BUNKO

NEWCOMERS

A common reflection of beginning law students (after having managed to crawl from between the mill stones during a vacation or otherwise to get a chance to reflect) is that they really had no idea what they were getting into or that their expectations were at least heavily flawed. In other words, most students seem to have chosen to sock away three years of their lives at a law school without informed consent to the environment they encounter there. And they arguably suffer much more anguish in having to adjust themselves - overcoming their disappointments and toughening their classroom hides - than if the realities of law study were well in mind beforehand.

What representations about the student regimen are made, for instance, by Michigan Law School to prospective applicants? In the 1973-4 Bulletin, a number of facts are alleged about this school, some of which have latent ambiguities that in other settings for the same stakes of $10-15,000 over three years might be misrepresentations. Admissions Dean Waterson says UM "has a long tradition of excellence, and its faculty and students are of the highest caliber to be found in the country." Other passages speak of the "Socratic dialogue" as one of the course forms without explaining more about it and that "clinical education ... is being expanded"without saying few still can get in, not to mention the killer that the "buildings of the Quadrangle are of a late Jacobean type of Gothic architecture ... designed by the architects to achieve the maximum of convenience, adaptation to purpose and beauty." With special attention to Ms. Waterson's references to excellence and high caliber, they're true enough as
far as they go but what are the implications of such an academic situation; is it understood by the reader that abuse may rain down upon a student’s head owing to professorial "prima donnaism," administrative procedures for governing the school may imply fee-paying men and women in their mid-twenties are essentially children, or competitive colleagues may make life around the Quad sometimes unbearable?

Of course, the fraud laws look gently on mere "puffing" as the various claims in the Bulletin may be considered, but is there a higher duty of descriptive care required of an institution that teaches the law? Unfortunately, even if there was, the seller's market now prevailing in the law school market precludes students desperately wanting to climb aboard the golden gravy train from more deeply questioning the skimpy information offered about law school life, much less seeking to bargain about the offensive practices themselves.

In conclusion, what I'm trying to do is elicit a discussion in future issues about the accuracy of expectations with respect to law school beginning students have had and whether indeed there would be less apoplexy all around if we all had come to Michigan better informed. Moreover, should students have an opportunity to help write the Bulletin or other materials sent to applicants?

The letters page(s) have always been the sine qua non of Res Gestae, and in the absence of a Hutchins Hall Watergate, the topic of adjusting to law school is one on which everybody has to have a personal opinion.

OLDCOMERS

What can I say? Your presence here after previous law studies presents a clear case of assumption of risk, obviating any grounds for complaint.

mgs

---

WE'RE LOOKING FOR PEOPLE WHO LIKE TO READ AND WRITE

In fact we're looking for anyone who can read or write.

There's plenty of room this summer for articles, interviews, essays or bitching in the RG. And believe it or not, it pays! If you're interested, leave a note at our office, 102A LR, call Mike Slaughter at 763-0769 - or just shove your stuff under our door. (we print anything as long as the author's name is given)