Class of 1973 Five Year Report Alumni Comments

University of Michigan Law School

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While in law school I did not feel that the curriculum was geared toward giving me all of the skills that I would need to successfully practice law. I still believe that after 15 years of practice, but I do not feel that most of the skills necessary can be obtained other than through the intensive experience that legal practice itself can give. I feel that clinical law programs are generally of too brief of duration and too superficial in scope to be that helpful.

Law school began to prepare me to be sufficiently analytical to cope with the demands of a law practice. I could not have reasonably expected more. This basis has assisted me in developing the myriad of additional skills I felt I needed.

Private practice in litigation was a lot of fun -- and work -- for about 5-8 years, then it began to change. It (private practice) is now predominantly a business enterprise first and a profession second (a distant second very often). Litigators with whom I dealt also became more and more of a large pain in the ass -- especially the younger ones. As a result, I now work more with non-lawyers and I don't keep time sheets or send bills -- in-house practice is close to what private practice was.

As professionals, too much emphasis is placed on making money, and not on enjoying the fruits of our labors. Also, quantity of work seems to outweigh quality. Some of the legal output that crosses my desk, with increasing frequency, is shoddy. Finally, not enough emphasis is placed on the practical application of legal skills, understanding one's clients, etc. Essentially, there are a large number of book smart attorneys who do not operate effectively in this business world ... and their advice is often worthless because they do not understand the practicalities of the world in which they work.

Law school could be easily changed from 3 years to 1 year without losing any educational benefit.

The practice of law is ten times more enjoyable and intellectually stimulating than law school was.

Perhaps the single most significant lesson derived from my law school experience was the almost subconscious development of a thought process by which to approach problems, which process lawyers tend to regard as second nature, but which they come to realize in their dealings with clients, businessmen and others is not at all the norm among non-lawyers. It is this extreme
sensitivity to detail, logic and precision in the expression of ideas, as well as the analytical ability to anticipate consequences and explore alternative solutions that set lawyers apart and cause others to seek them out for advice. The courses a law student elects may prove helpful in his/her later legal career, although laws tend to change over time and among jurisdictions. However, the thought process developed in law school is a tool which lasts for one's entire career. University of Michigan Law School and its superb faculty provide law students with the intellectual stimuli by which this thought transformation is achieved.

The Michigan Law experience grows in importance as I look back. Lawyers and the practice of law is becoming increasingly, and excessively, concerned with income production. It is no longer a profession; it is a business.

Lawyers increasingly view themselves with a "hired gun" mentality, and consider "winning" to be the primary function of a lawyer.

When I started law school I heard the "joke":

The First year they scare you to death;
The Second year they work you to death; and
The Third year they bore you to death.

I think they did all three all three years. It was the worst three years of my life.

As you have asked, follow my comments on life and law and law school and other essential and non-essential follies. I am proud of my affiliation with the Law School but have strong negative feelings about the experience. I came to Michigan with a background (small town, Catholic, Southwestern, Hispanic) different than most of my fellow students. The first week, a blond, curly-haired, pimply faced "nerd" from one of the "Ivies" made the following comment: "One-third this school is nigger, one-third is Catholic, and one-third is Jew. There's no room for the White Anglo Saxon Protestant that made it great." I was naive and twenty-two (perhaps I shouldn't have been), and that remark set the tone for my three years. I found the faculty highly accomplished but not very human. For example, in my second year, my Grandfather, the man who raised me, passed away. I asked a professor to let me postpone the exam over the Christmas holidays. He responded that he could arrange for me to take the exam on December 23 (the funeral was to be held on December 22) in a city 135 miles away. We argued quite a bit; and when he did not relent, I told him to fail me because I was not going to take the exam. Finally, he grudgingly stated,"All right, I guess you're human too." That's all he said and I left, shocked at his behavior. I took the exam right after the vacation (without having spent two weeks preparing for it as I surmised the professor feared) and received a "B+." To this day, I resent that treatment. For these reasons, I have not been a
larger contributor to the Law School Fund.

Michigan is a great law school from an academic viewpoint. I just wish it had more people like Bill Bishop on the faculty, people who give the term "gentleman (or lady) and scholar" all of its intended meaning. But for him, Dave Chambers and Marvin Felheim (American Studies) I would have quit.

I can't conjecture how many of these attitudes and feelings stem from my minority background. I felt as well-prepared as anyone coming in. I think part of the reason I went on to get a Ph.D. was because my law school experience so stripped me of my self-esteem that I had to prove something to myself. When I finally got into practice, like "Fightin' Joe Piscopo" in the popular beer commercial, I felt I could beat anyone. I must say that I have had a great deal of success in the courtroom, at the negotiating table and in my practice. Maybe much of the credit goes to the excellent training received (David Chambers once told me that, despite my difficulties, I was "doing the top five percent of the law work nationally"). However, I know I am much brighter than I was made to feel at Michigan.

Whether we like it or not, we live in a racially-fragmented society. The Law School might pay greater attention to the individual and what he or she has to contribute. I once heard the Dean of Admissions state that Michigan just watched what Harvard and Yale did and followed suit. He had been asked a question (in 1970) about "pass/fail" grading. I was embarrassed for the School. It was an unworthy remark. I would like to see the Law School strive to integrate its faculty and stress to its students the value of cultural diversity. Such a perspective would have to start with the Dean and be given more than lip service. If Michigan is truly great, its stature will be enhanced, not diminished, by recognizing the contributions each of its students have to make. I fear that a generation later, the "WASPish" sentiments of my classmate still prevail.

Michigan, I love and respect you in many but not all ways.

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It took years to recover from my feelings of worthlessness after graduation from law school. I felt I was constantly told I was stupid, unprepared and "young" although I worked as hard if not harder than my classmates. I still have feelings of terror at being called on in class. The egos of law professors are unmatched in the "real world," and the Socratic method put an emotional barrier between me and learning. It has only been since my election to a judgeship that I have felt I can make a significant contribution to the legal system.

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I can only wonder whether the funds expended on the tabulation of these questionnaires is worth it. I have little or no faith in the social sciences which waste millions in finding either meaningless or obvious correlations.

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The more removed in time I am from my days at the Law School, the more I appreciate those wonderful years I spent in Ann Arbor.

I am most impressed by the fact that the area of law in which I am practicing is far removed from those areas I considered entering during and immediately after law school. Consequently, perhaps the Law School's long-held notion that every student should strive for a well-rounded legal education is born more of experience than of logic. In any event, the curriculum should continue to broaden the minds of law students rather than attempt to channel their thinking into a specialty.

Ethics cannot be overemphasized as the bedrock of any lawyer's reputation. For those lawyers who constantly counsel business clients, it is crucial that he or she maintain the highest standards of ethics because the client will always push to exploit the very limits of the law. Quite often it is only legal counsel who can stop the corporate "bandwagon" from committing an unethical/illegal act. Law students must be adequately trained to assume such a role, and they should thoroughly understand that it is a role that occupies a lonely outpost.

Finally, please don't ever consider terminating "Law Quadrangle Notes." It is my only remaining umbilical cord to the Law School.

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I believe justice requires people to be responsible for their own actions. I believe the American legal system has moved a long way from this requirement and believe that the actions of lawyers are a major reason for this movement.

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Would recommend that U-M Law School seriously consider:

a) a course or seminar on taking law school exams prior to or early in one's freshman year of law school. Some of the best input that I received on this "technique" was in the bar review course -- long after it was useful for law school.

b) a move away from the casebook method to a textbook (outline approach) with case examples. This approach, especially when coupled with more practical experience in all areas (e.g., drafting of wills, tax matters, real estate, negotiations -- as well as litigation) would maximize the student's benefit from a finite amount of study time. This comment is especially appropriate for second or third year students who are presumably intelligent enough and experienced enough after reading cases all through freshman year to utilize another less time-consuming approach without sacrificing legal skills.

c) a means of diminishing the "intimidation" aspects of law school. The practice of law requires hard work and the personal mettle to deal with confrontation. Nonetheless, it is not an "intimidating" atmosphere in any general sense.
Since law school is presumably an educational experience and since most people do not "learn by intimidation," any efforts that can be made to decrease this atmosphere (e.g., decrease of class size, use of mid-term tests, diminution of the use of the Socratic method) should enhance the learning or educational experience at the Law School.

I have an interesting and challenging job in a relatively small community with many social and cultural amenities.

I think that the system of hiring lawyers is far too heavily oriented to relying on 1st year law school grades. (I was the person responsible for hiring 3 years in my firm of 75 lawyers).

I also believe that the third year of law school is largely a waste of time. Perhaps the curriculum should be shortened to 2 years.

My law school training has been invaluable throughout my career as a source of mental discipline when analyzing problems in an orderly fashion. I feel that Michigan truly provided a learning experience.

Although I do not in fact practice the Law, the legal training has enabled me to be involved in a multitude of various business pursuits successfully.

I enjoyed my law school experience and am grateful I was afforded an opportunity to attend.

I would suggest a course on the stress involved in law practice and something on alcohol and substance abuse. I know I fell victim to this and it has taken me some time to recover. Some awareness of these issues and the known high rate of alcoholism and substance abuse among lawyers would be helpful.

1) When I think back on law school, I can only recall 3 or 4 excellent teachers (one was a visitor). I know how reputations are built, but there should be more emphasis on what goes on in the classroom.

2) Why a consistent history of arrogant fools in the admissions office? Is this a tradition that needs to be upheld? By the way -- this comment is not sour grapes -- I have 2 law degrees from U-M.

I feel that much more training in effective written and oral communication is needed in law school. This should be done even if it means adding a semester to the curriculum. This should include instruction in courtroom practice.

I felt so alienated in law school that I could not bring myself to go back into the building for many years after graduation. As a minority I felt ostracized from the main stream. Law school
was far more conservative than undergrad at U of M or School of Public Health of which I am also a graduate.

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Life is tough but rewarding.

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1) Writing clearly and effectively is a must. Law school prepares you to write in "threes." A plaintiff doesn't allege, he/she "states, alleges and avers." Why? Lawyers are terrible writers.

2) No course offered while I was there came close to teaching what it takes to put a case together or what to do with it at trial. Irving Younger did more in a half day, than a semester at school. You should review a few of his tapes.

Negotiating is an art which needs training. There was little offered on this and should be expanded or added as needed.

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I have given up the active practice of law, without regrets. My legal experience as a litigator in a small firm has helped me achieve some success as head of a shorthand reporting firm, although, of necessity, I have had to become an enthusiast (if not a maven) in the world of computers.

My present (and future) career offers several qualities not present in the life of most attorneys: hands-on management (e.g., meeting a payroll, handling personnel), extensive, critical and sensitive client contact, the joy of bill-collecting, and being the person at whose desk the buck stops. As you may divine, I think running a small business is probably a useful education for any attorney whose practice involves representing businesses the owners of which are identifiable.

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While the educational experience at UM has provided a solid basis for my legal work, the academic and social atmosphere at the Law School had severe limitations. Class size, approachability of profs and the Socratic method -- all were limiting factors. Professors had a tendency to be elitist/condescending -- if you were not one of the top 10-20% of your class little interest seemed to be paid to your concerns. I say this despite the fact I had several outstanding profs and do not mean to uniformly categorize them. Sax, White, Sandalow, Bishop were excellent -- probably my own boredom with the process was as much to blame.

Social pressure to succeed was intense -- yet nothing was done to try to alleviate or deal with that pressure. Students should be trained to be good people first/good lawyers second. The emphasis on good jobs/high pay, etc. was always present. Interpersonal relations suffered as a consequence, yet I have found that the ability to deal effectively with other people is the most important of all my lawyer skills.

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In law school, I worked hard with poor results. I now believe that the training was more intellectual and theoretical than
practical (practical is my strong suit). The Placement Office was of no help to me as I wanted to return to New York and the "Wall Street" firms were not interested in me. I graduated without a job and finally found one several months later. I was with a firm I didn't like doing work I didn't want to do, but I was grateful to have a job. At that time, I felt the Law School shortchanged me. I am now a name partner in a very successful firm and I am recognized throughout the country as an authority in a small, specialized field of law. Today, I give the Law School a lot of credit for giving me a strong foundation in the law.

The only shortcoming of the Law School was that it did not have a support system for those in the bottom part of the class.

Looking back on my law school experience, I believe that I was intimidated by the reputation of the Law School, its faculty and students. Consequently, I don't think I performed well nor did I get as much out of my three years at U of M as I might otherwise have achieved. Like all or most of the other students I had performed well in school elsewhere and had experienced success academically. When I arrived at law school, the style of instruction, the demands of the classroom and the caliber of the competition shook my self-confidence and I don't feel that I ever fully recovered that confidence until long after graduation. For a long time I carried with me the feeling that I was an average law student who would at best be an average lawyer. That self-image created -- and still occasionally produces -- a great deal of stress for me. However, with time and experience, I have come to appreciate the fact that I did learn something, did acquire some useful skills during my legal education, and that there are areas of the law which I enjoy and in which I can do well.

Despite the somewhat negative comments above, I have to say that I met several tremendous people, both students and faculty, while attending the Law School, people of integrity and with great intellectual ability as well as other talents. Many of these people remain my friends to this day. In retrospect these relationships are one of the most cherished aspects of my law school memories. And even though I may have been intimidated by some of the professors, I now know that I learned a great deal in spite of my own fears.

I had a good education although I felt at the time and still feel that most of my class was liberal beyond common sense and that some faculty members were overly liberal. To this day I am poorly trained in labor law. I dropped the course because it was so biased.

I enjoy working with U of M attorneys. If I were ever to add an attorney to my business, I would look for a Michigan graduate.

I took course work outside the Law School, so that my time was 4 years instead of 3 in Ann Arbor. I believe law school was more
valuable to me when I was taking nonlaw courses.

The longer I practice the more I appreciate the fine legal training I received at Michigan Law School.

Law school at Michigan was an outstanding intellectual experience and excellent professional training (to the extent that any school -- in contrast to actual experience -- prepares one for professional work, i.e., strong development of analytical skills, theoretical knowledge). Even though I do not currently work in law, the background and training provided me by Michigan Law (and my several years in legal work) remain very valuable and important to me. They have added substantially to my development as a professional and as a person.

To a large extent my responses to this questionnaire are misleading as they are geared to my present job with a law firm which I have held for only eight months. My government jobs as a prosecutor and staff attorney for an independent regulatory agency were very satisfying intellectually and in fulfilling my desire to be performing socially useful work. However, the pay was so low that I could no longer stand living with the mounting sense that it was economically irresponsible for me to continue in public service. Many of the idealistic lawyers I know who began their careers in government service have left for the same reason. The disparity between the salaries of government lawyers and private practitioners has gotten to be so great that it is hard to imagine how the government can attract talented lawyers in the future.

My negative memories of the Law School stem largely from the feelings of isolation that were engendered by being one of the very few women in the class and the lack of interaction with the faculty outside of the classroom (Harry Edwards was a notable exception to this experience). I felt very little support for my career aspirations or for my very presence at the Law School. I assume that the women students today are not told, as I was, that they should go to the Social Work School instead of the Law School because it was easier work and one could still attend mixers at the Law School and meet a lawyer (presumably a real -- or male -- lawyer).

The Law School experience had almost no relevance to my later career in corporate law. It would have been much more relevant if the emphasis had been more on practical skills -- e.g., drafting, negotiating, etc. There was too much emphasis on criminal law, courtroom procedure, etc.

Law school is a necessary requirement for the practice of law, but does not really teach a student how to practice law. Students should be told this in advance!

It is possible to "have it all" without being trapped by big firm, big organization pressures or joining the counterculture.
I think I've had (so far) a most satisfying family life and career, with lots of prestige, intellectual challenge, and reward, without having to live in a big city, bill 80 hours a week, or anything of the sort.

We should change our expectations and images of success, to recognize that lawyers can raise children around the office, can produce good work outside "American Lawyer" type firms, can make it without obnoxious summer clerkships. We are people first, not associates, partners or even judges.

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At this particular point in my career I am very happy with the education that I received from the University of Michigan Law School. Although I have a small practice composed of myself and one lawyer who works for me, few lawyers have had the opportunities that I have had to practice in both the federal and state courts.

I am convinced that the education that I received at the University of Michigan has played a major role in my accomplishments.

I won't review my accomplishments because I don't think that is necessary. I might say though that I have a wonderful future ahead of me in Chicago.

I am disheartened greatly however by the negative publicity a few students have brought to the School because of racial confrontations.

I am a black lawyer. I am therefore very sensitive to the news that there are racial problems at the University of Michigan. I sincerely hope that such is not the case at the Law School.

Hopefully, the Law School will continue to recruit black students. As an attorney practicing in Chicago I know many graduates from my law school. It is my honest opinion that the black graduates are having a disproportionately positive impact as lawyers in Chicago. The investment made by the School in black students is paying wonderful dividends to the citizens in my city.

My recollection of the faculty is that they were not only brilliant men (as there were no women professors at that time), but that they were caring individuals who really cared about the students and who really wanted to see black students at Michigan. I will always be grateful to the faculty for the encouragement given me by these wonderful human beings. And not enough can be said for the student body -- a hard working bunch of kids who inspired you to reach the highest goals.

As an example of the positive impact that Michigan has had over my career, recently I have begun to write and publish articles even though I have a very busy practice. I have a concern to
meet the high standards of accomplishment that Michigan instills. Indeed, although I believe it obviously important that the questionnaire sought information about salary, certainly, the quality of the student body could also be measured by an inquiry about whether the students were publishing their ideas. The School would probably be pleasantly surprised at the number who do publish.

It appears to me that a major concern of the questionnaire is with the issue whether changes should be made in the Law School. In my opinion there should be no changes. A successful law school is not measured by the particular subject matter taught, but instead by the quality of thinking passed from professor to student. In this respect Michigan excels and should not change.

I worked hard at Michigan and I work just as hard today. Yes, I would like to have a better personal life, but I have learned that one must make choices.

As one of the few conservatives in my legal aid program, I have had to both ask myself and deal with the question of others concerning why I have stayed in legal services. The answer is that I enjoy helping clients, and the job gives me the chance to work on interesting problems. Also, I believe that every member of this society should have access to the dispute-resolving and rights-protecting mechanisms the law provides.

What may well lead me into another line of practice is an increasing dissatisfaction with my program's emphasis on "law reform" work on behalf of "needs" which are chosen by the management, to the detriment of helping real people with the problems they bring to our offices. I doubt if the low income population is being well served by this change in emphasis, and I have my doubts about the wisdom of attempting to bring about broad social change through litigation.

My life is generally satisfying, and my income is more than sufficient for my lifestyle, including saving and investing for retirement.

There are too many practicing attorneys. Their numbers spur litigation that is not necessary.

If lawyers are going to give management advice, then law schools should teach business management courses. Lawyers frequently give very silly business advice to clients because they are naive about the realities of business.

Your survey needs to more adequately address those of us who no longer practice law. I believe legal training is valuable for nonlegal pursuits.

Forget the bar exam, we need a two-three year internship program for graduating lawyers. We are foisted, unskilled, upon the
unsuspecting public after law school. Many of us do not have mentors or trainers at this time and we can (and do) do a lot of harm.

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I often went to class afraid of being humiliated. This was not a good learning experience. Later, when I went to graduate law school, I was treated with more respect. Recently, I have attended a two-week summer program of instruction for lawyers and been treated by the professors as a fellow professional. What a pleasure!

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Although I no longer actively practice law, I continue to have significant contact with the legal community through the activities of our corporate legal department which reports to me. After years of viewing the actions of lawyers, judges and the legal system in general, I no longer take much pride in the profession. The daily abuses of the legal system by attorneys motivated only by money, and the unwillingness of judges to exercise their authority to curb abuses and properly sanction lawyers, have led the entire country's legal system into a state of turmoil, hostility and injustice that only worsens the moral fabric and economic condition of the country. While the decline in moral and ethical standards is certainly not limited to lawyers, lawyers, unfortunately, represent that decline at its worst. Although there are many ethical and principled attorneys, the number of those who are not is rising. As a final matter, my experiences in a state which elects all levels of judges have underscored the need for judges to be appointed in a manner that minimizes political cronyism and special interest group influence and encourages the selection of competent, qualified and independent individuals.

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I found law school to be a rich and rewarding intellectual/academic experience. I enjoy the law.

I found the reality of law practice and lawyers to be radically different than what I think of as the law and my expectations. Over the past 15 years I have grown more and more frustrated by what I now feel to be the general uselessness of lawyers in our society. I have now had the unhappy experience of being a client for the past 5 years and my opinion of lawyers and the legal system finds new lows nearly every day.

Although my legal training has been helpful to me in my life, and although it is essential to my ability to run my business and develop my products, most often I am embarrassed and ashamed to be a member of the legal profession!

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I love the practice of law and the balance I have achieved between work, family and community activities.

Law is the very best profession that I could have chosen given my wide range of interests.

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I have come to believe that the power of sanity in all aspects of law practice is greater than the power of persuasion and manipulation.

As I mentioned above, I hated law school. I entered in '70 and graduated in '73 -- politically and personally turbulent times. I entered from U-M LSA, and I experienced totally incapacitating culture shock. Most of my classmates professed values (wealth, materialism, conservative politics) that I abhorred. My classes seemed (in my first year) totally irrelevant to me, so I stopped attending in September and wound up on academic probation. I didn't quit (because I'd never quit on anything [and because of the draft]) and gritted my teeth and graduated on time.

If I had to do it over again, I'd either go to grad school (English, psych, or anthropology) or try to do better in law school. My interest in doing better relates solely to subsequently having to return to grad school to prove to the academic world (and to myself) that I was as intellectually competent as I'd like to believe I am. Rehabilitation's a painful enterprise.

Otherwise, life's worked out for me about as well as I hoped: I teach full-time in a decent university, expect to earn tenure, get to read, write, conduct research and teach for a living. I have a wonderful spouse and son.

Advice to the Law School universe: 1) concentrate your efforts on teaching how law shapes behavior (and whether it does); 2) refuse admission (or at least graduation) to anyone who has not spent two full years working for a living; 3) increase your laudable attention to interdisciplinary instruction; 4) impress on students an ethical approach to their profession and to their lives; 5) leave the human campsite cleaner than you found it.

I did my judicial clerking beginning in 1981 after graduating in May of 1973 -- encourage law students to consider trial court clerkships as well as appellate court clerkships. I am trial court clerk -- 6 judge court.

I worked as in-house counsel for a bank for 4 years and as a law librarian for 1 1/3 years before doing a clerkship.

I enjoyed living in Ann Arbor during law school. Students should be encouraged to make good use of their time so that they have time for other people, have time for something other than law, and still prepare themselves to excel as attorneys.

Overall, law school was a very unhappy time for me. My positive feelings are very few and are reserved for several classmates and several faculty. It is ironic that I work full-time in labor, and I did not take one labor law course. At the time, I had absolutely no interest in the subject.
Theory taught in law school fundamentals, and rigorous analytical approach, has been very valuable in practice.

The U of M admits "non-traditional" students but continues to be inflexible in its program. It is possible to meet academic demands and be gainfully employed. Class schedules should be more flexible to allow employment.

Your LLM program should be available to employed attorneys. The U of M appears to believe that full time students only can meet academic standards. I disagree. Many serious and able students must earn a living. Our firm prefers new hires with a work record, preferably beginning with paper routes at an early age. The U of M doesn't produce many such applicants. I believe you're missing an opportunity and avoiding a responsibility. Employed students will more probably be productive graduates and serious students. I further believe a State institution should be more responsive to community needs.

Thank you for allowing my participation in this study of alumni of the Class of '73. I look forward to receiving a copy of the survey results.

As a black alumnus of the University of Michigan Law School, I particularly want to focus my comments on employment opportunities for blacks in the legal profession. The experience I had with campus recruiters during my second and third year was so negative that I questioned my abilities to succeed as an attorney. I recall one recruiter closing his notebook when I entered the interview room. He then limited his questions to professional and amateur athletics, while making no attempt to explore any of my accomplishments in law school or any effort to determine what contribution I could make to the firm for which he was employed.

Since law school, I have discovered that there remains for blacks a formidable barrier to employment in "white" law firms. I feel confident that I would have overcome such barriers had I persisted in my efforts to find employment in that arena. Instead, three years after law school, I chose to enter private practice as a solo practitioner. After years of struggling, the practice has begun to pay off and I feel very comfortable with the degree of professional and personal success I have attained after 12 years. The amount of control, self-determination and sense of accomplishment is well worth the long hours and is frequently a source of envy of my friends and associates.

I presently chair the California State Bar Executive Committee on Law Practice Management and lecture on that topic around the state. My practice emphasizes civil rights and employment issues, both areas with which I have a very strong identity. I have a wonderful, supportive wife and a beautiful four year-old daughter. I feel most fortunate. My only wish is to again be
placed in the same room with the interviewer I met in law school so that I could tell this story to him.

In retrospect, law school was more intellectually stimulating than it seemed at the time. But it was not nearly as stimulating as it might have been if we all had been less concerned about getting grades that would qualify us for choice jobs. Still, I have always remembered my years at Michigan very fondly.

See, you practice law 15 years and you start to edit even informal comments!

I was saddened to hear of the death of Professor Bill Bishop. I took several courses from him while at the Law School. He was an excellent teacher and scholar -- but even more important, a fine human being, a man interested in people and an individual who enjoyed hearing from former students in later years. He will be missed by students, colleagues and friends.

I believe that the "opinion" questions in Part D of your survey, because of their ambiguity and generality, may lead to misleading conclusions. This is particularly true of the two questions on political attitudes -- current and during law school. These questions are oversimplified and will mask the true nature of changes in attitudes.

Political Attitudes: Take, for example, attitudes toward rights of the accused in criminal matters. I am as liberal as ever in my attitudes about the right to a fair trial, but decidedly more conservative with respect to curbing crime and punishing convicted criminals.

I am as concerned as ever about individual rights to privacy; but is concern about governmental intrusion a hallmark of liberalism or conservatism? In current politics, it seems that many "conservatives" who profess the greatest mistrust of government are in the forefront of moves to pry more into the private lives of citizens and to impose their social values on others.

On social issues, my basically liberal views have not changed much, but my attitudes about ways to deal with these issues have moderated. I continue to believe government must take an active role, but not necessarily through massive social programs. Economic incentives can and should play a greater role.

On economic issues, as well, my attitudes are mixed. I have a greater appreciation of the importance of private initiative, competition, and the profit incentive, but far from the point of believing that the public is inherently best served by an unconstrained marketplace. Even as to tax policy, I am (perhaps paradoxically) less enamored with the idea of using taxes for wealth redistribution, but more concerned that middle income people are not bearing a disproportionate overall tax burden.
compared to the wealthy. I am also becoming more concerned about the seemingly widening gap between the wealthy, on the one hand, and middle and "under-classes," on the other hand. Am I more liberal or less?

On environmental issues, I find myself coming full circle and then some. In law school I strongly supported stringent protection of the environment. Over the next ten years my views moderated toward a balancing of environmental and economic needs. But now I have become concerned that potential environmental dangers far transcend the mere loss of natural beauty and wildlife habitat: ozone depletion, acid rain, toxic and nuclear waste, loss of the world's forests and the consequent implications on endangered species and oxygen generation, and the list goes on. If anything, I am more "liberal" now.

My responses to these two questions suggest that I am, on balance, somewhat less liberal now than 15 years ago. But my attitudes differ depending on the issue. Moreover, my "shift" with respect to economic and social problems reflects primarily a change in attitude about solutions to these problems rather than a lessening of concern about the problems themselves. I suspect the same may be true of many other survey respondents.

Because of the generality of the questions, I suspect that your survey results will "show" a general shift to the right among my classmates. But it would be erroneous and improper to draw this conclusion without acknowledging that the results can only be viewed in the most general sense and cannot be extended to specific issues. Under accepted survey principles, the conclusions can be no more specific than the survey questions. I trust that any published summary of the survey results will note these limitations.

Ethical Conduct: I have a similar problem with your generalized question about the ethical conduct of the lawyers with whom I have dealt. My definition of "ethical" conduct is more stringent than bar standards. I have had the pleasure of dealing with some lawyers with the highest ethical standards, whose word I would trust even without written commitment. I have also encountered some that I wouldn't trust for anything, but who were nevertheless "effective" in pursuing their clients' interests and would probably not run afoul of bar standards -- though they rank low on my personal ethical scale. The vast majority of lawyers I have dealt with fall above average on my scale. Averaging the high and the low on my scale produces an overall "3" ranking, but by bar ethical standards it would be closer to a "2" ranking.

The lawyers that I have dealt with the most tend to have a higher ethical ranking on my scale. This is probably because repeated dealings eventually foster a greater sense of mutual trust and respect (in some cases it may also be because the adversaries realize that they will not be allowed to get away with slipshod practices). Thus, if my rankings were weighted by the extent of
my dealings with other lawyers, the overall ranking on my personal scale would be a "2" rather than a "3."

For these reasons, your conclusions need to be tempered by the fact that different respondents may be applying differing standards and weightings of "ethical" conduct.

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I am very grateful for having had this opportunity to go to Michigan Law School. It provided me with excellent training and was a very enjoyable experience. Go Blue!

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I believe what will come across quite plainly in my survey response is the need for more practical "hands-on" type courses in law school. I recognize that U of M is a national law school that is committed to the Socratic teaching method but I think it's absurd that law students graduate from law school and don't know how to draft a complaint, file a motion, etc. The medical profession, by way of example, would not tolerate such deficiencies in medical school graduates. Granted, it's been 15 years since I've graduated and a lot of things may have changed during this period in terms of the Law School curriculum, so I can only comment on the situation when I was there. Other than this, my only other complaint was I felt some of the professors on staff were racists. My sense is some of them, Jerold Israel being a case in point, felt that all minorities were there solely for EEO statistical purposes; but did not believe they were as intelligent as their white counterparts. Overall, my law school experience at U of M was positive but I wouldn't want to go through it again.

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I practiced law about 8 years before I had children and stopped to raise them full-time. I came to feel that I had a very superior law school education. Many lawyers I encountered had had a specific, rule-oriented education aimed at passing the bar exam. In dealing with legal problems, it was so important to be able to look at the problems theoretically and from both sides.

I wish now that I had been a better student and participated more in class. I come from a strictly working class background and knew no lawyers. I wish I had had a little professional counseling. If I had been a better student I would have known a few professors.

If I could do my 20's over, I would definitely clerk for a judge for the contacts and exposure to the legal community. Also, I would have looked for a corporate law position much earlier. I practiced law with Mountain Bell my last 3+ years and was tremendously happy there.

I also have to say that if I could choose a law school again it might be Cornell with its small classes.

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I would advise aspiring public interest lawyers to make some money before doing public interest work. The work creates its
own pressures due to the fact that its practitioners are normally "outgunned." Financial pressures can make public interest practice much more difficult.

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In all candor, I learned more about criminal law and procedure in one summer clerking for a prosecutor's office than I did in my law school classes. There is just no substitute for hands-on courtroom experience.

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I would be interested in more frequent income surveys.

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I enjoyed law school. I had nor have any great desire for significant change. I feel that I was well prepared for my practice.

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I have left the practice of law. In my opinion it was a mistake for me to attend law school and then practice law. My interests are much more in the area of general business. My view of the legal profession is very cynical.

1) As a society we spend too much on lawyers and involve them too deeply in our affairs.
2) As a group lawyers exhibit an incredible lack of both business judgment and ethics.
3) Bar associations and courts are far too hesitant to discipline miscreants in the profession.

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My law school career was interrupted by the Vietnam War and stretched over 6 years. It was during this time that I found other business interests. I did work as an assistant prosecuting attorney for 5 years and I enjoyed trial work very much. I also taught business law at EMU. Nevertheless, I am happy now doing marketing and advertising. There are great similarities. I gather and sort information, prepare arguments and persuade others to change their opinions very much as I did in the courtroom. Only now my "jury" is composed of consumers.

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It was upsetting to learn that in recent years the administration proposed to abolish the summer starter section to save money.

Those of us who benefitted from the summer starter program should make ourselves heard in the event that such a suggestion is made again in the future.

Being able to start law school in the relative calm of summer was a blessed alternative to the pressure cooker of the standard first year program.

Diversity in the student body is valuable. This program promotes diversity. It would be a shame to lose the flexibility which this program adds to the Law School schedule.

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I continue to believe that U of M Law School is too unwilling to consider hiring experienced lawyers who could be good teachers,
and is too willing to hire smart law school graduates who have not practiced law much or at all. Please note that some types of learning come from "doing" of a type that even a U.S. Supreme Court law clerk is not likely to experience.

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I apologize for not returning this to you promptly. I have spent several months thinking about what to say in this segment. I hope this reaches you in time for inclusion. But I would like to share some impressions of life after law school.

I went directly into what was then a large firm after law school. Michigan prepared me well for law practice. I spent two years in that firm before moving to the east coast, to a medium-sized firm. After three years there, I returned to the large firm but in a small, east coast branch office.

I have always worked hard in my fifteen years. Up until this year, evening work and weekends were a regular thing. Until the last several years 1800-2200 chargeable hours was the norm with several hundred more hours on top of that. Many years with one week of vacation or no vacation. I am successful economically, although not as much so as some of my classmates in more profitable firms. And I am successful in my work. But in the new, competitive law firm arena I always wonder whether my success will continue or top out.

By and large I have enjoyed law practice. I have worked in a pleasant environment with good clients on fun and stimulating projects. There is, however, a large part of law practice that is tedious and boring. But law practice is demanding--much more so than other occupations I am familiar with. The clients that want a preliminary injunction tomorrow; who want you to make over a trial tomorrow; who want a compendious report tomorrow. The demands are stressful and at great personal expense. And often unpredictable.

Thus, I am ambivalent about my work. It has been often stimulating, rewarding, and interesting. But it is also demanding, stressful, and boring. When I see the jobs my clients have, I wonder if they do not have the better deal. While they often have security, regular hours, and great benefits, I do have an independence in my work that they do not (so long as there are enough clients around to provide me with a job). In short, this can be a rewarding profession, but the demands are very great.

In a different vein, as I approach middle age, I must say that I do wonder whether it has all been worth it. All the nights and weekends in the office. They didn't seem like that much at the time, but one now realizes that they're gone for good. And my work took precedence at a critical time in my marriage--contributing to its dissolution. If I had to do it over, I probably would do it differently. Perhaps my perspective now is that the enduring values are marriage, family, and the job of life; while a stimulating, gratifying career is important, the
rewards of career are not lasting. I wish I had had this perspective when I was approaching 30 rather than when I was approaching 40.

1) UMLS was a formalistic process bearing little relationship to preparation for, or success in the practice of law

2) Few professors conveyed any reasonable concepts and/or experience in the "real world" of practicing law

3) The most valuable aspect of UMLS was creating the confidence associated with successfully competing against a truly gifted and talented pool of classmates.

I found E1 hard to fill out because the % of time in those activities varies greatly from time to time. For example until leaving our recruiting committees this year I had spent probably 20% of my time for the last 5-10 years in recruiting. I do all of the items listed from time to time, but to assign some % to each seems to be very strained, and I question how valuable you will find this information from all of the responses.

I had no complaints with law school except that I don't believe I would go straight through if I had it to do again. Too much of a grind. Also that is probably not a smart course for someone in today's market with its emphasis on 2nd year summer clerkships.

When I began practice I was struck by the factual and legal complexity of the problems that were faced on a daily basis. These problems must be solved and it is not sufficient to identify the issues or the arguments that can be made pro and con. It seems that Law School did not teach that very well. Perhaps it doesn't lend itself to a course -- it may be like to both common sense or experience.

My law school experience will always remain a very positive memory. Nonetheless, I think that there would be some merit in offering students more opportunities to learn about the actual practice of law. By this I do not mean to refer to trial or appellate advocacy, but rather the various alternatives, such as large, middle and small sized firms, clerkships, state's attorneys, federal attorneys, public defenders, government attorneys and corporate counsel. Perhaps private attorneys from the Ann Arbor/Detroit area could be recruited to conduct a course/seminar on the rudiments of law office economics and management.

From a social standpoint, law school is a disaster.

I am not directly practicing law but my position as a Fortune 100 executive is directly related to my legal background and experience.

I have been, and continue to be, delighted by the positive
reaction of lawyers, judges and clients whenever they learn that I attended law school at the U. of M.

My work as editor of the Journal was better preparation for the work I now do.

I never enjoyed practicing law -- (practiced for one year) -- went back to pre-med classes for one year, then eight years of med school and OB-Gyn residency.

Most of my practice involves evidentiary presentations either before administrative law judges or trial courts. Law school provides almost no practical training. Perhaps such education should best be left to clerkships and continuing education. Law school courses which provoked analytical thought and taught legal reasoning have provided the most beneficial foundations. Any effort to require legal writing and oral advocacy should be pursued.

While intellectually challenging, I found Michigan Law School to be exceedingly conservative, stuffy, and bound to outmoded tradition.

Michigan was too intellectual; not practical enough.

I continue to believe my education at Michigan Law School was a superb preparation for the practice of law!

It is hard to overstate the value of a U/M legal education. My respect for the quality of the training we received has grown over the years and my affection for the institution, its faculty and staff, has remained unabated. The two factors I regard the highest, though, were the extraordinary quality of the teaching and the friendliness of my classmates. From my perspective, I wouldn't tinker with the Law School's traditions in these regards because the right balance had been struck in my time there. This is starting to sound impossibly rosy so I'd better stop. (But it's true.)

My law school experience was extraordinarily valuable and enjoyable from a socialization, intellectual and occupation-preparation standpoint.