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Class of 1973 Five Year Report Alumni Comments, Part 4

University of Michigan Law School

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VII.B. What of your law school training is contributing most meaningfully to your present job ability?

The research and analysis skills honed by seminars and interdisciplinary research.

1. Law Review experience; 2. Legal research and writing; 3. Legal advocacy.

Clinical law training.

The basic courses--most of which were in my first year: Contracts, Criminal Law, Torts, Procedure. Many other courses, which should have been more meaningful, were not basically taught.

Courses: 1) Admin. Law (Vining); 2) Civil Procedure (Miller); 3) Municipal Law (Sandalow); 4) Con Law (Kauper); 5) Commercial Law (White).

General understanding of nature and operation of the legal system.

Although I most often use knowledge of substantive law from commercial transactions, torts, civil procedure and evidence, the most important part of law school for me was development of analytical skills--the ability to get to the central issue and resolve it.

Training in basic legal principles.

Analytical thinking.

Case Club was very helpful and it would be expanded to give students some trial practice experience. Specific courses that helped most were Criminal Law, Criminal Procedure, Constitutional Law and, most of all, my Tax courses with Prof. Wright.

Law Review

I feel I have learned to be an effective criminal defense attorney since my graduation from law school. I do not attribute this to my law school training.

Instruction in substantive legal principles.

The harassment by my professors using the Socratic approach--it trained me to think quickly and has been my salvation in the courtroom.

Clinical Law.

Since one is truly a neophyte, i.e., a babe in the woods, regardless of intellectual achievements in law school, development of the ability to quickly perceive the essence of a new situation and to bring to bear clear thinking and the breath of one's accumulated knowledge has been most meaningful.

If anything, evidence and procedure and criminal law. However, very little of my experience in law school prepared me in any way for a public defender position.

VII.B. (2)

Estate planning and individual research under Alan Polasky.

Clinical and practical courses most helpful in preparing for the "real world." Also, seminars and other courses which encourage independence and creativity were very productive.

General broad understanding of legal concepts and their inter-relationships. "Black letter" knowledge relatively insignificant.

Law Review.

Courses in labor law and , oddly enough, legal philosophy.

Nothing specific comes to mind, other than having been challenged to learn and be innovative by a few outstanding professors.

It is difficult to isolate particular courses. My coursework, as a whole, developed my understanding of the legal system, the industrial relations system, and my ability to work with and shape the laws related to employee benefits.

Business planning, Tax II.

Law school does not equip one to practice law, but (thought it seems trite) learning to "think like a lawyer" contributed the most.

My training at Michigan taught me to think like a lawyer and gave me a good general background in legal principles.

Law Review experience.

Classroom case analysis and discussion.

Torts and Trial Practice.

My experience with Evidence, Civil Procedure, and Trial Technique have been most helpful. However, the general classroom interaction of students and faculty is also helpful as training in developing issues.

Internship with the Center for Law and Social Policy, Washington, DC.

Research, writing--The name of the game seems to be formulating, expressing and finding support for your thoughts.

Case club work.

Trial Practice, Clinical Law program.

Administrative Law; Legal Writing & Advocacy; Securities.

Training in research and writing.

Clinical law.

VII.B. (3)

The disciplining of one's thought processes.

Labor law courses and case club (including any other writing experience).

Substantive law courses; Law Review experience.

Self-discipline; accurate and complete preparation.

Legal reasoning and analysis.

Legal analysis of hypothetical problems and the formulation of legal arguments in support of solutions to those problems-i.e. advocacy and analysis as taught in almost all of my law school courses.

Ability to solve problems.

The ability to critically analyze factual situations and legal implications.

Legal reasoning and writing. General training in the ability to think and perform as a practicing attorney.

Commercial law and UCC study.

Being on the law review is the only thing I can think of that really made an impression.

Legal aid - clinical law.

Analytical training.

Analytical approach. Legal process, admin. law.

Ability to write clearly and concisely. Ability to identify issues.

Very little.

In terms of courses which I took, I have utilized my substantive training in constitutional law and statutory interpretation more than any others.

Ability to analyze problems.

Learned basic legal principles.

Not what to do, but how to do it.

Trial practice course.

Development of analytical abilities.

Training in legal writing including case club and Law Review.

Learning to make logical, confident analyses of legal problems. As my response to the next question might indicate, there are plenty of opportunities to gain specialized knowledge outside of law school. The general education was more important to me

VII.B. (4)

Training in legal research & writing, particularly time spent as writer & editor for Journal of Law Reform; most valuable classes: antitrust, procedure, evidence, economics, corporations, criminal & const. law.

Tax - Wright & Kahn; Estate Planning - Polasky; Accounting - Polasky.

Civil procedure, real property and evidence.

Basic first year courses, followed by exposure to professors in small group study, whatever the course.

Educational emphasis on legal analysis, legal writing and legal theory.

Clinical law program experience.

Thinking process--knowledge of black letter law--cohesion between varying fields of law.

Courses in which the professors emphasized analysis of cases and legal analysis rather than rules of law. Examples of former--Contracts with Professor Gray; Criminal law with Kamisar; Federal courts with Sandalow; Taxation with Wright. Example of latter Civil Pro with Martin; Com Trans.

A thorough understanding of the reasoning process by which courts arrive at decisions.

Legal writing and appellate advocacy.

Other than legal research techniques, little if any.

Constitutional Law & Administration of Criminal Justice (~~Frank Allen~~)
(Paul Kauper); ~~Exam~~ (Frank Allen)

Con law & criminal law.

The teaching of analytical skills.

Nothing in particular.

Research.

Labor law courses and having worked for Prof. Harry Edwards.

Rigorous study habits marshalling as near total command of the law applicable to a certain problem as is possible.

Basic principles of writing & reasoning.

Research skills.

Commercial transactions - J. J. White

Being held to high standards--course work can be learned as needed.

VII.B. (5)

Courses in Procedure, Fed. Courts, and Constitutional Law.

No significant area. Most significant contribution was JD degree which opened doors.

1. Courses in Admiralty, Labor Law and Enterprise Organization.
2. Case Club. #3. Principles of legal reasoning taught in all 1st-year courses

Labor Law; Participation in Legal Aid.

Business and corporate courses.

Criminal law; constitutional law.

Writing skills of law review & case club; general analytical training (as opposed to substantive course content in my primary field of land use & environmental & municipal law)

Corporation, business planning & tax courses.

International law.

Classroom and Law Review experience.

I can honestly say that each course helped in my current work, as I believe the practice (not study) of law is keyed to developing a methodology of working in the system. Anyone can learn the substantive aspects of law. The total law school experience (ugh!) developed a sense of the law in me.

Writing, analytical thinking.

Analytical skills. Legal research & writing. Oral argument.

Clinical law and civil procedure. Clinical law taught me the actual functioning of the legal system and civil procedure taught me its rules.

No one area stands out; good, broad based education background; probably most significant has been "on-the-job training" after law school.

Copyright.

Systematic legal analysis of issues and withholding judgment until sufficient material gathered to permit effective decision making.

Contracts, constitutional law, torts, municipal corporations.

Planning courses from Prof. Siegel and Polasky have contributed to my creativity and flexibility in resolving client's problems; taking a broad variety of courses has enabled me to more fully appreciate ramifications outside my areas of specialty.

Information acquired in courses which relate to my specialty, e.g. Evidence, Civil Procedure, Conflict of Laws, Commercial Transactions, Antitrust.

VII.B. (6)

Analytical skills derived from basic courses and essay exam format.

My understanding of Fundamental legal concepts acquired in the more traditional courses.

Trial practice.

No course specifically. I've benefitted most from courses stressing analytical views of the law.

Constitutional law.

Clinical law, welfare law.

I think that the most meaningful training was the first year stress on finding the issue.

Trial practice, consumer law, commercial transactions, legal writing and advocacy, clinical law.

Ted St. Antoine and Harry Edwards.

All - too difficult to break down.

Association with a U of M professor who continually gave me support, told me "I can do it."

Proper method of analysis.

Courses in taxation and commercial law and general training in legal research.

Overall approach to the practice of law and legal reasoning gleaned from entire law school experience coupled with the confidence gained from knowing that I received an excellent legal education at Michigan.

Diploma.

Employment Discrimination Course.

Labor courses from Prof. Edwards.

Courses in Evidence, Constitutional Law, Trial Practice and Clinical Law. (Although the last 5 years have given me expertise in public utility, environmental, and administrative law, along with extensive trial work, I had no courses in public utility law, environmental law, regulated industries, oil and gas energy law, etc. at U of M. Also my administrative law class was a disappointment.) The best educational experience has been the "trial-by-fire" on-the-job learning involving preparation and completion of hearings, trials, appeals, briefing, etc.

Legal analysis.

VII.B. (7)

The intellectual discipline and analytical requirements as opposed to acquiring any particular legal knowledge. In this regard the first year course of studies is most important.

Requirement to assimilate diverse material and select relevant argument, position or factors.

Brief writing, legal analysis, appellate practice, civil procedure.

- 1. Analytical approach to problem solving.
2. Discipline.

Tax and estate planning courses and seminars.

A solid background in constitutional law and a heavy exposure to Socratic methodology ala Arthur Miller, St. Antoine, etc.

Can't think of anything that is contributing meaningfully.

The premium placed on preparation as a prerequisite to a meaningful classroom experience. There is no substitute for preparation in practice.

Generally, training in legal analysis. In terms of courses, those courses dealing with business and commercial matters.

The manner in which one is required to think and reason in a high quality law school (as opposed to "bar preparation" law schools one finds in California).

1st year property law.

Besides a knowledge of substantive law, the ability to identify essential issues from a complex set of facts and apply the appropriate analyses.

Research skills--basic courses 1st year--opportunity to do independent study and research in admiralty for credit.

Legal research and writing.

No one group of courses. The general 3 years education.

Tax training.

First year civil procedure and case club, since corporate litigation involves lots of pretrial maneuvering and since I do a good deal of appellate brief-writing as well. Substantively, my work runs the gamut (excluding tax and probate) of the subject areas I studied in law school.

Kamisar, Vining, Hawkins.

The high quality of the individuals who did the teaching of the basics.

Research and the generalized pattern of analysis.

VII.B. (8)

I suppose it's the assumption that human beings are capable of reasoning.

Procedure, Evidence, Antitrust courses.

Trial Practice; Clinical Law (Center for Law and Social Policy);
Admin. Law.

Association with several key professors--i.e. Bill Bishop and Chip Kuklin,
former Dean for Student Affairs; general course work; friends made in
law school.

Ability to analyze a fact situation.

1. Ability to analyze legal problems and issues. 2. Ability to organize
legal arguments/ 3/ Estate planning and tax courses.

I believe the first year program effort to teach one to analyze and solve
legal problems is of preeminent importance. Writing and drafting next.
Substantive course offerings are of only tertiary importance.

Commercial, Business Law, and Finance related courses.

Tax, Commercial Transactions (U.C.C.), Evidence, Trial Practice.

The courses relating to my specialty--property, tax, trusts and estate
planning.

Business and Commercial Law courses.

Associations with students and faculty members of high caliber, work on
Journal of Law Reform, courses with Profs Browder and Wright.

Labor law courses and Procedure.

Statute-oriented courses (e.g. Taxation I & II with Kahn and Commercial
Transactions with White) forcing one to wrestle with codified law have
proven most beneficial.

Training in analysis and reasoning. Writing development.

Writing experiences, such as Law Review and Legal Writing and Advocacy.

The caliber of teaching legal analysis as applied to clients problems,
both legal and non-legal.

First year courses.

~~Some of the~~ General background in many different areas of law.

Clinical law.

General analytical training.

VII.B. (9)

Basic courses in first year; "Business Law" courses e.g. Commercial Transactions, Taxation, Corporations.

Focus of law school on writing skills; experience of meeting persons with such diverse backgrounds; technical legal knowledge; ability to argue all sides of a question.

Clinical law.

Ability to think and advocate.

Clinical exposure gained during semester at Center for Law and Social Policy, solid background in judicial and analytical reasoning.

Doug Kahn's presentation of the tax law.

The legal writing and research skills that I acquired while working on the law review have been exceptionally useful. I have also found the courses in federal jurisdiction to be of frequent use in practice.

Course in logic and writing.

Generally, learning how to find information (research) in a thorough and efficient manner; specifically, copyright law and contracts.

General approach to problem-solving.

The law school's emphasis on theory has proven quite valuable. Research and briefing have been expedited by a sound grasp of the theory underlying a given proposition.

Ability to think and reason on a theoretical basis.

Analytical approach generally developed in all law school classes.

Ability gained relative to analysis of problems in systematic way.

Background.

Training in lawyerlike skills as distinguished from substantive courses although the latter was important--particularly with regard to difficult courses such as tax, securities, etc.

In general first year courses did the most to prepare me for practice.

Excellent background emphasizing theory of law and writing ability.

Learning how to analyze cases. Trial Practice course.

First year courses with emphasis on "thinking like a lawyer." Strong research training clinical law program contact with supervising.

Corporate law; taxation.

VII.B. (10)

Constitutional law--Municipal corporations--Admin. Law.

Clinical law. Contracts.

The ability to analyze a situation in a systematic manner and then evaluate a course of action to solve the problem.

I can identify no one aspect of my training that is most meaningful. My positions have required me to draw on virtually every part of my training. However, my experience on the Journal was extraordinarily beneficial and is to be highly recommended.

~~Taxation and securities law courses.~~

The ability to "think like a lawyer"

Confidence that the overall instructional program was excellent.

Research and writing skills; civil procedure.

Observing and participating in the Socratic approach to a problem.

My crim law & procedure courses, general training on interpreting a case, const'l law.

The developed ability to work quickly under pressure and (hopefully) to be able to master a fairly broad range of legal activity in the process.

The broad and diversified commercial law background provided.

~~xxxx~~ L. Hart Wright - succinctly. Generally - the philosophy of maintaining an overview when dealing with specific problems.

Training in the analysis of cases and fact situations and legal writing.

Improvement of analytical skills

Ability to analyze reasoning behind decisions for use in predicting outcome of current issues --derived primarily from courses with Prof. Blasi.

Clinical law and trial practice as well as Civil Procedure.

Learning to approach a problem, think it through and solve it.

Not terribly much--following courses in this order: 1. UCC with Jim White
2. Civil Procedure.

Legal reasoning.

General analytical skills. Commercial & antitrust courses.

Training as to the analysis of legal problems.

VII.B. (11)

The rigorous "never-stop-asking-questions" approach of professors like J.J. White, Jerry Israel, Tom Kauper, John Jackson, Douglas Kahn and others has stuck with me longest, and benefitted me the most.

Law Review --skills of editing, writing, and analysis are the most important assets in my practice.

Problem solving--analysis & methodology: more specifically, legal research, writing and critical analysis.

Legal research and writing courses.

Probably Law Review because much of my practice has involved legal writing and the editing of legal writing.

Simply the ability acquired to analyze and reason as a lawyer.

Nothing in particular stands out. I felt I learned much from my 20-hour week job as a law clerk in an Ann Arbor firm.

The law school experience is the most meaningful factor. It taught me to think like a lawyer and work like a dog!

Tax courses - L. Hertz Wright

The general training in thinking and reasoning, and research abilities, more than specific types of courses.

Training to "think like a lawyer."

Law Review experience. The Socratic method as used by some professors (e.g., Prof. White, Israel, Friedman [U. of Penn.]).

Ability to work long hours & devotion to excellence.

Good teachers, aside from their subject matter. The best I can recall were Douglas Kahn, Francis Allen, Jerry Israel; Prof. Hawkins (torts), Prof. Regan (antitrust)

Courses on taxation.

Not to sound trite, the excellent quality of the teaching at Michigan equipped me with analytical skills that I find indispensable in practice while it also gave me a sense for the intellectual excitement of the law that has added to my personal satisfaction in the profession.

Moot court competition--I'd say the rest of my education was irrelevant except insofar as it trained me to think like a lawyer.

Exposure to top flight faculty and student body.

- 1. Ability to work long hours with little reward.
2. Pressure, Prof. James White was correct--the pressure one experiences in law school is slight compared to the real world

VII.B. (12)

Criminal appellate advocacy course, evidence course, general analytical skills picked up for all courses.

Not much--I hate to say this, but I had no idea what I would pursue, and took all the wrong courses. I even avoided writing which is 90% of my practice.

Courses in Antitrust, Administrative Law, Evidence, Civil Procedure; Freshman case clubs; Campbell competition; and seminar in the economics of Public Policy Decision Making.

~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ H. ^K Edwards/Labor Law II course (Arbitration)

Exercise of analytic abilities.

No specific course, but rather the experience of attending a professionally administered institution and associating with intelligent, motivated students.

Legal analysis (issue spotting) and substantive law learned in individual courses.

General substantive knowledge --especially civil, criminal procedure, property and taxation.

My background in Welfare and Family Law. Also my work with Clinical program and with Environmental Law Society.

Seminar in Legal communications (Layman Allen).

Most helpful were tax courses with Prof. Kahn and trust courses with Prof. Palmer--both as to content and discipline.

All labor courses. Prof. Edwards did a good job. I had him for 3 labor courses.'

J. J. White--Commercial Transactions!!
Carrington--Civil Procedure.

Trial practice. Legal writing and advocacy.

Learning how to read a decision.

Analytical training, legal research and writing, selection of course variety, free exchange of ideas, opinions, etc. in and out of class.

More than any substantive area, it has been the thought and reasoning process learned in law school.

Background in corporation and business law. Also, contract law and property law have helped considerably. I feel that the 1st year Case Club program helped me immeasurably to improve my writing and advocacy skills.

VII.B. (13)

Excellent courses in civil procedure and Uniform Commercial Code; general ability to analyze problems and to correlate facts and law.

Clinical law program at the Center for Law and Social Policy.

The first year courses in teaching the method of thought. I suffered from a bad contracts course during a mayoral election and a bad bankruptcy course during Prof. Kennedy's absence to Washington.

Trial practice; evidence.

General approach to addressing problems.

I have little respect for any of my law school training.

Writing skills; courses which emphasize practical as opposed to theoretical approaches (e.g. lawyer as negotiator, collective bargaining and labor arbitration, etc.)

Association with high quality faculty and student body, resulting in general expectation of quality thought and work by myself and others.

Principles and theory contained in the most basic courses such as torts, contracts, property, and taxation.

Application of law to business setting--ex. commercial transactions (Prof. White).

Writing; research for instructor.

I think the formal course background at Michigan has been extremely beneficial. I particularly feel that I acquired an excellent background in contracts and restitution and in general analysis of problems.

The legal skills developed in those classes taught by the "better" professors--i.e. Miller, St. Antoine, L. Hart Wright, etc.

Case club, law review experience, federal taxation. (Most important I think is the general intellectual stimulation from many courses, few of which have anything to do with my current areas of practice)

The labor law courses, particularly Harry Edwards' courses. Beyond that, staying away from the law school as much as possible in order to obtain real world experience in politics, poverty law, legislation, and labor relations.

Legal analysis and writing.

Little.

The intellectual, problem-solving and analytical aspects, and courses in procedure. Also, the emphasis on thorough preparation.

VII.B. (14)

Other than evidence, I can't say I got any real personal injury trial training. Pride based on the high quality of student and teacher dictated that I could master this area of legal practice.

Methodology--Approach to a legal problem and research. Substantively--
Business Planning type courses.

First year courses which provided fundamental background in terminology
and legal reasoning.

The quality of student intelligence. Most classes were not all that hot.
Whit Gray and Prof. Stein's classes best for legal thinking.

Methodology of legal analysis--approach to analysis of fact situations in
terms of legally significant issues and ability to generate multiple
alternative legal solutions.

Working on the Journal of Law Reform.

Civil and trila procedure.

The exchange of different opinions on various topics.

All.

Lawyer as a Negotiator. Commercial Transactions. Evidence - Civil Procedure

Substance of some of the courses got me off to a good start. General
excellence of school, faculty contributed to ability to approach and
analyze legal problems.

Legal writing and advocacy.

Good basic background. However not much help from a practical standpoint.

Logical problem solving.

Having a broad, historical, policy oriented background rather than a primaril
nuts & bolts approach. Knowing how to do legal research in some depth.

Courses involving research, brief writing, appellate work.

Civil procedure; contracts.

Courses: Federal Courts (Sandalow); Civil Procedure (Miller-Martin);
Environmental Law (Sax); Campbell Competition - Moot Court for Legal
Research & Writing.

Writing skills developed in case club work and in my work as an editor
of the Journal; General "thinking" skills from being trained to "think
like a lawyer."

Broad general legal education background.