Villanova University Belle Air Yearbook - Law School Excerpt - 1990

Class of 1990

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riefing, outlining, and massive quantities of cases await the first year law student upon his or her entrance into the first year of law school. Previous notions of procrastination and a never ending array of social events are quickly dispelled when the student walks into the first day of classes and is handed reading assignments and writing projects which cause even the most studious to break into a nervous sweat.

Almost everyone thinks of law school as a stepping stone to glamour and prestige. These ideas are formed from such television series as “L.A. Law” and from various movies. But, this glamour may never be found by these prospective young attorneys. The challenge of three years of intense legal study is simply too much for some and after the first year many may decide that law is not for them or that the appeal of working for a small firm greatly outweighs the 18 hour work day that comes with working for larger firms. Many also decide that they want to dedicate their lives to social aid and find a place in the real world working with the underprivileged and poor. Only several, if any, will make it to the top of the legal scene and for those that do, the struggle to this plateau involves a great amount of personal deprivation and dedication to the field.

Yet, the idea of work is not the most outstanding fact in the first year law student’s mind. After the initial transition, one that takes a lot of attitude and study changing, the student learns to cope with the everyday pressures. Fellow classmates and professors are always willing to lend a helping hand in preparation for any project or exam. With this help and a lot of determination almost all students learn that law school, although difficult, can be handled with some degree of ease. Yet, all anxiously await for that day when it is all complete and the only challenge that awaits is the passing of the bar exam and the admittance to the state of their choice.

To help ease all anxieties this group of law students gather around to have a study session in Garey Hall. Aside from pens, paper, and books what is needed here is some pizza and soda.
Do you know that there are more law students in school today than there are attorneys in the entire U.S.? Do you know that the job market is so flooded that you will probably be earning the lowest available salary when you graduate from law school? Of course you will do great in law school, but first, you have to get in! Such are the daily reminders given to the senior college student applying to law school.

Unfortunately, these little reminders turn into solid facts when applying to and graduating from a law school. Luckily, the job search is put into a much better perspective when the student reaches their final year.

There always seems to be a place in the real world for even the lowest on the class rank. After all, most schools only accept the best from undergraduate schools throughout the country and with all of these intelligent young people, even the one who finishes last must have had something that allowed him or her to be admitted in the first place.

Many seniors find that applying to law school is the most difficult aspect of their undergraduate experience. They find that, no matter how many leadership positions you have had and how great your grades may be, the almighty LSAT score makes or breaks your chance of being accepted. Many law schools say that the score does not really determine your acceptance, however, many schools rate all applicants according to this score and their grades and only look at their extracurricular activities when there is some discrepancy. What this discrepancy may be is yet to be discovered by those who earnestly work hard during college both academically and in extracurricular activities and are rejected by the law school of their choice. The only thing that seems to help the applicant during this time is a lot of prayer and hope; for once the application is in the mail, it is totally out of their hands and the stress of waiting for that little white envelope has just begun.

by Patteen Murgan

Working on the final touches, Karen Palestini peruses through the filing cabinet at the Environmental Law Journal. The Journal publishes articles regarding State and Federal environmental issues, and is edited and published by students.

Subject to a contract lecture, these first year law students busily scribble down notes concerning the various aspects of contract validity. A relaxing atmosphere is vital in dealing with the pressures of everyday studies.

Robert Kelly
Chris Kemppinski
Karen Kent-Gross
Mignon Klein
Lisa Kmiel

Kelly-Kmiel © Law School Applications 211
The Villanova University Law School, located inconspicuously on west campus, may seem somewhat remote; but despite its location, it nonetheless adds a key ingredient to the excellence of the academic community. The student body consists of highly talented students, graduates from over two hundred colleges and universities.

One important element which leads to quality education is the law school faculty. The faculty has been nationally recognized for legal scholarship and teaching abilities, and for significant contributions to the study and practice of law. Students can easily get together for discussions outside the classroom, which encourages teaching to be conducted holistically. Another element that keeps the Law School right on line with other top notch post graduate institutions is that each student is assigned to a particular faculty advisor.

A point of pride for the Law School is the wide range use of computers in legal practice. Each student attains a minimum level of computer literacy in the first-year legal writing program. Word Processing, working with Computer Aided Legal Instruction ("CALI") exercises, and various other applications can be accessed. There are several seminars provided which deal with the consideration of the implications of automating various aspects of law practice and legal analysis. Almost all students take the opportunity to use LEXIS and WESTLAW, the major legal computer databases.

The most prestigious aspect of the school of law is the 321,000 volume library. The library was created under the direction of the former Harvard Law School library director, the late Arthur Clement Pulling. Pulling was renowned as the leading law librarian when he began designing the Villanova Law Library. Computerized LEXIS and WESTLAW research systems have been installed into the library circulation system.

Beyond the requisite skills of written and oral expression, the men and women of Villanova Law School develop the fundamental skills of the practicing lawyer, including counseling, drafting, negotiation, advocacy, mediation, dispute resolution, conciliation, and mature judgement. The development of a "lawyer-like" mind and the skills of the lawyer pervades every course in the curriculum. (continued on page 215)
These skills are also the subject of special courses and clinical legal education through which the student combines critical educational experiences with service to the community. Villanova graduates from the Law School have an enviable passing rate regarding the Pennsylvania Bar Examination. Having achieved unusually early and full accreditation by the American Bar Association and the Association of American Law Schools, Villanova became the first law school within a church-related University to be awarded a chapter of The Order of the Coif, the premier law school honor society.

Thus advances in technological improvements to the study of law, a fully recognized sensational faculty, a superior law library boasting a multitude of legal resources, and an holistic, comprehensive manner of analysing all aspects of the study of law are not merely attributes which promise to render the Villanova Law School a superior institution of legal training. Rather, these are the qualities that have already enriched the quality of the school to supreme law school status in the United States.

by Norina Pia Agullo

Hitting back for a few reading hours, Joe Hirsch and Jeff Lieberman debate the finer points of the exclusionary rule. Effective argument is essential in trial situations.
Meditating on the horrors of his upcoming Bar Exam, Steve Cyranowski assumes a pseudo-relaxed appearance. Fortunately Nova Law School graduates enjoy statistically better chances at passing the Bar exam the first time.

Sleepless nights, cram sessions, and lack of a social life all describe the years spent in law school for many future attorneys. Ironically, the unpleasantries do not end at graduation. The final obstacle of the struggle remains: the state Bar exam.

Richard DiStefano, a 1985 Law School graduate who is now a practicing attorney from Berwyn, PA., has the opinion that many graduates choose to take the exam as soon after graduation as possible. Preparations include enrollment in an intensive Bar Review course, more popularly known as “cram school.” All of the material covered in law school is compressed into six weeks, placing a special emphasis on state law. The course can be compared to other test prep courses like that for the GRE, MCAT, or the high school SAT.

The Pennsylvania State Bar exam is twice annually, in July and February, over a two day period. One must answer eight essay questions about Pennsylvania state law on the first day in which one has 45 minutes to answer each question. On the second day, one must answer 200 multiple-choice questions about “multi-state” law. The second half of the exam is identical in all states.

Once the dreaded testing days are over, there is the unbearable days of waiting when one thinks over and over again about their results. The wait is over in about three months after the exam in Pennsylvania. Because their grading system is more elaborate, the Garden State takes approximately 5 months. The minimum score for the Pennsylvania bar is 135 on the multi-state and 120 if one’s exams are good. New Jersey sets the minimum of 9 out of the 15 essays right.

Once the state bar exam is successfully completed, one is qualified to plead a case before the State Supreme Court, as well as state superior and appellate courts. In addition, one is admitted to the Federal district court of your area. To go to the top of the hill and plead cases before the U.S. Supreme Court, one must wait three years after passing the state bar, request permission of the Court and pay a fee of $100 dollars.

As is plainly noted, the process of having the title attorney at law is not an easy crusade. From the grueling years spent in school to the anxiety-filled months of study and waiting, one might question whether or not law school is a wise decision. However, once the seemingly impossible is accomplished, the awards, both personal and professional, more than repay the demanded effort.

by Jean P. Cluff