Class of 1973 Five Year Report Alumni Comments, Part 2

University of Michigan Law School

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One of the reasons it is so hard for a law-trained person to get out of the mold is that most people have as narrow and provincial a view of what legal training is good for as this questionnaire reflects. You are clearly utterly uninterested in any of the creative things I have done with law since my graduation, since there is no place at all to mention it here. I hope you get the results you seek.

I hope you receive a significant response, there is much timely self-study to be done in this field.

I am in private practice—with one employee associate. My education could have been sounder had I known in law school that this is what I would be doing. I believe it is difficult, if not impossible, to predict one's needs while still in school. Consequently, I believe that basic education and the mastery of basic skills and training is one's best preparation.

I would think it interesting if the class standing were included in various comparisons to answers to many of the questions.

I see attorneys leaving the practice of law because there are too many people in the field. This should not be a problem for U-M grads but perhaps some attention should be paid to the possible alternatives for law students besides working as a lawyer since, inevitably, some students will be faced with that prospect.

I'm quite pleased with my law school experience. I look back on it as three strenuous but satisfying years. Having recently entered law teaching myself, I particularly appreciate the quality of education I received at Michigan.

I clerked for a labor law firm in Michigan until I was sworn in as an attorney in December, 1973. Within 2 months I was working half-time because the 1974 recession devastated what had been a thriving practice for 20 years (all of our clients were construction trades unions, and the construction industry was in a depression). I could not look for other work because my right hip was degenerating from Osteoarthritis, and I underwent hip surgery in January, 1975. The operation was a failure, and I was totally disabled for 1 1/2 years. In early 1976 I had a second operation, but by the time I was able to return to work in June, I had lost my job at the firm due to my long absence and their need to find someone else (by then their business had picked up considerably). I then moved to Virginia in search of a better climate due to my hip problems. I worked for the Research Group while taking (and passing) the Virginia bar exam, but despite the most intensive job search of which I was capable, I could find nothing better in Virginia or Washington, D.C. (into whose bar I was accepted by waiver). The Research Group job was so lousey that after a year and a half I decided to try my luck in Florida. I have since passed the bar exam here, and now find myself in the curious position of having been accepted in four jurisdictions, but unable to find work thusfar. The recession and my illness cost me dearly, and I am sure that my story is so atypical that any data from my questionnaire will be of no value to you. For what it's worth, here it is.
I would encourage you to develop courses which train new lawyers how to investigate and to develop facts.

Next survey ask which professors still on faculty that should be "canned".

Specialize Since I specialize in general corporate litigation, I have found that the subject matter of the courses I took in law school, with the exception of the basic first-year courses, was not as important as the ability to analyze, as taught by the fine professors at Michigan. I cannot, and will not, rely on memories of what the law was on a particular issue when I took the relevant course in law school. Instead, I must quickly grasp the relevant law through intensive research and structure and defend my strongest position. This is exactly what occurred in almost every course I took at Michigan--I read the assigned cases, was required to take a position in a hypothetical posed by a professor, and was forced to defend that position. The only improvement I could suggest would be to reduce class size to accommodate and promote greater student participation.

I practice corporate law in a big law firm. If I had it to do all over again, I'd take almost nothing but basic corporate and commercial courses in law school--lots of tax, antitrust, UCC, etc. I also think there's a crying need for training in clear writing, but, the only way to teach writing is to have a very high teacher-pupil ratio and have the instructor criticize samples of the students' work carefully. I doubt that it's possible to make any substantial improvement in students' writing style on a large scale.

This questionnaire is not well designed for someone in my situation, since I have worked, have taken time out from my career to start a family, and plan to go back to work in the near future.

What the hell happened to the parking lot next to the library?

My feeling while at law school was that the students viewed the primary purpose of school to learn rules--i.e., by memorizing all the rules you get an "A". A more productive atmosphere would be attained if somehow the emphasis can be placed on legal analysis and theory. In addition, the school, i.e., administration and faculty, should treat students as individuals and with some respect.

Thanks.

As a "business-oriented" lawyer, it would have been helpful to have had more business and financial non-legal courses--perhaps similar to MBA curriculum courses.

As you can tell law school was not a great experience for me, but instead something that had to be done. Probably 3 years in Army cut into my thirst for the books and the educational experience.
Although I graduated from the Law School in December of 1973, I entered with the class which graduated in June of 1974, and have always considered myself a member of that group. Therefore my responses to this questionnaire may not be of assistance in drawing conclusions about the class of 1973.

1. I feel that I had an excellent legal education.
2. However, the law school, especially the faculty were for the most part cold.
3. After five years I am still uncertain whether trained to practice law.

With re question VIII, an important, related question would pertain to race as a factor in employment.

I have now and had in law school extensive family (we, wife and I, have a "dual career" marriage) and financial pressure (due to family socioeconomic background).

As a minority, law school at Michigan was a severe "culture shock" which affected my performance profoundly. The law school might well consider addressing this non-academic, human problem because minority people have much in their background which could enrich a fine institution like Michigan Law School and the legal profession in general. I do not feel my talents were adequately brought out at Michigan for these reasons. See Romero et al., "La Raza, the Law, and Law School," Toledo L. Rev. (1975).

I was an extremely unsuccessful law student and indeed feel fortunate to have even graduated. At the same time, I always knew that I would be a good attorney. Law is a people-oriented profession, and while there is something to be said for academic achievement, unless one can deal with people and get the job done then all the academic knowledge available isn't worth a damn. I found that it was the development of an over-view of what the law is, how it works and how I can get it to work for my clients that makes me successful to the extent that I am. My Michigan training was so thorough (despite what my grades would indicate) that I developed a good sense of what the practice of law would require. I have, on occasion, encountered former classmates, many of whom are still laboring away at prestige firms in the hope of making partner. Many were far better students than I, but I have not seen that this is any indication of success as an attorney. Maybe you know what this means as to the teaching of law. I don't.

In any event, my work at Michigan was invaluable, and it is for this reason that I will always support the law school. I trust that the others must feel the same way. I hope so.

I am married to a woman attorney who has a career similar to my own. Therefore items IX B & C may be different.

Even 5 years after graduation I am still convinced the extreme competitive grade pressure was disruptive of the educational process. Some tempering of this factor would generate a better quality law-school product. I have found no analogy to the frenetic, grade hunger in the "real world." The focus in law school is a diversion with serious consequences.
I would encourage law school students to take as broad a variety of courses as possible. Too many students believe that they can graduate from law school as fully developed specialists in "corporate law," or "environmental law" etc. As the curriculum is presently structured, and given the total time allowed, students would do well to obtain a broad, general background in as many areas as possible plus a few courses of an advanced nature in their areas of special interest. The student who sees himself as a corporate lawyer would benefit from a course in criminal procedure as would the student who sees himself as a tax specialist. Similarly the student interested in labor law would benefit from exposure to a course in corporate taxation or one in international law. Although many students believe that an employer will be impressed with their law-school acquired "expertise" in a particular area or specialty, I think most employers are seeking young attorneys with a broad (if thin) foundation who can develop specialties after working in an area for several years.

Given the number of courses which can be taken is limited, the real problem is selecting the right ones from the ones available. I imagine that many members of the class of '73 would be quite happy if they could switch some of the courses they took to other ones that were then available. Having stated what is obvious, I offer no solution.

My responses might be misleading since I just changed jobs on October 9, 1978. Previously I was employed in a N.Y. law firm doing principally securities and financial work. For example, since changing jobs my response to IX.C. might well be #1.

The only question to which my response is somewhat misleading is II. I was raised in Oceanside, New York, a Long Island-suburb of New York City. Oceanside itself had only approximately 35,000 residents. It was, however, an inseparable component of an urban sprawl of many millions of people. Thus, although a look at my responses to questions I & II would indicate exactly the opposite, I now work and live in a much densely populated and smaller metropolitan environment than that in which I was raised.

Michigan Law provided an excellent academic experience. I take great pride in my school and my profession.

I feel I received a good legal education at U of M, however I probably would have benefited from clerking while going to school. I am fearful that U of M is in danger of becoming too exclusive--some of the best lawyers I have encountered are "doers," not "bookworms."

One last comment: I am still bitter about two professors at the Law School. Dr. Andrew Watson is a charlatan and L. Hart Wright is a pompous ass.

Would recommend moot court experience be moved to second year, mandatory minimal participation for all and utilize the first year time thus available for upgrading the legal writing feedback and experience.

I find it a little difficult to find categories in question IVA & B which precisely describe my position as a senior staff attorney with a legal aid program. The next such survey should include that category.
(1) The Univ of Mich Law School should update to modern reality, i.e. that most valuable property rights along with the collision of private vs public interests and rights occurs in the first instance in extensive administrative proceedings before state and federal agencies, and only in some cases, are issues simplified and narrowed via appeal in the courts. Consider: telecommunications, utility regulation, energy matters, numerous environmental matters, food and drug matters, OSAA, even election law, etc. Further, the number of legal and factual issues, pre-trial or pre-hearing discovery, etc, surrounding such protracted struggles can be awesome. My formal legal education, in retrospect, was deficient by the absence of a well designed program in the following: utility law, regulated industries, energy law, oil and gas, environmental law, administrative law, training in extensive pre-trial discovery (interrogatories, admissions of fact, depositions, state and federal administrative procedure, etc.) In addition, the Clinical Law Program was aimed at local district and circuit court cases involving minor criminal matters, divorce, and creditor suits—is there any means to provide such students with an appreciation of some of the battles going on in state and federal administrative agency proceedings where the stakes may be vast and where the result may affect the entire general public?

(2) The U of M Law School's long-term strength can be enhanced by developing programs not only for would-be corporate lawyers, but also for those who are interested in working on behalf of the public interest in complex fields--such as antitrust, utility regulation, securities regulation, energy matters, natural resource and environmental matters, etc. In this regard, public interest law involves many other fields besides welfare matters and civil rights issues which are usually tabbed with this label. Finally, besides a complete educational program for lawyers interested in these public interest fields, your admissions committee should be attuned to spotting those applicants who have demonstrated an interest and a competence in this direction.

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Since leaving law school I have worked as an administrative hearing officer. However I am not practicing law per se, I am dissatisfied with my present position, and would much rather be doing something else.

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My law school experience would have been much more meaningful had it not been oriented so overwhelmingly towards the private practice of law. Much more is needed for the lawyer going into a career in an organization with a non-legal orientation, i.e., courses relating to the lawyer's role in a non-legal organization, legal responsibilities and ethics in the business world, negotiating and drafting business documents (particularly financial documents), more courses dedicated exclusively to securities law and corporations, etc. The basic first year courses, in particular, are practically worthless for such a lawyer.

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I believe the following changes ought to be made in the curriculum and teaching methods of the law school:

1. The amount of written assignments ought to be increased. The school is woefully deficient in this regard.

2. After the first year, too much time is spent reading and analyzing cases and in so-called Socratic discussions. Other approaches ought to be considered which could increase the amount of material covered and at the same time provide greater variety and interest to the students.
3. The overall approach ought to be shifted from a negative reinforcement approach to a positive reinforcement approach.

Most of my practice consists of trial work and brief writing for the general trial courts. There was little in law school which prepared one for the "nuts and bolts" of trial work. Fortunately, my law school training did not allow me to "swim" when encountering the "rip tide" of a judge or jury. The legal research aspect of Michigan's training was quite unrealistic and, I have found, out of step with the requirements of some of the lower level courts. It is doubtful, however, that much more could be done in this area due to the diverse requirements of the students and the courts.

The questionnaire doesn't inquire as to the respondent's race, an omission I think unfortunate if the results are to be used in counselling. While I am in a large corporate firm doing fairly challenging work, I know of many black classmates who are working in jobs far below their potential. The Michigan Black Law Alumni Society has ascertained that the largest employer of U-M Law School black graduates is the government (federal, state, or local). While some government lawyering jobs are challenging, many are not. I think it is a waste of a U of M Law education to allow the school's alumni to turn into bureaucrats—but the only employers willing to hire the school's black graduates on a consistent basis are governments. There are several reasons for this, one of them being the blind devotion of elite law firms' recruiting committees (including this firm's) to grades as the indicator of ability to practice law. Although most lawyers will admit that grades do not necessarily predict one's ability to practice law, most are afraid or too unimaginative to rely on anything else. This attitude, plus the historical tendency of blacks as a group to have lower GPA's than whites (the reasons for this are another story), means very limited employment opportunities for black alumni. There is a job here for the placement office, if not some enlightened faculty committee, in at least educating recruiters to the limits of grades as predictors of real world skills.

Just terminated association with (now defunct) firm in Ypsilanti and formed partnership with Robert E. Merchant II, attorney, in Saline, where both of us received our secondary education and have family and friends.

Brrr! It's cold in my office today.

It may be the disadvantages I face as a female trial attorney are balanced by advantages. I tend to stand out in the courtroom crowd simply because I am a woman—which helps in getting and holding the judge/jury attention. Actually that's the only advantage I can think of. I believe I've been spared some discrimination by being in government service or private sole practice. I believe and witness considerable discrimination in the private sector.

The question of income from principal occupation does not take into account other income which has been generated because of a lawyer's skills (e.g. real estate development, writing, etc.).
The curriculum should place more emphasis on research and writing in second year. As I recall, there was always a conflict between course work and case club responsibilities in the first year. Writing skills are essential in actual practice and should be emphasized for all students, not just those on various journals. Greater credit for writing courses should be given. Emphasis in writing courses should be on short and medium length projects, as well as letter writing. It is rare in my practice to do memos or briefs beyond 10 pages. Anyway, many lengthy projects contain boiler plate along with creative writing. Basics should be emphasized more, with less exotic courses. The one exception is new federal laws--i.e. health, safety, etc. Also, securities regulation and a basic courses in tax and consumer laws (Truth in Lending) should be required.

I would recommend a dramatically different approach than the Socratic method of instruction. My law school experience was made more annoying and less productive) as a result of the intimidating aspects of this age-old practice. In fact, the time spent in badgering students could be more beneficially utilized in teaching them the law (despite what Prof. Kingsfield may tell us). The law school final exam is another area which should be re-evaluated. It seems to me that the essay questions on the two bar exams I've taken (Mich & Mass.) were much fairer than those on law school exams. They (the bar questions) seemed to be looking for the examiner's knowledge of the law rather than for the organized schematic of a Rube Goldberg contraption. It should be noted that in five years of practice, I have never been faced with a 28-issue problem which demanded resolution in one hour. A significant change in either of the two items mentioned above would do far more for creating a healthy academic climate than all the machinations with different course offerings will produce.

I find the training in the law I received from the U of Michigan Law School to be excellent. I would recommend mandatory courses or courses in simple drafting of pleadings, perhaps to be integrated with the Legal Writing and Advocacy course to be taken during the second year. Although the Legal Writing and Advocacy course was OK when I attended the Law School (mandatory for 1st year students), its scope focused too much on the appellate level). I believe there should be greater emphasis at the trial level.

Next year I will be teaching (at a Law School) which will change my answers somewhat in Sections IV, VI and X.

I am now working on a Master of Science in Librarianship at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo. I will graduate in April, 1979 and will pursue a career in Law Librarianship. There are good jobs available for those with both the JD and MLS degrees.

As a lawyer for a non-profit public interest organization specializing in the protection of constitutional rights, I note that this questionnaire is not at all geared to cover individuals in my category. That fact may reflect the unfortunate reality--no one expects Michigan Law graduates to devote their career to this type of work.
The law school provided me with basic tools which experience has honed and supplemented. The school should emphasize to the student that the institutionalized educational process is only a part of the process by which a competent attorney is created.

I believe more emphasis should be placed on studies in jurisprudence or legal history. This is not because it is beneficial in my work but because it would assist me in understanding the legal system. I believe all lawyers should have an appreciation in depth of this matter. Further, emphasis should be placed on the limitations, if any, which should be placed on the role of a lawyer in our society. Too often, I believe, lawyers tend to accept clients without regard to the social impact of the result sought to be obtained. Lawyers also tend to assume too much the role of the "advocate" and not enough the role of "mediator." I believe this intense zeal in representing one's client's interests is oftentimes detrimental to the legal system as a whole. Perhaps the law schools, including U of M, could address this problem by emphasizing more philosophical issues as opposed to courses in the substantive law.

Adjusting my career to my home life took a great deal of thought and effort--I do feel, however, that the adjustments were worth the effort, and that my personal and professional life fit well with one another.

Every time I reflect I'm more and more grateful for the fine combination of the practical with the theoretical in the law which I received in my education at the U of Michigan.

My major criticism of my education at Michigan Law School was the total lack of practical experience I received during my first year. I had difficulty relating to much of the theory taught in many of the courses, and I shared this problem with a significant portion of my classmates. It wasn't until I worked as a summer clerk (second summer) and participated in the Clinical Law Program (third year) that I acquired any practical experience. Thereafter, my entire attitude toward what I had previously considered a boring ordeal changed: I became more highly motivated and the theoretical courses became more meaningful.

I do not believe enough emphasis is placed on the practicalities of the business world. Law Grads are somewhat realistic, and this is fine. But the "street smart" lawyer is the most effective one and, ultimately, the most successful. While legal theory, analysis, etc. should be taught, how it should be used in the real world is just as important.

My academic experience at Michigan provided me with an ample basis for success in private practice. I regret, however, that there were not more opportunities to work more closely in many ways with the faculty. I cannot emphasize enough the need to provide students with writing experience. Additionally, I would like to see the Law School take steps to create more of a personal bond among both the students and the alumni.

Having graduated from U of M is an asset in two ways. First, employers regard it as a good school. Second, they are right. In comparing myself to my peers who have graduated from other law schools, I find that I have superior skills and a firmer grasp of the "common law" and how it works.
While this consideration may be inconsistent with U-M's philosophy, I strongly feel that more attention should be paid to the ability of Michigan's professors to teach. There were a few professors who were absolutely abysmal. This problem seemed more acute in relation to the visiting professors, some of whom were "auditioning" for a shot at the big time. More attention should also be paid to counseling students who have little pre-law school exposure to law.

I would strongly suggest that the Law School place more emphasis on the art of writing.

I work for a 20 lawyer defense litigation firm on an independent contractor basis. I work in the office one day a week, and at home, and am paid an hourly rate. This arrangement is necessitated by my desire to be home with my children while they are very young. My answers must be considered with this in mind.

If you were really serious about improving U of M legal education you should: 1. Leave 1st year alone, except for having full credit, full term course in writing and research. 2. Devote at least 1 semester after 1st year to trial practice, legal pleading preparation, emphasizing practical aspects of practice.

Even after all my UM law school loans are fully repaid, I will still owe the school a vast intangible debt. After years of sweating there, for B's and C's (and an A or two), I graduated and found that the school has a magnificent reputation out here in the real world--a reputation that, incidentally, tremendously helped me. I can't really comment on how you might "revamp" or "update" your course offerings, but I feel very strongly that the caliber of the UM law faculty is far and away the school's greatest asset... I mean professors such as Jackson, Israel, White, Kauper and many others; and if you can keep them, I suspect all your other problems will be small ones.

I have not suggested any changes in the law school curriculum because I believe that the necessary legal skills do not change dramatically from one substantive area to another. Accordingly, I think that they can be taught--to the extent that they can be taught--in one course as well as another. I have spent much time dealing with statutes too recent or too arcane to have been the subject of a law school course. Thus, I believe that the skills one learns are probably more important than any in-depth knowledge garnered in law school of a substantive area.

More sections in The Lawyer as a Negotiator, etc. would be warranted when student demand for such courses is evident, yet unmet.

As I specialize more, I have decided that the particular course offering is not so critical as getting a broad overview of all legal areas, and gaining the ability to reason critically and research thoroughly. I believe U-M succeeded in imparting those abilities.
My experience at Michigan was very rewarding both professionally and personally. Course selection was not as important as professor selection. My wife, Synde-B. Keywell, is a 1978 U of M law school grad.

I would suggest that the number of entrants for all law schools be reduced. The increased number of lawyers has created a general decline in standards—both professional and ethical.

IX.C. Not too great a problem—mostly the usual time crunch problem any working person would have—not much different as a married person than when I was single.

VII.B. I hate to say this, but I had no idea what I would pursue, and took all the wrong courses. I even avoided writing which is 90% of my practice. I would take some different courses if I had law school to do again. The emphasis would be different.

With respect to the programs of training offered by the law school, I believe that students (especially those who are not members of the Law Review staff) would benefit greatly from a course or program in legal research and writing, in addition to the freshman case clubs and the Campbell Competition. The ability to research and write quickly and effectively is necessary to the successful practice of law in my experience and developing that ability should be an important priority of legal education for all students.

Looking back I feel that Michigan provided an excellent education. It would be good to have more personal contact with professors. Perhaps the seminar requirements could be increased.

I support Prof. (now Dean) Carrington's advocacy of a 2-year law school. I also think legal pedagogy is seriously outdated. The case method should be but one teaching method, limited to 1-2 courses in the first year and perhaps 1 in the next year. Doctrine can be taught much more efficiently in other ways. As for legal thinking, training should derive from practice, minimally from classrooms. More emphasis should be placed on the lawyers role as ombudsmen and agent of conflict prevention or resolution. More consideration might be placed on teaching lawyers to simplify and convey legal rules to the citizenry. The great separation between professionals and lay persons in their understanding of the law is a politically disastrous development.

Under part VII.A I have marked "Trial Practice" as needing increased emphasis, but with some reservations. Good trial ability takes years to develop, and, in my opinion, the tutelage of an experienced trial attorney in actual practice is the best training. However, some basic training should be provided in law school.

As to the remainder of Part VII-A, I did not mark any other subjects because I feel that no change in course offerings is necessary. This is not to say that the curricula should stay static perpetually. Some course variation is necessary to adjust to student demands and changing times. However, I found the course offerings available when I was a student to be quite to my liking.
With regard to item VII, I feel that the curriculum was excellent. Perhaps the most striking aspect of private practice to me was the complexity of the problems faced and the need to be able to find all the facts. Problem solving type courses may be a possible 3rd year offering to prepare for this aspect of practice. On the other hand this may well be one of those things you have to learn as you go in practice.

I practised law in South Bend, Indiana (my hometown) for a year after I graduated from Michigan. For a variety of reasons (not just because I was dissatisfied with practising law as I indicated on Question V), I applied and was accepted to medical school - a decision for which I have no regrets, but rather the utmost praise. Whether I will combine law and medic in after my OB-Gyn residency remains to be decided.

Item X should attempt to disclose incomes for the past 5 years, rather than the most recent year.

I am very proud of having attained my J.D. from U. of M. and hope my answers to this questionnaire are helpful.

In light of my experience, I think that the law school could greatly improve its career counselling for women. Those who seek leadership positions in law firms and agencies should be encouraged to take a course in management and to learn ways to cope with discrimination without jeopardizing one's career. Pretending that it does not exist is not efficacious.

I do not feel that course offerings should be reduced, because of the many different careers possible within the profession. The courses pertinent to my career are not necessarily relevant to other legal careers, and vice-versa.

I feel that my legal training at the University of Michigan prepared me extremely well in the areas of legal research and analysis of legal problems. I do not feel that I was given sufficient training in the practical application of analytical skills such as drafting, business planning, etc. Although some practical courses were available, they were usually limited enrollment. Moreover, the importance of practical courses was not sufficiently emphasized.

One serious shortcoming of a national law school such as Michigan is that students graduate without much practical experience. More emphasis needs to be placed on tools students will need in the "real world." Too many students graduate without knowing how to draft a complaint, answer a complaint, draft a will, draft a contract, etc. In this respect, I think law schools can learn a lot from medical schools. Can you imagine a doctor graduating from medical school without ever having read an EKG or administered a shot?

I could comment more intelligently if I understood the precise purpose for which this information will be used. To say that "the purpose of the questionnaire is to gather data concerning the Class of 1973" is not enlightening.
Michigan could garner a bit more alumni support if it ran courses - 1 or 2 weeks - which survey new developments and general law in securities, corporate taxation, etc. on the Harvard model.

Some important legal areas where law schools could best provide training but which are virtually ignored by law schools are: social security law and pension law. I do not share the belief of many that clinical law courses are important for law students—even though I am engaged in trial practice. Law students need to be exposed to as much of the academic or theoretical side of the law as possible while they are students because they will not ever have as much time as they like to become acquainted with aspects of theory when they are in private practice. On the other hand, law schools will never be equipped to provide more than marginal benefits in clinical law programs.

It has only been within the last year that my career objectives have become defined. Following graduation I entered private practice in Lansing for 1 1/2 years with Foster, Swift, Coolins & Coty. My total practice as an associate there was insurance defense litigation. I then moved to Hawaii where I worked for two years as a staff attorney for the Legislature. In June of 1977 we moved to the Bay Area and I obtained my present position. Although I was hired to do litigation, I have moved increasingly toward real estate practice and now intend to make it my career specialty. I am, however, essentially beginning anew for the third time.

As long as U of M aims at only top 10% of class and has immense class size the courses at U of M will be an ordeal more than a way to learn to think like a lawyer.

Aside from being black and female, having attended law school endowed me with another handicap - a professional. My chances and/or opportunities for marriage and children have diminished substantially since I graduated. The attitude of men, I find, in and out of law, toward a woman lawyer is tolerant at best. To my utter shock, I was admitted to the Virgin Islands bar (on my state license) before a federal district judge, who stated in open court that he was doing so with "much trepidation" as there were too many women coming to the bar. I am increasingly beginning to resent my own choice to pursue law as a career. I have much more to say but space is limited, therefore I'll write Dean Sandalow personally.

The law school spends much too much time on the common law courses to the detriment of statutory courses. Professor Pierce's legislation course brings home the point that judges most commonly are interpreting statutes, Not declaring the common law. Second greater emphasis should be placed on teaching FACT development. A statute makes sense when viewed in a specific setting. Too many courses teach case law as if the underlying fact situation is irrelevant.

Even in Rochester, New York, the U. of M. Law School has a prestigious reputation which is an advantage both in seeking employment and in practicing law.
Dean Terrance SANDALOW  
Office of the Dean  
Hutchins Hall  
University of Michigan  
Law School  
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109

Dear Dean SANDALOW:

I suspect the Law School could do a great deal more to encourage the assistance of future graduates with its problems, financial and otherwise, by treating students as human beings not unwashed ignoramuses. Treatment of the non-law review types as something more than admissions' errors might also help.

I also suggest that greater assistance be given students in finding jobs in areas other than the Wall Street class of law firms. When I was a student, it was apparent, despite the heroic efforts of the Placement Director, that the funding priorities were directed at placing the students with the best academic records in the "best" firms. The rest of us were not afforded adequate opportunities for interviews with firms likely to hire us. I wasted a great deal of time before reality became apparent.

With the above off my chest, the quality of the theoretical education I received was superb. Although I did not know how to do anything practical when I graduated, I soon picked it up. I hope the School does not get too carried away with clinical law - that is not what you do best.

Sincerely,