Class of 1967 Fifteen Year Report Alumni Comments

University of Michigan Law School

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Responses from the Members of
The Class of 1967
To the Last Question on Survey Asking For
"Comments of Any Sort About Your Life
or Law School or Whatever"
My experience at Michigan was outstanding. I received, in spite of myself, an excellent legal education. The social life was also great, especially because of the strong married students association. Your questionnaire did not leave room for support by a working spouse and for the contributions of same. Perhaps there are not as many married students today--I have had a good career so far. I work too hard for too little money and taking time to be with my kids cuts further into the earning capacity.

Re: The Legal Profession.
Litigation must in some way be made less time consuming & expensive. There should be more "searching for the truth" and less adversarial activity--especially prior to trial. There should be a consideration of costs to be assessed for superfluous and unwarranted actions. Law schools could perhaps assume a role in such changes by more courses on ethics and practical aspects of the profession.

The contingent fee system is not fair to the injured person & encourages excessive aggression & for dishonesty. It is my understanding that they do not have it in Canada.

Generally attorneys who have graduated from the U have been very competent quick learners but in the 70's you sent some academic greats and colossal practice, and business stupids, out to us. Some I know of you still are pushing even though their batting averages are very low. While at the school I never talked with one faculty member--but I didn't mind then and don't now. Throughout the school I felt your faculty loved Wall Street law firms and federal judges. They should take a better look. Your expert on criminal-Kamisar-is to the left of Eugene Debs. I suggest he look at the blood before he makes his next polemic for the exclusionary rule.

In view of my atypical situation as a law professor in a country other than the U.S., my answers to the question of this questionnaire (which in many respects does not even fit to an alumnus teaching in a U.S. Law School) do not reflect all or even the majority of factors relevant to my present professional and personal condition. Nonetheless I hope my answers are of some use. Anyway, I am looking forward to the analysis of the results for my class.

Working too hard. Would like to cut back but can not at this time, apparently.

I wish the law school had offered me any career guidance--I had an "advisor" but no advice. Also some idea early of what kinds of alternative areas of law practice there were (in both public and private sectors) and how to learn more about them would have made a great difference. This is an excellent survey.

Although not entirely satisfied with law as a career, and frustrated by inability to deal with "political" issues in a legal forum, I would not prefer any other career.
The most difficult problems of private practice are:

1) Setting priorities as to family & personal life vs. the demands of practice. Far too often the family needs are sacrificed in favor of client/practice needs.

2) Setting realistic deadlines--it is very easy to promise documents or completion of a project only to find that it will take longer than promised.

3) Most lawyers do a very poor job of discussing fees in advance, collecting fees in a short period of time, and setting forth, in writing to the client, the scope of the work required & to be performed by the lawyer.

My biggest complaint is the lack of solid ethical standards by the general bar. Far too often, it is necessary to reduce to writing a statement or promise by another lawyer (even in non-adversary settings). It is too bad, but true, that the "word" of many lawyers is "not true" unless reduced to writing.

The Michigan Law School had very high standards. It was a rough grind, but a very rewarding experience. I continue to support the law school, because I believe you have kept up those standards--while at the same time trying to open up the school to new people and new ideas. Keep up the good work. I'm grateful for all you've done for me.

I think I got a very good legal education at U of M.

In general, I was quite pleased with my education at Michigan and believe that my experience there has been useful over the last 15 years. However, this questionnaire did not deal with one area which I believe somewhat lacking in legal education generally. I have believed for some time that law school does not adequately equip new graduates for dealing with the problems of law practice. I am not concerned with the ability to prepare routine pleadings and knowing where to file documents, etc.; those skills can be quickly acquired on the job. What I am concerned about are the pressures of law practice as compared to the womblike atmosphere of law school. Specifically, in law school, 90 percent is an "A"; in practice 90 percent can be an "F" resulting in malpractice if you miss the wrong 10 percent. In other words, law school does little to prepare the graduates for dealing with the uncertainties of law practice including the inevitability of error and the uncertainties of making decisions and helping clients make decisions when the law is uncertain or unknown. At the same time, law school training does not provide a framework of standards and experience from which students can determine for themselves what are reasonable standards of performance. A graduate is left to his own devices to determine how close to perfection he should attempt to come in order to deal with the uncertainties. The ability to deal with these issues will, to a large extent, depend upon whether he is assigned to an older lawyer who has come to grips appropriately with the problem, i.e., the resolution depends in part upon chance. My impression is that the medical profession by the use of residency and internship is better able in an organized way to demonstrate to would-be doctors how to deal with the pressures of practice. While I do not necessarily advocate that approach for lawyers, I do think that Michigan could serve its students better by conducting seminars in the third year regarding these issues and what to expect and how to deal with them. I would think that Dr. Watson could also be a useful part of that effort. I would also think that a number of alumni from various backgrounds and types of practice would be willing to participate.
The human interest taken by the Administration & faculty of the Law School is to be applauded. The real interest in student welfare is a fact and feeling I will attest to. I'm proud to say I'm a graduate of U. of M.

Keep up the good work.

Re: Question 5, Some electives should be reduced from 3 or 4 hour courses to 2 or 1 hour courses. This allows a lawyer to know a little about a larger number of subjects if he anticipates a more general practice. A 3 hour course fulfills everyone's desire to have taught or learned 100% of the intellectual knowledge on a topic, but not everyone needs so much. A lot is ignored or forgotten after law school on topics which are not the lawyer's primary subject. Keep most topics as full meal-sized courses but allow snack-sized ones for students to explore.

For me the course offerings or lack thereof was not the issue. Some courses were too theoretical/intellectual and not practical or down to earth enough. Possibly more courses that are practical (such as trial techniques) could be added. That's what I believe this survey will show. However I believe the content of the existing courses should be more relevant or practical. Try visiting some of the lower class law schools that cater to students from only one state. Often the issues or problems they work on are more specific and exact instead of general and intellectual. Bright UM profs can improve on these local schools to make the concepts sufficiently intellectual for a higher class school. Also visit some Continuing Legal Education classes for lawyers. They are taught for able lawyer/students but are done in a practical non-theoretical manner. Otherwise no one would pay to come the next time.

Law school at a top rated school like UM is not a training ground for lawyers (Local lower level schools train lawyers because their students and faculty are not able enough financially or intellectually to be at a top school). Law school at a top rated school is a boot camp and obstacle course to test one's general capabilities to stand up to pressure, to engage in disciplined thinking, to use a law library, & to think on one's feet. It is required by State licensing authorities and is not there to be liked or disliked. A person who can endure or thrive during three years of rigorous activity will probably endure or thrive in law practice. However, none of the above means that law school was useful as a vocational school--a school to train on particular topics. UM could have used more "spoon feeding"--the organized imparting of facts and basic knowledge on a topic in addition to helping students to learn how to think for the long run. Both are useful.

I have been afforded many opportunities and advantages by my good fortune in having been born in this country in this age. I feel that I have made good use of those opportunities and advantages by application of my time, energy and ambition to benefit society and myself. I am particularly proud of my scholastic and professional accomplishments and the opportunity afforded thereby to help my fellow voyagers through this life to cope with some of the problems they confront. I sincerely believe that the opportunity afforded to me by the University of Michigan Law School has been repaid in part by my contributing to this being a better world than it would be without me and my professional services.

I don't believe that I have ever declared to anybody just how pleased and proud I am of myself (not vanity--just pride in accomplishment). So, whoever you may be who now reads these comments, thanks for asking.
Law school was one of the highlights of my life, I thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

My career since law school is somewhat unusual in the number of different jobs I've had (7). All but one have been directly related to the law, or the practice of it, and all have been as different as they have been stimulating. The lack of security/stability is more than overcome by the stimulation. I enjoyed the formal years of my legal education very much, and did graduate work.

If I have much of a complaint about the profession, it is the general lack of involvement lawyers have in public affairs, government, or even issues on all levels. While this is countra the conventional wisdom, my 5 or 6 years in and out of government service bears witness. Lawyers owe much more than they are giving.

On the other hand, I enjoy the company of my legal brethren immensely, and frequently encourage young seekers of wisdom to consider careers in the law, or a formal, legal education for whatever their goals.

The University, in retrospect, was/is an outstanding experience. My only regret is that my hours of employment (30-40 a week) precluded me from fully participating in the intellectual experience. My grades suffered, as a result. On the other hand, perhaps I came to value the education and the experience greater than someone who did not have such pressures.

If my career were to permit the time off, I would love to return to the campus and "take-over" the several courses I passed with a "D" or simply achieved a "C." Indeed, my career experiences would probably assist me in handling not only the courses but several others at the same time.

Overall my experience at UM was untypical in some respects but an outstanding personal experience overall.

I enjoyed law school, particularly the peer group associations. I do not feel it prepared me very well for my profession (Bank Trust Dept.). An MBA (or my MBA since I have one) was as good, if not better, preparation.

Law School should place more emphasis on practical application of law to business problems, art of negotiating, business getting ability, law office management.

The courses in law school which seemed, (at the time) the least likely to be of value to me in my career, have proven to be the most important—contracts, property, lawyer as negotiator (seminar)—in my real estate "work-out" practice. My training in thinking through legal problems was outstanding—however, the presentation of materials, overall, might have been more creative and exciting. The one major shortcoming was legal writing! I'll be a Mich Law supporter forever!!

Comment on this Questionnaire: I think some of your questions are worded so as to evoke an answer susceptible of misinterpretation. For example, question Sh: I oppose the Equal Rights Amendment because I oppose the kind of judicial legislation (and inevitable judicial silliness) it inherently calls for, but I favor governmental legislative prohibitions on sex discrimination. It is not governmental prohibition I oppose, but the ERA. Similarly, in question 5g, it is not the extent
of environmental regulation that troubles me so much as the sometimes 
ludicrous, overly costly rules laid down in particular instances. There 
is a difference between regulating extensively and regulating badly.

There is a definite need to make institutions of all types—public 
and private—accountable to their respective constituencies without 
the need for private citizens to foot the bill. All too often, the 
attitude of an institutional bureaucrat—corporate or governmental—\is "I'm here and I'm right; if you want to change me, sue me." This is 
especially true of the arrogance of federal governmental agents of all 
types. There ought to be a mechanism for reducing a governmental budget, 
as well as denying tax deductions whenever an institution loses a case 
and has to pay damages.

Of course, this attitude by bureaucrats is merely a human condition. That 
becomes enhanced by the position of the individual; maybe we ought to 
engage in changing the basic thought processes of humans first.
Whatever else I got from Law School, the longer I am away, the more I 
realize that the basic ingrained processes of thought and interaction 
made me a far superior technical lawyer than many of my brethren.

The University of Michigan Law School prepared me very well for my pro-
fession, in spite of my resistance. Learning to think like a lawyer is 
much more important than learning specific substantive and procedural 
rules. My observation of many lawyers who have gone to "trade schools" 
is that they know specifics, but are not especially innovative and are 
often baffeled by an unusual problem.

The practice can be very demanding and can affect family life. I, for-
tunately, have a most understanding wife and daughter and together we 
live a pleasant life in a pleasant small town.
Perhaps I'm lacking in ambition, but I am a very happy man and lawyer. 
And I really am quite good at what I do.

Although I practice as a CPA I enjoyed law school and feel it was worth-
while for me.

There should be more opportunity to develop realistic expectations re-
garding generalized patterns of career development with respect to large 
firm practice, small firm corporate counsel, governmental work and com-
binations of those. Expected scope of practice of each and types of 
pressures.

My law school experience has been and remains a central reference point 
and foundation for my professional life and, in part, my family life. 

I was in the Army for two years after law school. Then in private 
practice at a major Washington D.C. law firm for 5½ years. Then I spent 
3 years in the government with responsible positions at the I.C.C. and 
PTC. Then I organized and built a law department and litigation program 
at one of the major national trade associations for 4½ years. Very re-
cently I have become a partner at a major national law firm. 

Once again I am very reliant on the intellectual skills I learned at law 
school. The resilience I learned will also help if it still holds. In 
my new work discipline and analytical skill is again at a premium.
As a member of our firm's hiring committee I am concerned about a trend
I see in many recent graduates of law schools (fortunately seldom with
Michigan grads) in being able to state a black-letter rule or find one
case and think that is the answer. Why? In my view the following con­
tribute to this situation:
1) Lack of background in legal history to trace developments and know­
ledge of where a particular decision fits into a continuum.
2) Lack of knowledge in fundamental areas of law where legal reasoning
and philosophy plays a more important role, eg. contracts, torts and
property, as opposed to more specialized courses such as tax. The
UCC is not a substitute for contracts.
3) Lack of interest in law except as a way to make money.
Keep up the basics and the good work.

1) I resented what I perceived to be a bias against or condescension to­
ward trial attorneys and those interested in trial practice while I was
in law school.
2) I do not doubt that I received one of the finest legal educations ob­
tainable. Yet I found law school in general a distasteful experience.
It was initially intimidating, exhausting, and frustrating. Finally, it
was just boring. Maybe that is the way it is supposed to be. I didn't
like it.
3) Perhaps law schools could better prepare would-be attorneys for the
almost astonishing triviality that pervades the daily practice of law.

I have extremely fond memories of Michigan Law School and my Ann Arbor
experiences including, not insignificantly, meeting my wife (then a UM
senior) during the first week of my first year at the Law School. Roy
Proffitt (then Dean of Students), who helped me after a bad first year,
and L. Hart Wright, who interested me in tax and got me my first job,
were strong influences. Roy Steinheimer (in the UCC course) was the
greatest lecturer; I still remember UCC citations even though I never work
with the Code in practice! (I still remember IRC citations from Wright
as well, often when I have done no work with them in practice.) UM Law
School instilled a great sense of loyalty in me and other UM grads whom
I meet; and UM Law grads have participated with distinction in various
areas of public service at the federal level.

Having just turned 40, I suppose evaluation or reevaluation of one's
life is normal (whatever that may mean). Michigan was a very important
aspect of my personal and professional life. In addition, I have tried
hard to strike a healthy balance between family and professional life,
and I think I generally have been successful.
Thank you for the opportunity to complete this questionnaire. I look
forward to the summary. I could go on but over the years I have wit­
nessed too many lawyers (hopefully not UM grads) write or talk too much!

This is an interesting questionnaire--hope the answers will be honest--
they will certainly be worth reviewing--

1) This form should be sent to graduates after 1 year out rather than
asking 15 year grads about details of law school finances, etc.
It was interesting to fill this out.
2) I have noticed that the teachers who were not terribly popular--
Browder, T. Kauper, Estep, etc.--were the ones from whom I kept a
knowledge and who prepared me well for practice & professional life.
On the other hand those who were theatrical & therefore perhaps more
"popular"--Kamisar, Wright--did not provide as good a background. Per­
haps this form should go into attributes of a good teacher after 15 yrs.
experience.
In my 15 years the law has been revolutionized as a tool for social justice. The courts legislate without reserve or self-restraint. Judges practice substantive due process, proceeding from the assumption that their superior wisdom equips them to superintend the minutest details of the affairs of others.

Courts complain of over-load, or "hyper lexis" (should be "hyper juris!") & yet seize jurisdiction eagerly & fashion new standards readily. Slow decisis is a joke and Res judicata is honored in the breach only.

The problem is aggravated by the judicialization of administrative law & the ludicrous position of bar association unauthorized practice committees that lay advocates cannot practice before such tribunals.

One of my greatest frustrations is telling clients that the law is never settled (eg. in Michigan!) & their fate rests in the hands of a robed mogul who can do any damned thing he wants.

Another is justifying to lay people the asinine & frivolous decisions and actions of our courts (eg. federal) and ironies such as: Federal judge takes 2 years to decide case, holding police denied someone due process by delaying 1 hour in bringing him before a magistrate.

I do not consider the law to be a "high calling."

I consider my experience at the U-M one of the highlites of my life to date.

Wish had more $ to give to Law School.

Even though I indicated that school should offer and require more "skills" courses, the emphasis should be, as it was when I was in law school, on substantive fundamentals & critical analysis.

Since my law school days I received an MBA from Harvard. This gave me an excellent chance to compare the 2 schools. I have several observations, 2 of which I would offer here:

The quality of instruction at Harvard is substantially higher. This is not to say I did not obtain a good education at Michigan--it was excellent. At Michigan it was "dog eat dog" amongst the students. Except perhaps for the Law Review types there was no real sense of community. I lived 3 years in the Law Quad yet felt essentially alone. There was little effort on behalf of the school to foster a sense of community & belong. This was directly opposite Harvard's approach. Thus, although I have had both successful legal (appointed Judge; head of 5 man legal office) & business experiences, I feel much closer to Harvard.

I appreciate being admitted to, attending and graduating from U of M Law School. I try to be a credit, inter alia, to the traditions, faculty and alumni of the school and some day shall contribute financially to the school in an amount significant for me.

My loyalty to and interest in the Law School far exceeds my loyalty and interest in Northwestern, my undergraduate school. I received a degree from Northwestern. At U of M Law School, I started to learn to think critically and to express myself critically. I shall never stop learning.

Aristotle would have been a great Blue.
I went from law school into the USMC for three years, during part of which I both practiced and taught military law. Otherwise, my experience has been entirely commercial. While my law school experience helped me develop useful analytical skills, my objectives would have been better served by attending business school.

The conclusions I have drawn are the following:

1) One should not go to law school unless one truly wants to practice law and intends to do so.

2) Law as it is practiced in the USA engenders a deplorable waste of time and money.

3) The U of M Law School is an outstanding institution with a first-rate faculty.

I was hopeful this survey would get at impressions of the law school experience, per se. I have repeated in writing to Dean Proffitt my feelings on that subject which are highly adverse to U-M! I felt that the bulk of my own experience was an exercise in humiliation--a lot of it on purpose. I am still angry about that 15 years later. I saw no excuse for the behavior of a number of professors then--nor do I now. Therefore, as an educational experience, my 3 years at the U-M were the pits! I do not believe that such tactics prepare one for the rigors of practice or other business endeavors. It was almost a macho thing. I have spent 15 years in business in increasingly responsible positions in the manufacturing, hospitality, and financial industries including many years in New York City, Chicago, and now San Francisco. In none of those positions did the sadism practiced by professors benefit me. I am very bright and articulate as well as, I believe, caring. None of those qualities was nourished or enhanced at the U-M with the single exception of Paul Kauper's smaller seminar. My experience, in sum, was terrible and remains an agonizing memory. Many of my friends, those with excellent grades as well as those with mediocre ones, felt the same. Why has the Law School not ever consulted us?

(1) I went to a small and exclusive New England men's college and found the faculty to be often arrogant and distant. To my pleasant surprise I found the U. of Michigan law faculty to be genuine, open, thoughtful, and caring people (Kamisar and a couple of others were exceptions).

(2) So I went to Michigan with no expectations, left grateful and impressed, and in the years since I remain pleased with my choice and proud to have studied law at Michigan. Also (for what it is worth) my impression is that Michigan's reputation as a law school has improved over the past 15 years.

(3) I suppose my one complaint about Michigan is in reality a criticism of our society in general. As an adult I have found the quality of the emotional, spiritual, and self esteem aspects of many otherwise "successful" people in our culture is not good. Many people live with what I believe is an unacceptable level of chaos, anger, fear, and self destructiveness. Professional schools and colleges operate on the assumption (1) that their outstanding students don't have these problems (which is nonsense) or (2) these matters are for the home and church. So what happens for people like myself (who came from a poor emotional (not financial) background) is that we are forced to struggle alone in life (unaided by family or schools) to either maintain an unsatisfactory status quo or over time heal ourselves. Fortunately I have had the energy and belief in life to accomplish the latter. All of this is to suggest that
if I were a law school Dean somehow I would allocate some % of my faculty's
time and energy into assessing how my students were developing as human
beings, as young adults. My guess is that such an effort would generate
great benefit for the 1/3 of your students with serious to mild "emotional"
problems, that you would graduate more productive lawyers and happier and
hence more grateful alumni. And whatever "hard law" we would miss could
easily be made up in the months and years which pass once we leave law
school.

It's hard to remember some of the info related to a number of these
questions.

I think that law schools should incorporate in the curriculum a music,
art or literature appreciation requirement. Also there should be some
emphasis made in all courses with dealing with interpersonal relationships
--at work and at home.
These comments are based on experiences with one dimensional lawyers who
only think about the law and their practice ($) and the many divorces I
see among my peers.

I enjoyed my years at Michigan a great deal & felt the balance between
pragmatic skills & attitudes & mere academic analytical skills was one
the school handled well.

1) I think this questionnaire was badly drafted--it does not probe what
attorneys are really doing now & many of the questions were overly complex
which will probably result in inaccurate responses. For example, I am a
tort lawyer spending 80 to 90% of my time on products liability and
medical malpractice defense work--that was not revealed in this question­
naire.
2) Looking back at law school it now seems that for my type of practice
a much better preparation would have been much more training in research
& writing and less study of obscure substantive law areas.

The practice of law isn't what it was cracked up to be. I run a small
town, small office practice with 1 partner. Office overhead chews up
60% of every dollar in, which means that every year we are on a faster
merry-go-round trying to snatch the elusive brass ring. We put in long
and arduous hours for what, by today's standards, are moderate earnings.
We have no security--no large, well-heeled clients; no retirement pro­
gram; no steady cash flow. I honestly believe that in light of economic
pressures; increasing specialization in larger firms; the advent of cut­
rate practitioners; fee regulation by the courts; and the generally low
esteem in which lawyers are held; the days of the sole practitioner and
the small private firm are numbered.
I've decided to move out of general private practice, and am specializing
more and more, primarily in working with a broker/dealer putting together
private offerings in tax sheltered federally sponsored housing develop­
ments. It's challenging, much less aggravating, and potentially far
more profitable than what I had been doing up until about 18 months ago.
The biggest disappointment to me is the bar itself. While the standard of the big firm is acceptable, the average attorney I encounter is avaricious, not prepared, not well-trained, and has adopted intellectual dishonesty as a major technique. Lack of preparation, inadequate training and a shortage of brains seem to predispose the attorney so endowed to adopt "trickyness" as a defense. Also, the courts must start expecting a specialized trial bar with higher standards of competence and ethics than the run of the mill attorney. That's a major reason why the courts are overworked and justice is hard to dispense--no standards for trial counsel.

For me, law school was like being in a holding pattern over O'Hare airport: necessary, but essentially boring and unproductive. There ought to have been the opportunity to complete law school in less than six semesters (as was offered in college). The general personality and character traits that I have, which make me a good lawyer, were in existence long before law school. The specific skills I have as a lawyer were developed after law school through experience and self-training. The three years of law school added very little to either category.

I would not recommend any significant changes in law school.

On the whole, law school was rewarding at the time and rewarding now. Law is as interesting an occupation as any, although not as financially rewarding as some. Looking back on law school, I think that the most effective professors, both at the time and for practice, were those who had had substantial practice experience. Conversely, those with little (e.g. 3-4 years) or no practical background left, and leave, much to be desired. I think a law school is strengthened by a balance between pure academics and academics with sufficient practice experience. Without the balance, the law school experience may become skewed so that students graduate not particularly well prepared to enter into the profession. I must admit I found the professors who had been practicing lawyers to have been the most articulate (a rather important attribute for a young lawyer) and the clearest thinkers.

I am very happy in my marriage, my relationship with my children, my community involvement and my ability to provide for the needs of my family. The only serious dislike I have about law practice is the internal politics of income allocation and getting partners to perform at the expected levels of activity. Sometimes, the stress and tension is such that I think a firm of lawyers is worse than a bad marriage could ever be. It is unfortunate these matters aren't discussed in law school. It is also unfortunate most lawyers don't have a frame of reference for analyzing and solving the dynamics of firm practice.

I feel that I am generally quite happy in my life and that my family is very important to me. I practice law in-house for a large corporation and find that more satisfying than I would have thought in law school. The compensation is good & the largest drawback is the heavy workload. I believe that my law school education prepared me quite well for what I have encountered later in practice.
This is a rather humorless and dull set of questions. The questionnaire neglects somewhat the growing number of lawyers like me who serve as house counsel on a salary with a different sort of client. (i.e. is it the company or the various employees which is (who are) the client?)

I went to the Law School with the vaguest of notions as to what lawyers did and found myself in the midst of an intense competition for a job on Wall Street. When my grades made me a long shot for a big firm there was no one around to help me cope. I have always felt the Law School was hard and irresponsible for allowing, if not fostering, this myopic and demoralizing race in the first year. It is my impression that steps have been taken to make the first year less like boot camp. One way to do this is to de-intellectualize and make the atmosphere more humane. Another is for the staff to transcend the sort of thinking which may be reflected in this questionnaire, thinking which poses lots of artificial either-or choices, eg. big firm law of "bring about social change" law, "function as a lawyer" or be a judge, teacher legislator, businessman, etc. Who says what it is to "function as a lawyer?" Why do we take the private practitioner as the norm? Is it clear that private practice is what most law graduates do now? Will this remain true?

I understand the limits of a questionnaire, particularly one which is to be compared with ones done earlier, but surely this could be more fun and more useful.

Legal practice in/for the IBM Corp. is quite unique and substantially different than what I might have envisioned or anticipated in law school. Basically it involves developing & attaining a thorough understanding of new technologies and then attempting to apply legal principles to new product offerings (packaging and terms & conditions) in a manner that avoids future legal problems & issues. The work is intellectually challenging and rewarding in the sense that it is quite likely to have at least a noticeable affect on our society over the long haul. Also I enjoy working on projects that are likely to shape or affect future events, as opposed to attempting to recreate past fact situations. The preventative and prospective nature of my activity is personally rewarding.

I enjoyed my experiences in law school & believe the education I received provided a firm foundation for success in the legal and judicial fields. Hopefully others will profit as much as I did from my years at the University of Michigan Law School.

The individual's relationship to, & obedience to, God is the only significant Factor.

I believe that my law school education at the U. of Mich. Law School provided an excellent basis for practicing law and for functioning effectively as a community leader in an urban society. I think the training and intellectual stimulation I received at U. of Mich. was and is superior to most legal educations that I have observed (i.e. as I watch other lawyers or meet them in the practice of law or corporate life.)
Will respondents be told what "survey says?"
What practical use is made of this survey?
A law school is its faculty. What profile would a faculty questionnaire cast?
Is the law school able to hire, pay, and keep high quality faculty?

I have enjoyed a wonderful life, although I do not give the Law School much credit for enhancing it. All things considered, I believe I "got what I paid for" but not much else, which is reflected in my record of not donating--in marked contrast to Harvard. Nonetheless, I wish the Law School well in its efforts to improve itself, and hope that other students have a more productive experience.

Michigan Law School from 15 years out is viewed as a mature, earnest, fairly practical professional education with a climate of stability and esprit de corps caused by its stable, high quality faculty and generally mature, private-practice oriented student body. I feel it was a very good school in the 1960's and at least as good today. Though the faculty is remarkably similar to that of 1967, I do not sense the complacency which one might expect as a negative aspect of their longevity at Michigan.

It is interesting to note that the responses to most questions go from left to right with the "satisfactory";"satisfied" and other good answers on the left. Your questions on political issues start with "liberal" answers on the left--an apparent bias.

Everything is great!

Perhaps the most significant lacking in Law School education was my inability to meet and really get to know my classmates and professors. The excessive emphasis on competition, especially in the 1st year, prevented some of the intellectually more stimulating--and perhaps more worthwhile--legal and social discussions that might better prepare us to serve our clients and community.

I take great pride in being a U-M Law School graduate and have found that a law degree from Michigan is greatly respected. My life turned out very different than I expected on entering law school, and my legal education had a lot to do with the changes. It wasn't until 8 years after graduation that I made some personal and career changes that would not have been possible without my legal education. On the whole, I'm pleased with the outcome to date.

Integrate law school with undergraduate 3 years & 3 years, or make it 2 year program full time with clinical periods mixed in to increase involvement.

I am disappointed that the legal profession has lost some of the respect it had when I first chose it as a calling. Hopefully, we can police ourselves better, to regain that respect in the future.

I am very proud and happy with my experience at U-M Law School. Although I certainly was not a devoted student at that time, I learned quite a bit, both about law and about how to conduct myself. The total experience (both the classes and the contact with other students and professors) were very important in shaping my ultimate career--and my life.
A move toward the English system of ethics would be an improvement.
   1. a lawyer's word should be "true" - cut out sharp shrewd practices
   2. cut out requirement that lawyers answer interrogs addressed to their individual clients

Rationalize damage law to enhance certainty of value while eliminating devastatingly & unpredictable verdicts that are difficult to justify--
Restore reality to judicial process - stop splitting hairs.  e.g. A finely divided court on child porn or agonizing over unanimous decision against porn is ridiculous!
Place premium on settlement of disputes.

Restore reality to the legal system:
   1. place premium on truth & reality rather than artifice and legal fiction e.g.
      a. inadmissibility of spouse remarriage
      b. inadmissibility of collateral source
      c. preclude double recoveries
      d. abandon collateral source rule
      e. eliminate insanity defense
      f. eliminate entrapment defense
   2. Reduce criminal litigation, relitigation, appeals, reappeals, retrials, etc., etc., etc.
   3. Shouldn't work so hard to prove and demonstrate that the law is an ass.

I felt that there was a lack of contact with many faculty members due to insufficient time and/or interest on their part.
Also, I had the impression that non-Law Review students were provided with inadequate substitute activities that would have permitted them to develop skills comparable to those developed on the "Review."

Overall, I am proud to be a graduate of the U of M Law School--a truly distinguished institution.

P.S. The survey is an excellent idea!

After 15 years, my love & admiration for U-M Law School and the education received there has not been dimmed; indeed, I grow more respectful of the education received.  I believe I was taught to THINK & ACT as a lawyer should.  Our local Bar Assoc. has approximately 600 members and (in my, perhaps, chauvanistic opinion) U-M alumnae & alumni stand out.
However, I must confess a general concern with the products that law schools seem to be "grinding out" currently (although I certainly haven't sensed it as much from U-M grads).  Much of the majesty of the law and dignity of the lawyer seems to have gone by the wayside--and it's too bad.  I believe our class of '67 may have gone into practice at the tail end of an era when the practice of law was less mechanized, controlled more by self-discipline, more concerned with substance than process and more concerned with people. (I must sound like a relic at the age of 40, but I'd like to see some of that "old time religion" infused back into the American bar and I believe fine schools like ours can aid in that endeavor.)

Generally, I have always (since age 10) looked forward to being a lawyer and have not been disappointed.  My only "gripe" is the time and energy drain from personal and family life.
I have been extremely fortunate to have found a specialty of interest that allows me to practice what I believe in as well as travel, teach and write. Also a city that has accepted such a practice and allowed me and my family the quality of life we sought.

While the casebook method is valuable as a teaching tool it is generally overdone. The real secret to a legal education is in learning the language of law and that can better be taught by textbook approach. After the student has learned the language then is the time to employ the casebook approach in the last year of law school to put it all into context and launch into the world of law practice. Lawyers learn far too little substantive law in 3 years of full time law school to justify the time spent.

In counseling with law students I find myself noting that the disinterest generated in law school for the practice of law must be discounted. The practice of real law in the real world, with its responsibilities and opportunities for personal growth and excitement, is not conveyed in the law school. Students between their first and second year and second and third years should be encouraged to work in law offices or clinics where they will be privy to clients and real problems for solution. This might help save some good people the profession otherwise loses.

I found my law school experience, at the time I was in school, very satisfying, challenging and stimulating. I feel I was extremely well prepared to do anything a good lawyer is called upon to do. I have been happy with my career since which has basically been commercial litigation and corporate work, with some significant pro bono criminal work as well. I was fortunate in being introduced to large law firms by several professors at U-M--notably Ted St. Antoine, Arthur Miller, Tom Kauper and Whit Gray.

Now that I am a single practitioner, my work is somewhat more varied and the specific part of any law school training that draw upon is the confidence that I can tackle just about any problem and handle it well. This is the reason I checked procedure and technique courses as most important. Substantive law in a broad sense is important but it is not necessary to teach the details of any particular state's law (that's what books are for!). I suspect my particular training would not have worked as well had I not worked first for a large firm. I don't believe that law school is the place to learn law to deal with clients (pro bono work is excellent training for that) or to learn court technique (which in my opinion can only be learned by doing it under pressure); thus I do not put a large emphasis on clinical courses.

Most definitely the 3 most unhappy years of my life. I was totally unprepared for the negative feelings I developed about myself and my progress and felt totally isolated. If I had to do it over I am sure I would use different strategies, would seek a friendly work from someone, but as it was I managed to make myself miserable and essentially denied myself the benefits of a great school and faculty. If I had had a genuine faculty counselor it might have been very helpful. The only reason I didn't quit is that I was very stubborn. I was cursed by having great "potential" which made the experience all the more painful.
Have highest regard for quality and reputation of Michigan Law School. I consider living in Law Quad to be an important and valuable facet of Mich. Law School education and am somewhat disconcerted to learn from recent graduates that Quad life has become more utilitarian (cafeteria meals rather than sit-down dinners; no daily maid service in dorm rooms!). The new library addition appears to be a significant enhancement to the school facility.

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I am not the typical law school graduate as I have left the day to day practice to become a real estate developer. I do however make constant use of my legal background, both in my business activities and in dealing with the many lawyers representing my company or entities we are dealing with.

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I found this survey fascinating. It should prove to be a valuable exercise for all law school graduates who, because of the demands of practice, family, and daily life, only rarely reflect on where they are, why they are there and where they are going. I will be very interested in the results of this study.

In my years of private practice (roughly 11+ years) I have tried (and I think succeeded reasonably well) in maintaining a balance among the practice of law, community service, the development of the law, pro bono activities, and family commitments. Over these years, I have seen colleagues and close friends succumb to the considerable pressures of the practice of law (from law firm economics to client demands to litigation tension) or the self-imposed compulsion to win or excel. Yes, the law continues to be a "jealous mistress" who can exact an enormous toll on the unwary and the wary alike. In talking to law students (in our firm's recruitment efforts) I regularly urge these aspiring lawyers to set their quality of life standards early and stick to them. If a young lawyer stakes out the perimeters of law practice early in his or her career the deleterious effects of "practice creep" can be avoided (or at least kept under control).

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I think I'm lucky. I decided on law in my third year of college, and so far continue happy in that choice. I also think I was lucky to have a low cost law school of Michigan's caliber available to me as a state resident. I am concerned that others now in my circumstances--modest family income, five children to educate--won't be able to encourage their children to take higher education, as my parents encouraged me. The scholarships I received at Michigan were very important to me. That's why I continue to contribute annually.

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Intellectual atmosphere and quality of fellow students was outstanding. I'm not convinced the case method is the best method of teaching in all courses. In the "real world" it is too time consuming. In certain courses it would seem much more efficient to use other than the case method.

Faculty quality was excellent. However, I gained the impression that there was such pressure on them to produce scholarly writings that teaching was incidental.

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The practice of law, particularly in a small community, is not what it used to be. Not only are lawyers no longer held in high repute and accorded a certain respect by virtue of their profession alone, but the opportunity for the acquisition of income and assets have been restricted. There are an increasing number of people and organizations vying for a slice of a diminishing pie.

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Not having seen the present curricula, the following may not apply today. I found U.M. too hesitant to make some critical distinctions:

a) the utility of interdisciplinary courses, such as Family Law was in '65-67. The perspective of social work grad students stood a lot of legal dogma on end.

b) the nonapplicability of the Socratic method or at least "inductive logic" when the foundation of the law has become a code, like U.C.C.

c) that the best writers are not necessarily the best teachers. e.g., Kamisar was a lousy prof. for Evidence (at least 15 years ago) but visiting prof Worden was very good in Criminal Law ('64-'65) despite his absence of impressive pedigree. Fortunately, many of your/my profs combined both talents.

Needless to say, I have problems with surveys which attempt to put life and experience in convenient pigeon-holes--convenient for the computer but not necessarily very accurate or revealing. Superficial results can follow.

Three years for law school allows only time for basic courses. State Bar Associations should require procedural courses and intensive programs to familiarize law graduates with local procedures and rules and client contact rather than testing them to see if they learned the basics in law school. This is especially true for accredited law schools.

I think that the law schools generally fail to adequately prepare students for practice in a small firm. I find that most recent law graduates are woefully deficient in appreciation of many ethical standards of practice which I believe should be honored.

1) Counseling was inadequate--most law professors don't wish to serve as advisors in any meaningful capacity. Prof. Proffitt seemed to be the exception.

2) Legal research was neglected as a topic and should have been required.

3) In my class sexism was present among some faculty and many students.

4) Legal ethics was a joke.

5) Michigan Law was an elitist institution for the upwardly mobile white male. It has changed for the better I'm certain but it, along with all the major legal educational institutions, has miles to go in even the discussion of how it needs to change to reflect the needs of the nation, the state and the underprivileged groups of this nation and state.

The time pressures of the profession and from clients are often overwhelming and substantially reduce the amount of satisfaction and enjoyment one should derive from the practice. On the whole, I am very satisfied with the active practice of law, however there is never enough time to do what needs to be done. The interpersonal relationships that develop are rewarding and have given me the most satisfaction.

The economics of the practice are never mentioned in law school and most young lawyers (and even some older ones) have little appreciation for this aspect of the practice. Also, there seems to be only a small percentage of lawyers who willingly donate their time and energies toward bettering the profession. This type of responsibility should be discussed (preached?) at the law school.

Writing, reasoning and an organized approach to legal problems should be stressed to law school students.

Our school can only be judged by the quality of its graduates as demonstrated by their successes within the profession. Please keep working on this.
Law School was a wonderful experience for me. I loved to study, enjoyed my classes, and found my teachers inspiring. I feel that the mandatory courses were needed by me to prepare as an attorney. I observe that those new attorneys who have not had mandatory courses are ill prepared. Similarly, clinic type courses aren't particularly helpful, in my opinion.

I personally found law school to be a drag. Professors allowed witless motormouths to dominate class discussions. As a result of my feelings, I basically did not attend classes.

I felt that we had an excellent faculty (apart from the above). Although I would not have taken the courses (because regular attendance would be necessary), I do feel that there should be more emphasis on nuts-and-bolts, hands-on courses. I do not feel that graduates of Michigan (or any other law school) are qualified to step into day-to-day civil practice simply because they have graduated and passed the bar.

I would suggest that at least 1 year of the 3 year curriculum be devoted to practical skills courses.