

University of Michigan Law School
University of Michigan Law School Scholarship Repository

Law School Alumni Survey Class Reports

University of Michigan Law School Alumni Survey
Project

Class of 1953 Fifteen Year Report Alumni Comments

University of Michigan Law School

Follow this and additional works at: http://repository.law.umich.edu/alumni_survey_reports

 Part of the [Legal Education Commons](#), and the [Legal Profession Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

University of Michigan Law School, "Class of 1953 Fifteen Year Report Alumni Comments" (1968).

This Response or Comment is brought to you for free and open access by the University of Michigan Law School Alumni Survey Project at University of Michigan Law School Scholarship Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Law School Alumni Survey Class Reports by an authorized administrator of University of Michigan Law School Scholarship Repository. For more information, please contact mlaw.repository@umich.edu.

Your Comments, if any

025 I assume that there has been curriculum changes in the past 15 years. I recognize that there are so many specialty areas, interest areas and variations in local, state and federal laws that individually tailored legal education is probably not possible. Most of my education has occurred in the practice. When I graduated I was probably more qualified to be a judge or professor than a practicing lawyer. I had not been trained to administer an estate, draft a petition for personal injury, consult with a client, etc. I would have made many errors had I not had the guidance of an experienced lawyer.

Although the case method and teaching practices in the Law School are of great general value, I believe that education of more practical value is possible. A medical doctor is taught anatomy, but he also learns to set a broken bone.

Most graduates who are employed by a large firm or by government receive on-the-job practical training before being turned loose on the public. It should be possible for a school to provide some education of this type for the student interested in individual or small group practice. The intern or apprentice system may have certain inherent evils. But in the past it helped produce the best of the trial lawyers I have opposed.

When I graduated, little effort was made to assist in placement of those who were not "B" students or better.

The school would do well to adopt Harvard's method of developing faculty by giving a number of temporary appointments and then selecting the best people for tenure positions.

The mental discipline and analytical ability derived from law school have been invaluable. Some of the members of the faculty were men of such high caliber that it was a pleasure and a privilege to have some association with them.

I believe there could have been more of an attempt at career counseling; opportunities in the practice of law; the lawyer in business; the lawyer in government.

The classes enjoyed most were those conducted on a seminar basis.

I have presently applied for a teaching position at Oakland Community College in areas of Business and Political Science. After 15 yrs. I have come to believe that I will find more satisfaction in the world of ideas than in the world of commerce.

I feel I obtained a superior legal education at U. of M. I was competing as an associate, with many others, almost all of which were Harvard law or Yale law. Most never became partners - most of the Paris partners are Harvard or Yale law. I have never felt that my law school education was inferior to theirs. Enclosed is a list of partners, and associates with education background. My admission to partnership in 1964 was based entirely on merit. I had no connections in Paris or in Boston. About the only advantage I had over other associates was the years as a claims investigator, prior to law school. This experience was invaluable in learning how to "get the posts." Searching the law is etc. etc.

* * * * *

I am thankful for my legal training at Michigan, but feel many courses lacked practical aspects as distinguished with theoretical aspects for one with little or no exposure prior to or during law school to courts and actual law practice. Clerkships or exposure to courts and law firms during law school would be most helpful as well as 2 means for needed enthusiasm for chosen profession while a student,

I have had the opportunity to interview and hire lawyers from several law schools and the Univ. of Mich. graduates stand out head and shoulders above the rest.

OK Questions under XI not answered, to avoid confusion, although I have derived an average thirty per cent of my income, the last three years, from my solo general practice of law on a part-time basis, using the same law office as that where I was an employed associate, during the previous 4½ years. I have answered all questions on current occupation as if my sole position were that of Asst. Law Director for the City of Dayton, a salaried position.

OK Our law school training was exceptional, and the quality of teaching was consistently high. We needed basic trial training. (woman who has done part-time practice while raising a family)

I haven't answered question XVI because I have no feeling of any imbalance in the curricula as I knew it. I do, however, think that some system of internship, either in senior year of law school or possibly all three years, should be devised to bring students into contact with real-live-honest-to-goodness legal problems. The practice of law is not solely comprised of an understanding of the law that is taught in law school. The gap should be filled.

Most emphatically another year should be added to law school during which the practical application of legal education would be stressed, as well as ethics, professional responsibilities and practical business training. The average lawyer is inefficient and unprogressive. Our legal as well as judicial system is simply not meeting the needs of modern society. More imagination, discipline and thoughtful changes are imperative.

My wife and I have considered ourselves to be very generous in making contributions to the U. of Mich. both generally and the Law School. I have acted as a campaign worker yearly for the Law School Fund. From what I heard at a recent dinner at which Pres. Fleming spoke, it appears that out of state students will not be able to attend Mich. because of the extremely discriminatory tuition differential with Mich. resident students. My wife and I are very concerned about this situation, because we would like our children to attend Michigan.

I am one who found myself somewhat bored with big city law practice - a stuffy library dominated atmosphere to which I did not adapt. I went to 2 corporations - first as a law "specialist" but gradually got into management for which I feel better suited. More challenged. My only regret is that I had no chance to try a different type of practice (for example, labor work or trial work) before "defecting" to business.

The most significant advantage of the U. of M. is its national character. This coupled with a fine faculty and unique plant constitutes Michigan to me. The rise of provincial attitudes I find alarming. The U. of M. with an equally fine faculty in the same surroundings but catering to and consisting of primarily Michigan residents would be a second rate (or worse) school. The value of this student national mix and fellow-graduates throughout the nation cannot be overemphasized. I deal frequently with U. of M. lawyers in many states (only rarely in Michigan) and the school's national reputation is of great value. Please keep it that way - i.e. national.

12) It should be noted that for about 3 years in the early 1960's I was without effective communication due to a serious illness.

I do feel, though, that the practice of law will become more and more difficult in the years ahead and I strongly suspect that the percentage of lawyers in private practice will decrease substantially in the next 10 years.

I most certainly hope that Univ. of Mich. Law School would continue to maintain its good reputation in the years to come. I find it to be most gratifying whenever I meet a lawyer from out-of-state who looks up to me and respects me merely because I happen to be a Mich. law graduate.

I also hope that Univ. of Mich. would give preference to any of my children who might study law.

Practicing law is a way of life - not necessarily a money making job. Corporations offer a better opportunity for financial return and security but in the private practice of the law one can still be an individual and his own master! (In spite of tax payer identification numbers, computers & zip codes.)

The study and/or practice of law is an individual matter. It is only one of many pursuits that can prove rewarding and satisfying. Most people enjoy what they do best.

Michigan basks under a reputation of being one of the top law schools in the country. Having attended only one, I am in no position to judge.

My personal reaction to 3 years of Ann Arbor was indifference. I was ill prepared to practice or appreciate law. I was neither challenged nor stimulated. One year of service in a Wall St. law firm contributed more to my training as a lawyer than 3 years of briefing irrelevant and out of date textbook cases.

Michigan is a fine school. I was well trained. Looking back at my Law School ~~wikawxkxkxaxxaxwrikxxxfkxawingxkxak~~ days I think it was difficult to attend Law School without the security of knowing that I would have the necessary money to complete the 3 yrs. The pressure of no income and the uncertainty of obtaining the tuition and living expenses for the following year were somewhat of a burden.

I did not really "find myself" until my final year. I knew then that I would have the money to finish and my grades improved considerably.

I returned to Ann Arbor to start my 3rd year with \$40.00 to my name. I was able to borrow money for tuition from the university and borrow money from a classmate. My life now is very interesting. I enjoy my work & my income is now in excess of \$32,000 per year.

When I left the law school, I intended to practice in a large firm & acquire a specialty. After 2 years of military service, including duty in Korea, I was more doubtful of such an objective. I practiced as an associate in a large firm in Denver for 4 years; then went to the U.S. Attorney's Office for 2 years and as Deputy City Attorney in Denver for 2 years, following which I returned to the same firm as a partner for two years, leaving to become Referee in Bankruptcy where I now serve. I hope to pursue a judicial career which I find more stimulating than private practice. I believe the law schools should have as a primary objective the development of the "legal type" mind with a heavy emphasis on the social responsibilities of the legal profession. Thus, I think that the philosophy of the law is far more important than teaching technical applications of the law. The latter are important only in the development of the former.

I rather resented when in law school the "break" that the top men in the Class ('53) had so far as getting the top Jobs to start off with. I always felt that if I were in a position to create scholarships, I would do it for the "C" students because as I heard Prof. James say on more than one occasion "Even our 'C' students turn out to be damn good lawyers." The years have mellowed me somewhat, and I realize that it is hard to have any measuring stick other than grades. I had to work very hard for "C" grades while other close friends made "A" grades without half trying. That hard work has paid off for me, but it is hard for me to believe that an improved way cannot be found to measure each student's worth. This is my hope - in giving careful consideration to this questionnaire.

My U. of M. Law School education opened doors for me, and once afforded the opportunity, gave me the tools and know-how on the job. I have always appreciated and been proud of my Law School

My 3 years at the law school were the most pleasurable and personally rewarding period of my life up to then and perhaps even up to now.

I believe the casebook system could be decreased somewhat and other methods used.

Greater effort should be made at the college level in assisting undergraduates to objectively analyze their potential interest and rewards in a law school education and career in the legal profession.

Sharell: "The law is a seamless web."

James: "There is no substitute for good hard work?"

Please check meaning of "natural child" in any standard law Dictionary!

Answer to XVIII F.(1) depends on the child, his aptitudes, interests and motivation. It was a great experience for me.

Re XVI - I was and am sold on the case method, but believe it should have been modified more than it was for courses like tax, legislation and procedures as they were taught in 1951-53. Also, I know greater use of Horn books would have been more helpful to me. Grismore's book on Contracts was of great help to me in gaining a better understanding of his Casebook and fitting the pieces together.

If someone could devise a practical way to counsel law students, I believe it would be a great contribution.

Fringe benefits can make a significant difference (in regard to XIX)

I think I'm in the right work for me. I wish I could say the same for more of my colleagues.

I consider law school at Michigan to be one of the most significant experiences of my life. I found myself well prepared to enter practice, even though almost 4 years elapsed between graduation and commencement of practice, military service having intervened. The fact of my having graduated from the U. of M., and my honors in the law school contributed immeasurably to job placement, as recently as Fall '67. For purposes of next section, (XIX) it should be noted that in 1964 I left practice to become an executive in the entertainment industry, and finally determined in summer '67 to return to practice. I presently have a special arrangement with a law firm that had not previously practiced in this state to develop a practice in this area

Two concerns on education of children: 1. Cost of university education in 10 years. 2. Availability of universities comparable to U. of M. - when I entered the Univ. of M. in 1949, entrance requirements not as strict as now - only students in high upper levels of high school or undergraduate school eligible for U. of M. undergraduate or graduate school.

I'M loyal to U. of M., but I would like my children to decide their vocation by testing first, then when they want to live and then go to school in state where they are going to live and choose school on basis if what field they are going to be in. For example, if they want to study oceanography they should go to University of Miami.

I feel that law school should do a better job to acquaint the student with the realities of the practice of law, e.g. office practice, meeting clients, the types of cases encountered most frequently in general practice, and also should give at least some preliminary training such as med. school provides for the senior medical student and later the intern. I realize more is being done along these lines than in my time, but say this only to let you know my feelings on this subject. I think that if I'd had a taste of practice, I would have started immediately upon graduation instead of floundering around for about 7 years before getting my feet wet.

I would recommend an externship for at least 1 year prior to being licensed.

Personally, I felt while in law school that a student such as myself at the time who was encountering some difficulty with grades should receive some additional faculty advice or counseling. Such advice usually is available in undergraduate school but not in law school.

Michigan was and is a good law school, principally because of the work required of the student, which was arduous. The ability to reason as a lawyer is the important training.

The denial of student loan assistance while in law school is the most outstanding memory connected with the school administration, especially in view of the fact that I was self-supporting (together with GI Bill) and compelled to work outside for average 40 hrs per week. It is short-sighted to award assistance only on the basis of scholastic standing, since if compelled to work out, a student cannot attain required grades to qualify.

I believe University of Michigan Law School in 1953 provided sound training. However, I think the approach was a little heavy on the trade school side. I think law students should also consider more critically the role of lawyers and our legal system in our society today.

I suggest that Michigan give greater emphasis to the field of public law. While I was in school, Michigan was oriented almost entirely to private law and private practice.

Never succumb to the temptation to devote too much time to the teaching of legal information and techniques. Make the students dig for the rationale. I am a strong believer in the "cas book" method in the hands of a skilled professor.

School should insist on more 1) legal research, 2) court room training, 3) appellate training.

I don't think this (XVI) is a meaningful questions. I would suggest a number of revisions in the curriculum, but not in the manner here contemplated. Furthermore the curriculum should be broad in scope, which I believe the present curriculum to be.

The professors that I liked best were those that seemed to have a real feeling for the law and demonstrated an earnest effort to get their subject matter across to the student. It is this combination that is most important.

I believe a law student should give serious consideration to going to a law school of high caliber in the state in which he intends to practice. I am also concerned about compulsory age 65 retirement for the outstanding profs.

I think the U. of M. Law School is excellent. If I had any criticism, it is that I felt the faculty was too "in-grown--" that is, too many U. of M. trained lawyers. I think that more teachers could have been selected with more varied backgrounds and experiences. Perhaps this is changed now!

Frankly I have been quite disappointed in the financial compensation afforded by law practice as compared with that received by physicians, dentists, accountants, teachers etc. I think that the disparity becomes particularly noticeable when the amount of time and stress in law work is compared with that of other occupations. I believe that a major reason for the existence of the low-income situation is related to the fact that bar associations have been remiss in failing to insist: (1) that law firms compensate their associates in a fair manner. For example in 1954 I accepted an association with a leading Detroit law firm at 40% less salary than I had been receiving for non-law work with an auto company. (2) that corporations and government agencies pay employed attorneys in a manner that is related to the minimum fee schedule with appropriate adjustments for overhead and fringe benefits. Because of this unfortunate income situation, I am not certain that I should advise my son to enter the profession. This man has been a member of numerous state bar associations, *including one on lawyers' economic situation.*
