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Class of 1957 Fifteen Year Report Alumni Comments

University of Michigan Law School

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Class of 1957
Comments

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007 The schedule of courses available is well expanded.

While a student, the phrase often used in Law School was "find the issue," which is related to "comprehend" with "learn to reason." I was not a good law student and really did not understand the law school phrase, nor the other meanings I relate to it until some-time following graduation. I would hope that your survey would help in developing a way to overcome this lag in comprehension for those afflicted as I was, for in hindsight my law school experience, without the lag, would have been far more meaningful. I hasten to add that it was the most meaningful experience that I have had. Standards of professional responsibility, it seems, are deteriorating more noticeably among younger lawyers. Perhaps this course should be required or its principles woven into the instruction in other courses.

I'll be anxious to see how my answers compare with my classmates.

Believe or not my law school training has been far more important than anything I had as an undergraduate or in the MBA program altho I didn't plan it that way.

Still an excellent law school, but campus life at U. of M. seems to have deteriorated seriously.

Academic standards, i.e. what was expected of students were too low in my class. I strongly object to giving preferential treatment for admission or otherwise to Black students or any other group. Continuous striving to excellence should be goal of law school, not egalitarianism.

In my early years of practice when I was asked the question of from what law school I had graduated, and I replied Michigan, I always received respectful looks. In the mid 60's the answer produced some awe mixed with the respect. Now the answer seems to produce more incredulity in the look than anything else. If I were 22 today, I could never get into the law school. As my class standing suggests, I was not a good student, but I do believe that I am a good lawyer today and I am thankful for the training I received in the law school that certainly played a large part in my development as a lawyer.

My response to XVIIIIF above is prompted by what appears to me to be over-crowding of the law schools and profession in recent years.

I believe the current trend away from required courses as a serious mistake

1957 Comments cont'd

In view of current admission criteria and pressures, I feel fortunate to have attended law school when I did! Moreover, I have found that my training at Michigan has enabled me to compete effectely with those of my peers who graduated from other law schools. The one ingredient that is not capable of being taught - sound judgment, coupled with the use of imagination in dealing practically with the problems of clients and regulators alike - is a vital one in terms of relative success in private practice, it seems to me. I suppose maturity and efftiveness in personal relationships have much to do with it, as do background and general motivation. I like the idea behind this survey, and commend the law s~~ch~~ool for attempting to learn more about success in school and success in practice.

I am too orientated to the Southwest to feel it necessary to send a student away from our fine law schools such as Southeran Methodist or Univ. of Texas.

re XVIII (A) I have always relied heavily on my research and writing skills in producing office memoranda or court opinions. Ultimately, I spent 8 years in outl and gas and Texas land law that was unrelated to my Michigan background. Five years ago I got into natitrust conseling and into corporate acquistions and international in the the past year. Antitrust and intern-national work were helped by Michigan background. In acquisitions I had no preparation.

re XV: From reading answer above, it can be seen that I have only recently rotten into internatioanl work after 14 years; however, it was my original objective. After 2 years in Legal Advoser's Office of Department of State, I went to Texas, when I had family connections. Internatioanl opportunities were not available, and I got with a corporation that only recetnly went international.

re. XIX: Economically I am an underachiever, working for a utility-oriented company, but I have a private income of \$10,000 per year.

XVIII F: I don't know what the law school curriculum deals with and emphasizes today and therefore feel unalble to answer question 1. If my answer for 1 were "yes" by all means it would be "yes" for 2.

I believe that more emphasis should be placed on the day-to-day prpbles of law practice rather than the academic. That is, how to institute proceed-ings, pursue a claim, investigate facts, etc. rather than a mere study of cases.

Your questionnaire is restricted as to what changes the informant would like to see in law school courses. I suggest that first year be devoted to the fundamentals of American law with wmpphasis on modern day law. The nest two ot three years should be a clinical application of practise of law. I spent about 7 years learning "how to"by hit and miss. There is absolutely o substitute for doing rather than a theoretical discussion. Law school discussions remind me of medieval discussions on how many angels can fnt on the head of a pin. If law students could spend all their time in a real law office, courts, etc. learning How and Why from practising lawyers', I believe the quality of law students would be far superior to the product now.

graduated. And more important, can immediately handle real life cases without supervision. I believe Abraham Lincoln learned this way.

In my contacts with many lawyers, I am continually impressed with both the relative and absolute comparative quality of the Michigan "product". I think the law school is doing a good job but should beware of too radical a departure from the traditional time and approach devoted to the study of law. There is a danger if law courses are devoted exclusively to specialties and an equal danger at the other end of the spectrum if the curricula become just an extended liberal arts course.

I was extremely disappointed in most teachers; there were times I needed advice and direction and felt extremely let down by faculty contact.

My recollections of law school are not pleasant. I felt the faculty was aloof, and insensitive to student problems, and dedicated primarily to research and their own personal advancement. I regard that period in my life as a struggle with both personal and law school problems. I do feel that Michigan Law School gave me a solid technical legal education.

I feel that the advantages of Mich. Law School have been a direct cause of any success I have practicing law. The competition of the students, the atmosphere, the faculty and facilities gave me a background which was superior to the other young lawyers in Memphis when I began my practice. With this advantage, I believe I have progressed faster than the average lawyer in my area.

My college record was poor and this was the result of my having no career objective until several years after graduation. After much thought, I decided upon law and set my goal quite high - school at Univ. of Mich. At Mich. I acquired work habits for the first time in my life and finished just above the midpoint in my class. These work habits continue and have now become a normal part of my makeup.

I feel that the law school should admit a few students each year without the high academic record which you now require, who have the drive to put out extra effort to obtain their objective. I wish many other students had the opportunity given me when I was admitted, on probation, as a student at Michigan Law School.

In retrospect I am grateful for the emphasis placed on the development of the skills required by practicing lawyers. I have since graduation compared legal education at Michigan with other schools? I conclude that Michigan continues to consider educating lawyers to practice as its primary function. This I gather from your present graduation requirements and the listing of elective courses which you have expanded to meet broadening areas of legal practice.

I hope that Michigan will not accept the conceit current in some institutions, which promise to train students as lawyers and also as social architects and philosophers, and succeed at neither of the two. Three years is a short time to instill the academic discipline of the law and introduce its

practical aspect. The process of education of a lawyer takes many years outside of the classroom and the university can frustrate its own goals by inadequate preparation of its graduates for its proper part in the process of legal education, the Michigan Law School has increased its eminence since 1957. I hope you will continue to do so.

One criticism, the n and now, is the light treatment of professional responsibility. No student should graduate without an understanding of the obligations of lawyers and their profession, taught with a positive attitude and a realistic view of those conditions which the bar must improve or eliminate.

Returned to practice on 4/3/72 after nearly 8 years appointive state official specializing in one aspect of law. Questions and answers therefore difficult to properly characterize. (104)

There is a great need in our society for a combined legal-business background. If I had it to do over again I'd try to get both an M.B.A. with a J.D. on a combined basis over a four-year period - But finances would present a problem.

Law Schools should educate students better on the pragmatism of making a first job choice. I was naive during my law school years. I knew nothing about the real value of the U. of M. diploma. I knew nothing about the ease of career movement "down" from Wall Street, through the corporations, to small practice firms; I know nothing about the barriers inhibiting movement "up" once an initial "wrong" decision had been made. I felt that my first choice had to be a lifetime choice.

Law students generally have no true concept of how to earn a living practicing law. They have no true concept of field specialization. They should be advised of the realities of what is still a rigid system, and urged to make a first job choice which provides them with the greatest available future flexibility. In my case, the U. of M. diploma permitted movement back "up" to a niche that is enjoyable and rewarding. Others, less fortunate, are forever saddled with a first wrong choice.

The U. of M law school was the coldest - Most impractical place I have ever been in. Blind devotion to the case method of law instruction is folly AND LAZY. One year out of law school a lawyer cannot afford to remember the rule in Shelly's Case. The Supreme Court cases are fine, But there is a legislature and lower courts. I didn't hear of them at the U. of M. It seemed none of your instructors practiced law.

My three years at Michigan Law School were so good that it is hard for me to be critical even in a constructive way.

In my opinion the Law School must spend more time (I had none) in studying and considering the problems, emotional and otherwise, of clients. The most complex matter still involves, like a domestic relations matter, the evaluation of the emotional and legal needs of the client.

In addition some comprehensive course should be given in a lawyers' obligations to his clients, the court, and the Bar. We only had two lectures by Dea Stason - which did nothing to prepare for the actual problems

of practice in the large firm and in the small firm.

Finally a comprehensive course in problem analysis and legal drafting would be of great help particularly in the area of modern drafting techniques and similar type study.

Michigan is too large and impersonal. Their job placement seemed only interested in the "A" students. They offered me no assistance.

The law school curriculum of 1954-57 was not particularly well adapted to train for corporate or business practice or litigation. I have the impression that these deficiencies have been largely overcome, but 15 years ago the law school seemed to assume its graduates would learn all they needed about the complex maze of federal and state administrative law in practice. Presumably this approach worked, but I believe the training was not all it should have been because the courses and many of the faculty looked at yesterday's law rather than tomorrow's practice.

I wish you had solicited more the attitudes and opinions of the class on the effectiveness of the law and our legal and governmental institution on the quality of life in the U.S. - and our projected future. How differently could law schools prepare their graduates for the strengthening of private and public life. I would think such analyses could be profitably used to improve academics; I don't see how one 15 years distant can add anything intelligent about course coverage, nor do I think that particularly material to self-improvement.

Hang in there!

I am grateful and proud concerning my graduation from the University of Michigan, both the Engineering School and the Law School

I am very grateful for what I consider an excellent legal background at Michigan Law; I only hope the Law School is still maintaining the same high standards and quality of legal education which I experienced. I am very distressed to read Quadrangle Notes and see the kind of articles that are being written for that magazine - there seems to be an attempt to politicize or socialize the Law School. I hope this is an illusion and not fact. The school was great because of the legal scholars not because of politicians or social scientists.

I thought law school unnecessarily miserable. Almost no professor projected any personal love of law or students-though I'm sure they may well have felt it. I didn't mind the rigors of law school-in fact I don't think it was particularly rough. But I think it got twisted into a nasty game-often degrading and based on peculiar values. Excessive emphasis on grades and the top students poisoned the atmosphere for all others, and seemed to poison some of the most successful students.

I think I learned a good deal, and felt pushed by fine minds. I give money and hope things have or will change. I hated it (I loved Harvard where I had an utterly ghastly time personally) Harvard Law, I gather, had much the same drawbacks, but Michigan somehow got only the chill rigor-not the

drama, power, tradition- I hope it does in time. I'm a university child would like to think better of it.

✓ The most valuable courses were usually taught by professors who were young or middleaged. The older professors, particularly those who had published several texts or casbooks, were somewhat disdainful of the students and often seemed to have difficulty getting basic principles across to first or second year students.

✓ The value of my education at Michigan (both pre-law and law) never ceases to amaze me.

✓ My memories of Michigan Law School are warm and good ones; my education there has been of great help in my State Department career; I recommend Michigan Law to anyone who wants to study law. I am very proud of the things Michigan Law is doing now.

✓ I am glad to see the law schools working more in fields of clinical education.

Lawyers are not trained in law school in the art of negotiation. 50% of a lawyers art relates to his ability to negotiate.

✓ I value the experience I had at the university as perhaps the finist of my life.

✓ Michigan gets very high marks from me. In New York City, where the prepaonderance of lawyers I meet are either from Harvard, Yale or highly competitive local schools, I believe that the Michigan experince is comparable. One thought: most of my work is presently in corporate finance; this mibht be the one area where a Michigan lawyer not originally from New York City, enters N.Y. City at a slight disadvantage, but perhaps this is only in the lack of initial contacts. There might be a way for our law school to have closer ties with the N.Y. community (if there already are, I don't know of them).

✓ The huge classes made the educational experience poor.

Do you still readily reveal class rank to prospective employers? This questionable practice is less defensible now than ever before when all the major law schools are so selective in admissions. Class standing continutes to haunt me today, ridiculously, although not in my present job.

Your materials do not emphasize the teacher-pupil ration. My wife was a full-time graduate student when I was a law school freshman. Then the law school student-teacher ration was about 23:1; for her it was 7:1/ No wonder I feel short-changed and that I was left to flounder. I'm glad the ratio has improved.

What about the concept of "educational accountability" at the law school? We have become completely disillusioned with the suburban public schools and we have found private and parochial schools which

Will not let our children under-achieve or fail.

✓ Do you still take pride in the number of students who drop it or fail in your huge first-year courses as proof of your high standards? Your doubled faculty does, I hope, include a larger number or proportion of true educators than the faceless faculty to whom I was just a number in 1954-57.

✓ The brief but concentrated study at Law School at Michigan was the most significant period of my total education. I have hired and worked with younger lawyers from many law schools since graduation, and without material exception (and excluding graduates of Harvard), the men from Michigan consistently were better prepared to begin practice to make significant contribution at once and to devote the necessary time to the projects at hand as well as their careers. Further, thoroughness in research and analysis was the standard rather than the exception.

✓ I feel very proud and grateful that I had the opportunity to attend and graduate from the U. of M. Law School.

Concerning XVIII F - I would hope only that the study of law would be among the possible objectives considered by my child.

✓ The present curriculum as described in "Then & Now" sounds like a great improvement over 1954-57. *Clinical Law sounds great*

✓ I feel my law school training was very weak, especially in practical hot to do it courses covering day to day legal problems re., drafting wills, trial work, marital counseling, etc. The ivory tower approach studying principles of law, is not too helpful to the neophyte lawyer trying to master the practical problems of practice.

✓ I treasure my legal education at Michigan, especially the dedication of the teachers in trying to make us learn to think and act like lawyers. Working in a business corporation environment, it has given me an "edge" which is generally not enjoyed by non-lawyers.

Sorry for delay in answering During the last 5 years, I have headed a division of General Mills, been involved in management consulting and am now vice president of a financial services company offering investment advisory services internationally and private placements (requiring thorough securities law knowledge).
