Class of 1976 Five Year Report Alumni Comments

University of Michigan Law School

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Responses from the Members of
The Class of 1976
To the Last Question on Survey Asking For
"Comments of Any Sort About Your Life
or Law School or Whatever"
In retrospect I felt the quality of education at U of M was extremely high but the priorities were skewed in many areas. Clinical experience, ethical discussions, learning to deal with clients, decision making in the real world, all were regarded as "vocational" as if this were a de-meaning word. These are crucial areas which we were left to discover on our own. To a great extent we could have been better prepared. I have yet to find any rationale for the intimidation and infantilization which so many professors used, many under the guise of the Socratic method. Treating us as adults would have been more productive by far. I love practicing law but I feel I am somewhat luckier than many of my peers. My work is substantively interesting and in accord with my ethical beliefs so I feel it is in harmony with the rest of my life.

1. In addition to teaching brief writing, law school should also give all students some exposure to drafting of pleadings and other legal documents (leases, wills, custody agreements). Careful drafting can often avoid litigation. It is a skill sorely lacking, and needed to some extent by all lawyers, many of whom cannot write a clearly worded letter.
2. Ethics should be taught seriously & well to all students by someone with practical experience (practicing attorney or judge).
3. Law school should require all students (& most faculty!) to take course in discrimination (race, sex, disability). We women students had to teach UM profs the relevant US Supreme Court cases in their own fields--con law (Kamisar put one footnote on sex discrimination in his 1400-page textbook on con law), Worker's Comp., etc. Discrimination touches all areas of law and will not be eliminated until all lawyers at least recognize it. The number of recent law graduates who unknowingly use illegal questions when interviewing associates, secretaries, etc., or malpractice by failing to recognize a cause of action based on discrimination is appalling.
4. Writing & research should be for 3 hours of credit and graded. It should give more attention to looseleafs and other reference materials used in particular fields. It should also familiarize students with legal research computers, which may be available at a nearby law library.
5. Professors could teach with more insight and perspective if they practiced law for at least 2 years before returning to their ivory towers.
6. UM needs more women and minority professors.
7. Students need to learn how to interview clients and witnesses and how to negotiate with opponents.

I was one of the rare people that enjoyed law school. I don't think you should put much more emphasis on law school as a means of preparing students for a career, per se. Analytical abilities, at least in big firms, are the key--not substantive legal knowledge or skills--in incoming associates. Too many of the lawyers I see just emerging from law school are far too grim and career-conscious.

At this relatively tender stage of my legal career, law school strikes me as but one small, albeit crucially important, step in the development of an attorney. The more experience I gain and the more sophisticated I become, the more I realize that law presents unique opportunities for career-long development and intellectual growth. Unfortunately, many lawyers whom I have observed find themselves trapped in stultifying niches or are too complacent to be creative. In twenty years, I would like to be able to look back upon my career and say that my career has been marked by a combination of intelligence, tenacity, ethics and creativity.
If I was to constructively criticize law school at this point I would say that I received no career counseling which would assist me in selecting courses, help me to understand the employment market, and help me to select the type of practice and type of organization I would function most effectively in. While I am basically satisfied with my career, I realize that I made many choices ignorantly or unconsciously.

I wish I could go back to law school now. I missed so many things, especially the opportunity to know my classmates' and teachers' thoughts about life outside the classroom and competition. I blew a lot of opportunity which was offered in this regard, and never again will I have such an opportunity. I believe that the most important part of law training is mind preparation, and that is done in ways I only dimly appreciated at the time. There must be some way to offer perspective on law school without regret of realization only so long after the fact.

When I was in law school, I viewed it as an unpleasant experience of little value which must be endured as a prerequisite to practicing law. Five years of practice has not changed that view.

U of M Law School should offer an L.L.M. in Taxation.

Christ Listens.

Law School overemphasizes its importance in preparing a person for a legal career.

A poor job of preparing graduates for solo practice or the general practice of law.

I generally feel too busy to really enjoy a feeling of accomplishment with my career as a whole.

While I am not enthusiastic about mandatory pro bono requirements, I think that law schools should constantly stress the moral obligations that lawyers have to use their skills for the benefit of society as well as for themselves. Each graduate should recognize that a significant amount of his or her time each year should be devoted to political, charitable, legal aid and/or community service activities. If professionals who have the skills, income and status of lawyers do not contribute in these ways, many such activities will go unperformed or will be relegated to much less effective bureaucrats.

While generally "liberal" and quite demanding about what I expect from law school, I am "conservative" in that I don't think law school should become a trade school or training school for specific employment functions. All of my legal work has been in civil rights, but I value my training in the UCC, etc.—because it was simply good training. While law school is not an apprenticeship, I regret not having received more and better training in (1) use of research tools and (2) the mechanics of courts & written motions, and (3) organized writing.

Thinking, analyzing and legal research and writing skills are the most important things a law school can offer to the practitioner. Practical details & applications vary too much from job to job and are best left to practical experience.

(cont'd)
Understanding how to think, analyze and approach a case stay with you much longer than specific information or principles in any area. Basically if you do not practice in a given area, you don't know or remember anything about it from law school.

The worst thing about being a lawyer is the high number of aggressive, unpleasant, unbalanced people in the profession. I avoid mentioning I am a lawyer whenever possible.

The law school should improve its research and writing program. This is a skill that can be used and retained for years.

This questionnaire, as well as the orientation of the professors and courses at Michigan, are geared to corporate/private practice. For those interested in public interest law, or some practice other than "large corporage," there was little encouragement or support.

Law school was much less intellectually stimulating than undergraduate school and employment.

I found U/M Law School to be overly academic and elitist at the expense of preparing students to deal with real people and problems in law practice.

Appreciate U. of M. Law School education relative to offerings of other law schools more as time goes by. Am concerned, however, with the distinct possibility that governmental employ, for an ambitious sort such as myself, will become increasingly unsatisfying. Am further concerned with the poor quality of performance of many attorneys, which seems to be somewhat attributable to economic realities. Finally, consider from time to time that the practice of law demands more of a person than that person can possibly hope to get in return and worry over the possibility of future burn-out which might compromise my performance standards.

Please note that I am about to change from practice of corporate law to law teaching; both to improve family life and job satisfaction.

Law school at Michigan was an enjoyable as well as a rewarding experience for me. There is very little I would have changed. I do experience some dissatisfaction with my professional career, in that I now feel that many aspects of my personality are unsuited to the practice of law (for example, I am not particularly aggressive and find that I hate arguing with people). This is only to say that the study of law and the practice of law are two quite different things. I will never regret having chosen to pursue the former at the University of Michigan Law School.

I basically find I don't like lawyers as people—not because they are unethical or have poor practice, but because they tend to have narrow views of things and are thus rather boring. But in addition, after thinking about and practicing law all day I prefer to deal with non-clients and non-lawyers.

As time goes by I more appreciate the theoretical, analytical background I got in law school and encourage others to seek strongly academic educations rather than technical legal training.

After law school I deliberately took some time to get back to earth after the pressure and abstract thinking of law school. More lawyers should
take the time to clarify their values and regroup after finishing law school. Most continuing legal education programs are a waste of time—either too general to be beneficial or too technical to understand. Good idea, but loses something in the execution.

Law School: great intellectual exercise which I greatly enjoyed. Limited relevance to current practice. Practice: demands on time most difficult to control. Some days you eat the bear; some days the bear eats you.

Still very impressed by intellectual capacity of faculty at U of M, & every effort must be made to retain this quality. U of M should better prepare students for actual practice—pleadings, discovery, motions, trials.

After leaving law school and returning to the South I found that attorneys in Alabama/Mississippi looked down on me for pursuing a high quality of education at U of M. This negative attitude has forced me out of practice even though I passed two Bar exams (Mississippi and Alabama) the first time. Since I did not finish in the upper 1/2 of my class I found it impossible to get my foot in the door at most law firms although I did for a time work for one of the largest corporate law firms in Birmingham and had exceptional recommendations from my immediate superiors. I also discovered that because I was a white male the US Attorney's Office was closed to me as was legal aid. I have since returned to college and am about to receive a BSE in Mechanical Engineering. In the engineering field you are judged by what you know, not who you know or who your father is. The "good old boys" type legal fraternity is alive and well in the south.

1) There should be more open discussion in law school about "quality-of-life" issues (ie, how to deal with pressures from clients, law firm politics, how to balance family & work life, etc.)
2) I strongly favor introduction of law office administration courses.
3) There need to be some courses on computer law. See the August 1982 ABA Journal article on this. Lawyers have got to face up to the existence of computers in business life.
4) I cannot stress how much help Andy Watson's "Psychiatry in the Law" course was in learning how to interview and be a counsellor at law. It also helped me recognize and sort out my own feelings and goals from those of the client—a process poorly dealt with by most lawyers, in my opinion.
5) Layman Allen was especially helpful in persuading me to stay in law school when I was terribly discouraged after my 2nd year.

Since graduation, I have come to appreciate more fully the value of my law school education. I feel I am better or as well, prepared as any of my colleagues. For that I am grateful. However, it strikes me that not enough emphasis was given to various legal processes including non trial methods of dispute resolution. Moreover, not enough emphasis was placed on the importance of administrative and legislative law. Finally, very little emphasis was placed on legal writing. The first year course was a joke. Presumably the admission process selects those of us able to think like "lawyers" (whatever that is). The law school should do more to train students how to communicate that thought process to others.
I entered Law school because I had visions of semi-retirement by the time I would reach thirty-five. Through no fault of the law and because of the "glut" of attorneys who had similar illusions--I barely had my first real job by then.

Students should be taught that law is hard work. You can tell most practicing attorneys by the way they walk (worse than policemen) from years of shuffling from court to court and being in three places at once. The shoulders are rounded from carrying heavy briefcases and files (not everyone can afford assistants for the dirty work--alas some of us are destined to be the assistants for the rest of our not-so-natural lives).

Women can't "have-it-all." Prepare them for divorce. The law is a jealous mistress--even for women--especially for women. We hard-working souls in need of a back rub ourselves face a hungry spouse who mumbles, "what's for dinner" and grumbles when he is the rubber and not the rubbee.

Lastly, for the minorities who don't make it to Wall Street--life's a drag. I have described myself as a legal "cleaning lady." I get the cases that nobody else wants. The ones that should come with diapers because they are so messy. I will forever be "low man on the totem pole" by definition of my caste. Hence, I must do the work and shut-up about it or ship out.

Bitter? Not really. I do realize that I am very lucky indeed. The money I earn gives me a way out--eventually. Sort of like slaves who saved the old freedom money. I have the tools that will help me to attain more independence than most women a lot sooner than most!

I really enjoyed my law school experience.

Law School did not prepare me for solo practice--U-M is primarily interested in preparation of persons for large firms, judicial clerkships, teaching, etc. Legal clinic, negotiation skills (seminar-Lawyer as Negotiator) etc. which would be helpful for smaller firm practice, solo practice, etc. were unavailable because of limited enrollment. Being a Michigan graduate does give one prestige in the eyes of fellow attorneys and some others who are aware of the quality (and reputation) of the law school. Furthermore, attending law school at Michigan gave me the most challenging intellectual pursuit I have yet experienced--discussions (in class and out) with professors and other students were stimulating and informative.

I do not find the practice of law to be particularly rewarding for me. I had no particular plans for my career, and perhaps should have dropped out after my first year, but did not want to consider such action since I would have considered such an act to be quitting or "failure." I was perhaps "oversold" on the quality of Michigan Law School, and expected to find employment easily. I began solo practice because I was unable to secure a position with a law firm in my home area (where I wanted to remain), and I needed some sort of income to meet school loan-obligations and living expenses. I have enjoyed the flexibility of hours, but feel great insecurity about the regularity of my income. While my practice has been slowly growing, I would expect to be in another line of work by the time your next questionnaire is sent.

Law school was a good experience, & I don't have any strong feelings or ideas as to how it could be improved. The high quality of the law professors and the law students are probably the most important reasons for making the school as good as it is. It prepared me for law practice as well as any school could have. Work in law school is just a preview of the hard work that comes with being a practicing attorney.

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1976 Comments (6)

The most disheartening thing about the practice today is the downward pressure on salaries caused by too many recent law graduates competing for too few jobs. This problem is bound to increase for the next few years, and affect attorneys with even six & seven years of experience.

The Law School should also address the problem of society becoming overly litigious. While this may be good for lawyers, it is a terrible waste of resources, as litigation is very inefficient. Frivolous cases --which seem to be growing--are most discouraging to work on. This I feel is the most troublesome problem facing our legal system. There is no cheap, quick way of resolving relatively unimportant disputes. Mandatory arbitration of such disputes should be addressed by the law school and its professors more seriously.

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I had a baby six months ago and returned to my desk for the first time to find this questionnaire. After six years of practice in a high pressure environment, and having put off child-bearing for 9 years (law school and practice), I am finding it extremely difficult to return to the "rat race." My firm has begrudgingly agreed to allow me to work part-time for 6 months (only). I feel my U of M law degree is one of my most significant and valued possessions yet I find myself regretting my decision to obtain it. Does anyone out there care about quality of life and the balance between family and work? Why must the practice of law be such a pressure-cooker? Why does there seem to be so little room to choose between income and quality of life? I am, by the way, neither a traditionalist nor a militant feminist--just a 35 year old first time mother with a hard-earned J.D., magna cum laude no less!

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I look back on my law school days with all the fondness of a dog remembering a long forgotten spew. My classmates were, by and large, boring automatons who chewed along like so many worms through the rich humus of life. My professors were, by and large, insipid paper-pushers resting comfortably within the gilded bowers of their sinecures, isolated and insulated from the slings and arrows of life, about as exciting as a half-brick.

I contrast this with the excitement of my few years in private practice in the courts, before I landed my present boring, if lucrative, sinecure. I developed a razor's edge and exhaustive knowledge of Michigan law, honed and reinforced through hours of review of tapes and cases. I went into court loaded for bear and ripped my opponents viciously, loving every moment. I was battling with people, living real life, yet pitting myself against some absurd, fictitious exam question and some bozo's idea of what the answer was. Real practice showed me I was a lot smarter than law school led me to believe. My fantasy is to get a hold of one of my old professors in court someday and annihilate him.

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The survey mentions nothing about my impressions concerning the over-all competency of the Bar. Generally I have been rather disappointed by the rather low over-all quality of the Bar.

While there are notable exceptions, it would seem there are too many lawyers who appear to be badly trained, generally lacking the required intellectual capacity and skill to properly represent their clients. I have seen briefs and legal memos of extremely poor quality not only lacking in research and analysis, but also demonstrating deficiencies in reasoning, logic, and basic English grammar.

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There is a need for a better quality antitrust course. I encounter these problems a lot in practice, and Prof. Steiner gave me almost nothing to work with.

There is a much greater need for better interaction between faculty and students. I still have bitterness about law school based upon the way professors treated me outside of class.

The UCC and federal income tax offerings were very good!

The new library addition is magnificent!

The University of Michigan should increase its commitment to the education of minority lawyers four-fold. Those persons with whom I am familiar have met the challenge gracefully and continue to fulfill the maxims upon which the University was founded. Black alumni of the U of M are some of the most prestigious persons in the United States. State supported institutions owe more of a commitment to equal opportunity education.

The survey is very interesting; I enjoyed thinking about some of the questions that were raised. Although my years in law school were by no means perfect, I look back on the time I spent at Michigan Law as, on the whole, one of the very best parts of my life. I feel that it prepared me in many ways for both my professional and personal lives and I'm very grateful for that. (And yes, I do contribute to and work for the Law School Fund).

In retrospect, I believe the interpersonal skills an attorney needs later in practice deserve relatively more emphasis than they were given during my tenure at Michigan from 1973 to 1976. The fierce competition was at times unpleasant while enduring same, but valuable later.

My sole comment relates to the availability of counseling—particularly career but other types as well—for law students at U-M. In particular, some attention should be given to the promising student (as evidenced by grades in undergrad school, activities—all the admissions criteria) who, for whatever reason, has a difficult time—with the concepts, the methodology and the competition. If you really believe the selection process works to find the best people, a minimum of expenditure at the earliest stages might help them to become the best lawyers. Particularly for those of us whose family and educational background brought us little contact with lawyers, the struggle entailed how to envision what the ultimate product would look like. A coordinated counseling effort, combining personal counseling, with placement efforts to assist the student to find a job and tutorial where needed would help the student, during the law school experience, to become a good lawyer.

Law School was a fairly brutal experience for me as a caring human being and more particularly as a woman. I learned I could be admitted to practice but never admitted to the "ol' boy school" that makes the practice work. I learned that to say something is unfair or unjust is laughable and that our system of law resolves disputes, but it does not render justice done, either individually or collectively. Out of school, I learned that law is a very inadequate remedy for any kind of wrong done to people or groups of people and that social change must come about in ways other than just through law suits or even passing statutes. Power is still the crux of the issue—those who have the money & the power, rule. Needless to say, I am a bit cynical about law as an institution and as a profession. The best thing law school did for me was open my eyes and

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radicalize me. The practice of law, or watching it being practiced, continues to radicalize me more. I am more interested now in being an advocate than in "practicing law."

More practical, practice-oriented classes in 2nd/3rd year. Offer courses or seminar in law office administration.

Law school would have been more rewarding if a problem-solving approach had been used. The case method (particularly when combined with the Socratic Method) is not an effective educational tool. The problem-solving approach (which is most effectively utilized by Professor Kahn) develops analytical and practical skills, is intellectually stimulating, and effectively covers substantive legal areas. This approach can also be utilized in conjunction with more extensive legal writing, research, and drafting.

The use of the Socratic method in law school has been abused to the extent that most professors use it to intimidate students rather than to educate. The only professor who successfully used the Socratic method in my courses was Prof. Allen. As a result, I would urge a shift to education through lectures, discussion and problem-solving. Problem-solving would provide a more realistic approach to and preparation for the practice of most attorneys than the case method. Legal writing of memoranda (as well as the briefs presently taught) and letters of opinion to clients should also be emphasized. Overall, much of law school (particularly the 1st year) is directed toward a litigation practice whereas the majority of lawyers have a business practice.

1) It is unfortunate that Law School continues to function, for many students, as a "Boot Camp" for the legal profession. While it (the Boot Camp environment) is not so bad at Michigan--compared to schools with "lesser stature"--it is nevertheless true that the real world is often completely different for the practitioner than the law school world was.
2) In practice, it's very difficult for me to have much respect for the legal profession as a whole. Money...getting paid...getting rich are too important to too many lawyers. Honesty, justice, morality are secondary considerations to many lawyers. That turns me off completely. I left this profession once, for almost a year, and if I can find some other way to make a living, I'll leave it again, for good.

My legal education is probably unique in one way--I did 2 years at U-M and my last year at Boalt Hall (UC Berkeley) as a visiting student. The differences are sharp:
1) U-M is far more rigorous and much more time is expected of the students. I studied 30-40 hours/week outside of class at U-M and got "B's" and "B+''s;" at Boalt I worked half as hard for A's.
2) Boalt's students are more diverse age-wise, career-goal wise, and are more "humanist" (whatever that means).
3) U-M focuses its students toward being associates at big law firms (I think excessively).
4) U-M grads have a better grasp of the law & are more likely to be able to apply one area of the law to another (eg. tax law to divorces, etc.).
5) Notwithstanding the foregoing, I am in solo practice as a divorce lawyer and my personal lawyer is a Boalt graduate (not from my class there).
1) The University of Michigan enjoys the reputation of having a fine law school among my colleagues (out of state)—none of whom is a graduate.  
2) The most distracting thing about being a trial lawyer is the practice of the courts to call cases with little or no notice.  
3) It is almost impossible to start a solo practice without either outside income or a contract (long term) or a working wife.  
4) Only cynics should practice law.  

Subjects studied subsequent to my first year of law school contributed practically nothing to my skills as a lawyer. In fact the training I received in three years should have taken no longer than six months. I should point out that I was not picked for the clinic and negotiation course—both of which, I am sure, would have been helpful. It is my opinion that the program in effect during my years at the law school was virtually irrelevant to the art of practical lawyering.

Most of the unpleasantness generally associated with law school is caused by the expectation that the law school experience will be painful and unpleasant. So too, the pressures and stress that are so much a part of private practice are often self-engendered. There are many causes for this—the feeling that it is expected and normal to be stressed-out, the perception that the only way to be a "good" lawyer is to work until you drop, and a need to inflict some pain on one’s self in order to justify the outrageous hourly rate/salary you are charging/"earning." Even those pressures that are not self-inflicted are usually subject to control. So that the real answer to solving the problems associated with the practice of law is not changing the nature of the practice but rather changing the individual’s approach to the practice.

No one would ever allow doctors to be trained the way lawyers are. By the time they leave school, medical students have had an enormous amount of practical & clinical experience. Law students may leave school without any. That was my case, and it meant I left school really having no idea how to practice law.

Law school professors, perhaps understandably, prefer to concentrate in class on the intellectual or philosophical issues. These are rarely of any concern to most lawyers—certainly not to the degree they are dwelt on in law school at least. Consequently, law students graduate being able to debate weighty issues but knowing little about the nuts and bolts of law practice. At U of M, we were already all pretty good thinkers. It’s silly to think that the professors had to devote 3 more years sharpening that skill. Better to teach those good thinkers the lawyering skills they need.

I also thought it was scandalous that all 3rd year students felt compelled to take a bar review course. After 3 years of studying law, who should need to take a course from someone who would never qualify to teach a course at U of M? Yet it was necessary because no one felt they knew enough specifics. Why not have something like a bar review course taught in the law school by a qualified instructor? Again, what would you think if doctors or dentists felt compelled to take such a course for their exams?

The emphasis on the casebook approach is overdone. After two years, students generally can handle the research themselves, as learning substantive law is less important than developing the process of legal thinking, once these thinking patterns are developed, some stress should be placed on practice in the real world. I think that an apprenticeship should be required, like an internship in medicine.
I recently hung out my own shingle and am specializing in high technology ventures and cable TV. It looks like I'm going to do very well. The quality of my UM education is a significant contribution to this adventure. Many folks go to law school as a kind of "useful" post-liberal arts degree. The law school should make courses available. Perhaps some counseling to direct these people away from a narrow and perhaps ill fitting professional "legal mold" and into other areas e.g. business or government policy making.

My answers to many of the practice-specific questions are misleading to a large degree as my practice has not yet developed a particular pattern. Following law school, I clerked for a Federal District Court judge in D.C. for 2 years. I was then at my firm for only one year when I accepted a position in the White House/State Dept. on the Middle East Peace Negotiations. I remained there for 1½ years, returning to the same firm after the 1980 Presidential election. I have only been back at the firm for 1½ years. Accordingly, though 5+ years out of law school, I have not developed any particular specialties within the context of my firm's general litigation practice. I hope this changes over the next several years.

Law school was a very negative experience for me because of:
1) emphasis on the wealthy, corporations, taxes
2) lack of clinical law courses
3) sexism & classism (bias against middle-class students)

However, it prepared me with 1) analytical thinking, 2) a degree and 3) a clear vision of why I felt out-of-place, which lead me to a clearer vision of what I truly value. I don't "own" my being a lawyer--I don't "feel like a lawyer." I think I'm in the wrong profession, although my degree has helped me in my social change activities.

UMLS is excellent preparation for appellate argument, but not practical law practice. The mechanics of running a law suit-interview to execution are never illustrated, let alone taught. Clinical law, 3 months long, is not long enough to run the course of a whole case. Your procedure courses deal only with legal arguments about the rules, not actual practice. I suggest a course (or two) called "LITIGATION" which runs through a PI case (contingent), a contract case (hourly), and a criminal case, showing (a) criteria for whether to take the case, (b) which pleadings are actually filed when, (c) negotiations, (d) trial preparation, (e) execution.

I object to the avowed UMLS attitude that these are the things one should learn the hard way--it is elitism and both the clients and the young lawyer suffer.

In short, UMLS does not train lawyers, only academicians. I think "Practical Litigation" classes would be more valuable--and if the exercises were realistic could take the place of--clinical law.

I am happy to be a legal aid attorney. The only other law-related career I would consider is that of judge in a trial court (state or federal).

I most enjoyed the intellectual camaraderie of serious, talented minds and the chance to enjoy the opportunity to develop good and close friendships with many of them.
Michigan has a great law school--couldn't possibly have gotten a better education anywhere else.

Placement office people were very helpful.

When I first glanced at the questionnaire I hesitated to complete it, feeling that I'm 'atypical' and might skew the survey. (I suspect that I'm in the wrong field; I went to law school because no better alternative presented itself, I continue in my job for much the same reason, although I haven't really enjoyed either.) But then I reminded myself that the whole point of a survey is to get views representative of all different experiences, not just the 'standard.' So I hope that the information may prove helpful although it's rather downbeat or indifferent.

Unlike some people, I had no lifelong ambition to be a lawyer. Rather I went to law school along with many people my age, because the career I would have chosen seemed unpromising and I saw no outstanding alternatives. It's a good job, but I am not devoted to the profession, I am not devoted to the law. I regret that, and sometimes envy people with that commitment.

On the other hand, I'm disturbed by what seems to me to be an increasing stridency among lawyers, particularly those my age or younger. This trend, coupled with many lawyers' over-identification with their clients' positions or interests, has made the practice of law less pleasant. It's not just that people are more litigious, or that an over-population of lawyers has resulted in an unfortunate increase in lawyers' meddling in people's lives, although both of these are true; it's that people are becoming lawyers who should not be. Their lack of perspective and lack of judgment are bringing on all of us a disrespect we deserve.

My experience is that the practice of law requires me to figure out what the most important things to do, prove, accomplish are, and then do them in an efficient way. Little in law school instructed me in these skills.

Perhaps I was unusually naive thinking (before going to law school) that lawyering was the most honorable profession. My disgust for the overwhelming majority of lawyers I have encountered since then, in all phases of our legal system (judges, educators, legislators, and particularly practitioners) is so total that I am abandoning law as a career. Until hypocrisy, greed, duplicity, and amorality are no longer the dominant characteristics of those who comprise the legal profession, I shall not return. The legal system itself may not require changing, but the attitudes of those who are its principal manipulators certainly do.

The most challenging aspect of the practice of law is the delivery of quality services at a price that will make those services available to everyone and still ensure the health of the practice as a business and as a profession that will attract quality practitioners.

I found the University of Michigan Law School to be excellent in most every manner and matriculation at that institution a most lastingly valuable experience.

This is one of the silliest questionnaires I have ever come across.
I believe I have learned much more from my job since law school, even in
the first year, than I did in law school about being a lawyer. Since I
was only allowed to make 3 choices in #5 I would like to add that I
would like to see U of M offer more courses in areas of the law other
than the corporate and high finance world. I would also like to see
better teachers in law school—it’s a shame to see professors who obvi­
ously have a good deal of knowledge and a love of the law not be able
to convey that to their students.

I found the practice not meaningfully connected to the pleasures of law
school that I experienced. Practice is far more of a business than I
knew; and the entire dynamic and effect of client-control inter-action
was ignored.

Some of the most unpleasant people in America lived and worked
at the U of M Law School, and were rewarded for their unpleasantness.

Law school tends to reduce the respect for the truth held by most people.
Law school tends to make people more like prostitutes and less like
saints.

No matter how much one feels removed from the mainstream of law
school, it has tremendous influence on personality development.

LAW SCHOOL OUGHT TO BE SHORTENED TO TWO YEARS!!

Incidentally, I am one of the few people I know who admitted to en­
joying law school during the experience.

The U. of M. has a pretty good placement service, but like the rest
of the school, it is too tied in to Big Business.

I am continually made aware in practice how lucky I was to have gone to
Michigan. I see several instances where my Mich. degree has made jobs
possible and has served as an entree to various opportunities.

Perhaps questionnaire should have included some more specific
questions on satisfaction with teaching abilities of Mich. faculty.

The greatest conflict in my practice, aside from the fact I don’t find
it intellectually stimulating, is between trying to serve the desires
of my clients and accomplishing an end result that is fair and just to
all involved.

The law school is a great institution. I hope it remains so in this
era of tight governmental budgets.

This made me reflect a lot on law school. I can’t think of a particular
class or experience which has been memorable. The whole educational
process of U of M Law was what attracted & kept me there. I’m still not
sure I like being a lawyer or whether I’ll stay in the legal profession
but I am glad I went to U of M Law.

Tried many drafts and gave up. Strong and mixed feelings about law
school and its ramifications.

There should be greater emphasis on communication skills.

I was a college economics professor for four years prior to attending
law school. I now feel that from the points of view of job satisfaction
and income I am far better off in both respects, and I am very grateful
to U of M’s general aid program in assisting me.
The value of a legal education at the University of Michigan is only apparent two or three years after graduation. Its value lies in teaching students how to think, organize, analyze, and communicate (either orally or in writing). It allows us to remain in the forefront of change in law and policy. It gives us insight into "what ought to be" rather than merely mechanically applying "what is."

At the same time, however, any substantive knowledge is acquired almost through osmosis, and since that is how students measure their progress, it behooves the law school administration to more fully orient the incoming student (and reassure the upperclasses) as to the value of a legal education at U-M. Perhaps there would be less anxiety if students were aware that for most courses, (but see: Tax, Commercial Law, Debtors and Creditors, for example) emphasis is on the development of a cohesive and coherent methodology of solving legal problems in whatever area is under consideration.

For my career goals, I wouldn't have wanted to go anywhere else. I just wish someone explained that to me during law school.

The Law school experience was quite important to me. I was a late starter (worked for a few years before I returned to Law School). I found many of the courses challenging, many professors interesting, and formed close attachments to various colleagues which have continued to the present. It gave me time to explore my life and led to some very important discoveries, the major one being my sexual orientation--finding out and dealing with my Lesbianism.

Professionally, it provided me with experiences in Washington at the Center for Law and Social Policy and as a staff member of the Journal of Law Reform which I shall never forget and which have been useful in my career.

I'm convinced that those people who make most of the state and local governmental decisions (including agency personnel legislators, local officials and staff) do so without benefit of legal advice. This in itself isn't bad since that would be expensive and since more lawyers wouldn't be exceptionally helpful given their present approach.

The problem is that most of these public decisionmakers do not really understand the law, especially the role it can and should play in decisionmaking. As a result decisions are usually made in inconsistent, arbitrary, contorted and confusing manners.

In a few cases litigation is brought but it is too rare to improve most daily decisionmaking when the role of the law is not well understood. In addition litigation often gets decided on technical issues and not the real merits.

In short, the law has become too synonymous with lawyers and litigation. It is not given enough deference and use until too late and then it becomes too important. The law in this modern world is too important for public decisionmaking to be left to the lawyers and the courts. Somehow lawyers in general must do a better job of demystifying the law, of explaining the context in which it operates and of providing a general understanding of its strengths and limits.

Lawyers must also realize in the field of public decisionmaking that their traditional approaches are no longer enough. They must better understand the rapidly changing socio-environmental contexts in which they are operating and the need for constantly improving and innovative approaches to problem solving. They must get involved in setting up the new legal mechanisms that will resolve problems without litigation being desirable (in most cases) and then in making sure they are understood and applied properly. Most lawyers come in at rare places (usually at

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the end of a conflict process where positions are hardened) and do not
know the law, understand what they are trying to do, where they come
from and so on. They speak and think one language while everyone else
is doing another. Somehow lawyers in general must get out of their
offices and their single court case focus to meet the decisionmakers and
public to understand problems and their contexts and to help find new
approaches to help resolve them. The real world is too important for the
legal profession to deal with it in a fragmented manner.

Law school taught nothing about most of the practical aspects of prac­
ticing law. That is a major failure, and it stems from the observed
fact that most law professors teach because they dislike the practice of
law.

I regret that I did not participate to a greater extent in law school.
It is apparent that my passivity prevented me from taking full advantage
of the learning opportunities.
Now that I have practiced for 6 years, I appreciate the excellence of
the U of M Law School much more than I did while attending.

I often wonder whether the intense pressure of active legal practice is
not unjustifiable as too great in comparison to the personal satisfaction
gotten out of the job.

I'm very happy with my job and my life. I continue to find that two
things are very important to me: 1) belief in the goals and, equally im­
portant, the integrity and fairness of process of the institution I rep­
resent and 2) limiting lawyering to a part--a significant but not all­
consuming part--of my life.

Immediately after law school, I worked for a large (150) law firm in
Washington, D.C. for three and one-half years......Since leaving the
firm, I have traveled and am currently writing a novel.

Law school was valuable in that it qualified me for a career in the law.
I do not feel that it contributed substantively to my abilities as a law­
yer. (I say this as a securities lawyer who did not take any securities
courses in law school.) I do feel that a legal education contributes to
the thought process which enables one to become a competent attorney.
The most valuable facet of my law school experience was clerking
for a three man firm in Brighton during my second and third year. It was
the practical experience gained during that employment which was of the
most value to me during my first year in practice. I do not believe that
the "summer associate" program sponsored by large law firms contributes
in the same way, however, since it is primarily a recruiting device.

My experience in practice has made me question the very nature of
our legal system. I do not believe that an adversarial process is able
to cope with the complexity and diversity of our present culture. The
government would benefit the society far more by adopting a system
gearied to dispute resolution and mediation as opposed to the current ad­
versarial process.

I find my life to be all that I could imagine. It is satisfying,
boring, exciting and disappointing at once. It will always be that way.
I am currently looking for my next project or career goal. I don't
know whether it will be in the law, in this firm or in something un­
related.

Thanks for the opportunity for my classmates and me to share our
experience through the means of this survey.