued to work actively in professional associations and educational forums, devoting considerable time for which I receive no financial compensation.

Law school opened up a whole new world to me which has added immeasurably to the richness of my life. I also relished and benefitted greatly from my classmates. I loved law school.

I may have made a mistake by going into private practice - a decision in which the law school aided and abetted me. There was an unspoken expectation that, short of teaching, the private practice of law was where the best students were expected to go. Although I realized while in law school that, unlike most of my classmates, I was not very interested in money (other than spending it, which I like to do as much as most people), somehow I did not realize quite the extent to which this would make me quite unsuited to most law firms. I wish I had been encouraged (and taught) more about public policy options - especially for those of us not in a position to relocate to DC (which I could not do after graduation or after my clerkship because of family concerns).

My opinion of law firms, as someone with considerable management experience, is very low. I think they do a terrible job of managing their human resources. There are a number of reasons for this - arrogance, the deference given rainmakers whose success is often due to the very qualities which make for poor managers (absolute confidence in themselves, seeing people as means to an end, etc.), and lack of any training in management. I think that the major reason attorneys who are not driven by a desire for money and power find happiness in the private practice of law is luck - finding a good mentor in an area they're interested in. I also think law firms are appallingly male-centered to the detriment of women.

Being a white male, I have not been forced to face much adverse discrimination on the basis of race or gender. Being gay, however, and working in a professional environment has been

challenging. I am quite lucky that my firm has become quite accommodating since my arrival at the firm. My sense, however, is that many law firms have been quite late to deal with this issue. Having recruited at Michigan and seen your current non-discrimination policy, which excludes sexual orientation for certain employers, I know that U of M has not adequately addressed this issue.

My life has changed dramatically in the past 5 years and I am more hopeful about my future than I have been in quite some time. My children are happy and my life and career are headed in a new and exciting direction. I am very thankful for my career and training as a lawyer. My only concern for the profession is that so many young lawyers are more concerned with employing "legal tactics" rather than considering what is truly in the best interest of the client and the client's family. I would recommend that law school actively address issues of professionalism and ethics throughout the curriculum.

Law was not a good profession for raising a family. Most firms do not give substantial maternity benefits. Part-time work is viewed as second-class citizenship, at best, and as a parasitic existence by many other lawyers, including other women.

Law firms are also generally stingy about retirement and health plans.

This could just be an excuse, but I felt that Michigan Law School ill-prepared me for the practice of law in a law firm, Michigan Law School better prepares students for academia or policy-making. I did reasonably well in law school and enjoyed my time there. However, I felt there was no true answer to any legal issue. I overanalyzed legal issues when it came to really practicing law. I wanted to research issues ad nauseam. Those of my friends who didn't like law school tended to like practicing law more than my friends who did like law school. These are obviously generalizations and my discomfort in a law firm setting may be more a reflection of my perfectionism and lack of confidence than law school. However, I think I came out of Michigan Law better prepared to write the answer to an exam question than to write a brief or argue a motion.

After clerking for a federal magistrate for a year, I worked for 8+ years for a policy/research-oriented legal organization and felt quite at home. After quitting work altogether 5 years ago, to take care of children, I felt a certain loss of status and worth. I seem to have gotten over that and now I'm not sure I will return to the law when I return to the workforce.

These questions do not allow for commentary on previous positions. I have only been in my current position (municipal government) a few months.

I think the large law firms (where I spent most of my professional career) are on the verge of change - as a matter of necessity. The largest firms in [city name] are predominantly white, male and conservative. Salaries are going up, the billable hours requirement is increasing, and benefits have been eliminated. Those who opt for a different lifestyle, i.e., fewer hours, suffer financially and professionally.

Michigan is an excellent, academic law school. However, it did nothing to prepare me for actual practice of law, nor to inform my decision making process concerning non-traditional, law related career paths. Unfortunately, the culture and the focus of the school was (and probably still is) on the private practice of law.

The institution seemed intent on cultivating the next "aristocracy," and reinforced pursuing careers involving primarily material rewards.

The quality of the education I received was excellent- from an academic standpoint. The faculty was, for the most part, brilliant and expert. The only negative was the failure to prepare students for the real life practice of law, a failing which I believe can and should be remedied.

The social atmosphere was truly one of privilege, and occasionally, arrogance. This was partially a reflection of the student body and partially the administration.

My main concern about law schools in general (not just U of M), is the brain drain from other pursuits. A lot of very intelligent people become lawyers and end up in private practice pursuing the \$, instead of making their profession public interest based.

UM Law School reputation carried and still carries a list of positive influence.

I would have combined law degree with business degree had I known then what I know now.

Would love to return to law school to share professional/career decision with current students.

Suggest you reach out and extend invitation to alumni to come and speak at a "career day" or something similar.

A great profession if you find the right job.

Law school was great. I would highly recommend U of M Law School if you wish to practice. I was an extremely good lawyer, but my value-added to the investment management industry, working conditions, personal interest and satisfaction make it too compelling to do anything else. I achieved sufficient financial success to retire at the age of 30 and did at 50. I only founded an investment management business, and came out of retirement, so that there would be a family business (rather than a family office) for my newborn child.

If I had to do it again, I would use my [college name] BBA credential and go straight into the investment industry. I regard law school as a jaunt which turned out to be a mistaken path.

I enjoy my profession and feel privileged to have the opportunity to serve in government as a lawyer. I'm not sure whether I would choose any other profession to work in.

To be frank, I've always had mixed feelings about Michigan Law School: I appreciate, in hindsight, the rigor of the schooling, the job opportunities it provided, and the close friendships I was able to form. However, (and the following comments may be more a product or reflection of my particular period (the 80's) and class make-up), I was, and still am to some extent, put off by the cruder antics of law students (a generally neurotic and compulsive bunch to be sure) as well as the isolation and occasional narrow-mindedness of life in the Midwest. Also, the weather is terrible and the school seems quite insecure (i.e., diffident, awkward) with regard to its perceived standing among other law schools. There always seems to be so much hyperbole, bragging, and stuffiness in the Law Quad Notes.

I did not like law school much. I recently left a law firm to join a Fortune 500 company's legal staff. So far I prefer this environment very much to private practice.

The bookmark was cheesy. Football tickets would be nice.

Law school needs to be a little more practical for people with no other professional contacts or family experience, some insights from practitioners who have been "out there" would be helpful. I'd like to see the law school become more "trial" oriented. By trial I do not mean litigation. I mean actual court room type of education. After all Clarence Darrow went to Michigan.

For the most part, I have been very happy with my career. It would be nice to make more money, but that does not happen working in the government.

The practice is so full of dishonesty and hostility that it is just plain ugly.

Rarely do judges read the law or the written documents submitted. This makes a joke of the whole system.

Law school - even Michigan - was based on memorizing the law. This was a great disappointment.

Law school was good training in reductionist logic. I didn't realize when I entered that 99% of law is about money.

Lawyers should not be viewed as an aristocracy or a priesthood.

Law should be simplified so that the transaction costs of actually using it are not so high as to make the legal system virtually useless to most people for most kinds of problems. The system works well for lawyers, so, I'm not holding my breath....

Law school was fine. I enjoyed most of my classes and classmates, was intellectually challenged and had opportunities to "do good" (SFF and Clinic programs). However, I didn't want to litigate, and left law school with significant debt, that in combination, let me to corporate law at a large firm (100 atty's, 1985). I chose a firm that promised (and until recently, offered) a balanced life and opportunities and support for pro bono work. Fifteen years later I'm still there, but now have three children age 10 and under. I have a small, but stable, health law practice and clients I like. I am increasingly dissatisfied with the practice of law as it is defined by our male management committee, and the greater legal community, however. It begins with the ever increasing starting salaries - no first year is worth what we pay them. This leads to increasing pressure to bill more hours, which eventually leads to dissatisfied associates (who I've spent hours training) leaving to go in-house or to stay home with kids - and the cycle begins anew. Meanwhile, senior partners who billed 1300 hours during their early years, had time for their families and stay-at-home spouses, now are intent on keeping up with the Jones, Days, expanding the number of offices and attorneys with no apparent thought for the effect of this empire-building on those of us left to work there after their retirement. I firmly believe it is possible to do good quality legal work and provide excellent service to clients without sacrificing

a home life, but the managing partners seem intent on making everyone fit in a 1950 minimum billable hour mold that is a throw back to the 1950's when women stayed home. It shouldn't have to be that way and I feel very sorry for the young women grads, eager to please and expecting a life in addition to the law. They will be faced with difficult, and I believe unnecessary, choices between career and family. There could and should be more flexibility, but I see less and less. Perhaps Shakespeare was right when he wrote "the law is an ass."

UM was a waste of three years. If I were to do it again, and still go into law, it would not be through UM. Everyone, white and minority, male and female, assumed and insisted on a certain urban upper middle class world view. Your entire school assumes that the students have a uniform cultural background and makes no allowances otherwise.

In many ways I'm grateful to UM Law School - I made some good friends while there, I benefitted from the prestige of the institution, I got a good job and have had a good career. I left UM, however, with a feeling that (except for two clinical programs) we were only taught a bunch of rules about a bunch of subjects. Perhaps that's all that law school should be - or could be - but I guess I'm still disappointed that there wasn't more. A lot of the cases I've faced as a practicing attorney require far more depth of thought and ethical analysis than any of my law school classes.

Billing time in 6 minute increments is no way to live.

I much preferred the team feeling of being in-house over private practice.

I wish I had a better perspective when I was in law school - it was important, and I'm glad I worked hard, but ultimately, 600 million Chinese don't care.

Without denigrating any of the things law school taught me, I wish I had seen more pleadings and walked through more real life situations before I started practice.

Law school should prepare lawyers for practice. We need more practical experience, less book knowledge.

Proud always to have graduated from the University of Michigan Law School.

U-Mich is a wonderful law school. It deserves it's excellent reputation.

I only gained a real appreciation of my education at U of M when I did adjunct teaching at another law school. I enjoyed coming back this year for a reception for lawyers working in government. It helped to re-establish a connection with the school.

The biggest challenge has been work and family responsibilities. We are in a profession where workaholic behavior is the norm - whether in the public or private sector. It's hard to cut back on work to raise a family and firms and government employers do little to help. Even firms with great reputations for advancement of women really are paying lip service to the notion rather than doing anything substantive with it.

Recent law school graduates seem to have no idea of what the real world is like - in the area of racist and sexist behavior and discrimination. They seem to feel that the barriers have been broken by the generation before them and, therefore, all is well. You need to teach them that the real world is very different from academic life, that the most sexist and racist partners are the guys in their 40's and that most of the discrimination is subtle and more difficult to deal with than the blatant comments and actions my generation encountered.

The administration staff at the law school, specifically the Dean of Student Affairs and head of financial aid should realize that people remember decisions and comments they make and attribute these comments to the law school later in life.

In particular, as a student, we had a visiting professor from another school who, following the term was hospitalized for emotional problems related to her work. She was still allowed to grade exams, and gave a large number of low grades to our class. Despite our protest, the law school stood by the results. It was grossly unfair and unjust and a mocking of what we were learning in our classes. As a result, I will never become a significant contribution to the law school.

Similarly, when I sought an additional loan from the financial aid office because I was not expecting to work during the summer in order to possibly travel abroad, I was ridiculed by the financial aid office. I did not travel, but still remember the incident clearly.

What I do now at my company is really a combination of law and business. I am a member of the board of our region at [company name] (Latin America, Africa and Middle East regions) and participate in most significant decisions. The strict practice of law would seem limiting to me now.

Generally, an excellent questionnaire. You might have had it reviewed by a couple of law firm practicing lawyers to catch a few of the difficult/out-of-date questions or responses.

In many ways, I feel that my Bar Review study course was a better way to learn the law than my law school experience.

I recognize that part of the 1st year "Socratic" experience was designed to teach students to think like lawyers; however, I believe that there has to be a more productive way to learn the law and I suspect that teaching methods have changed in recent years.

In 1985, the placement office was too focused on placing students with large law firms.

Lawyers find themselves in a variety of roles (both law-related and non law-related) in society; perhaps the law school curriculum should be broader.

It took me too long to figure out that I did not like being a lawyer. The hours were just too long. Practicing corporate law in a major firm does not allow one to strike a proper balance between career and family. When I have the opportunity, I discourage bright young people from pursuing a career in law.

While I hated every minute of practicing law, I learned to love the law as an intellectual endeavor while at Michigan. Thank you.