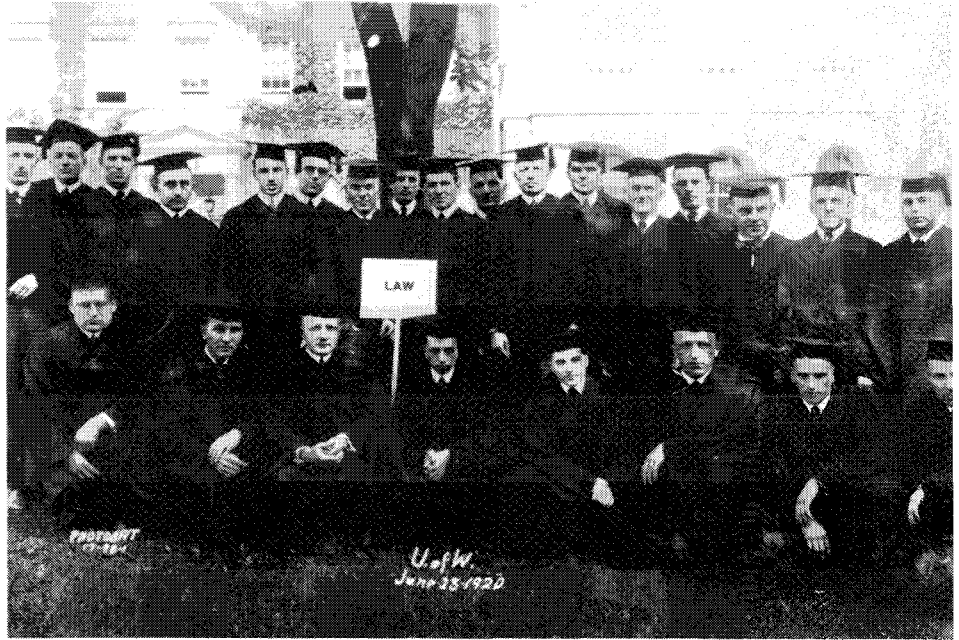


# Convocation Addresses

On May 14, 1988, some two hundred and fifty members of the Class of 1988 will join more than 12,000 other alumni of this Law School. In recent years, thanks largely to the efforts of the students themselves, graduation has again become an important event, one in which most students will actively participate.

After exams, and perhaps before the parties, our students will cross the stage, shake hands with dignitaries, and receive their diplomas. But in addition they will attend a convocation that they, themselves, have organized. Since 1981, the senior class has invited prominent attorneys, respected faculty, and members of their own class to speak to them on the eve of their entry into the profession.

We are reprinting here four of the recent speeches delivered at the last two convocations. They contain serious messages, which apply to all graduates; and some messages that are not so serious, but who said that "the law" cannot be entertaining.



## My Exam Number is 481!

John M. Curtin, Class of 1987

Ladies and Gentlemen, faculty members, parental, spousal and familial units, and fellow cogs in the great machinery of justice. I would like to begin my remarks this evening by revealing a terrible secret. This dark mystery was entrusted to me on my first day in law school and I have never disclosed it to a living soul. Nonetheless, as my law school career comes to an end, I will offer you this deep-hidden confidence as a symbol of the ending. Ladies and gentlemen . . . my exam number is 481!

So much for anonymous grading. So much for all grading for that matter. God, it's really over! And now I have to find something to say about it.

It has proved to be a difficult task. I have no real idea what people wanted when they elected me convocation speaker. In fact, it has been a long time since I could remember why I wanted to do this. Maybe I just liked the idea of being up here with a mike and no one able to stop me. I thought for a while that I might talk about some particular area of law. Bad idea. The last thing in the

world I want to do is give a lecture on law to a group of semi-intoxicated former law students. The consequences could be frightening. No, I don't want to talk about that.

Then I thought—perhaps I should talk about the legal profession, the role lawyers play in our society, the great mantle of public trust and admiration we are about to assume. The main problem with this is that I don't know anything about that stuff. I realize that that sort of impediment would never stop a real lawyer—but your humble narrator would never presume so much. I don't want to talk about that, either.

So then I thought—maybe I can explain law school to the parents and spouses and friends here tonight. Maybe I could explain what happened to the carefree, friendly, well-rested people you used to know. I know I've changed. When I arrived here three years ago I was a social worker and a counselor. Among my colleagues I had a reputation for being easy-going, compassionate and outgoing. Now, 3 years later I have permanent dark circles under my eyes. I have developed the temperament of a shark in bloody water. Last year I was offered a full tuition scholarship by

Maxwell House coffee. In short, I have become a third-year law student. The problem is, to explain how this occurred. The more I thought about it, the more I became convinced that it was impossible. There is no way to convey the law school experience to someone who hasn't been through it. Oh, I could compare it to a variety of painful and humiliating surgical procedures . . . but I don't want to talk about that, either.

Finally, in desperation, I began to think about the things I heard people say over the last several years. Two things immediately stood out. Two things that struck me as essentially true, as saying something valid about law and about law schools.

The first of these was said by a professor in my first year contracts class. He said, "The ultimate purpose of the law is to get through the week without violence." I have no idea why my professor said that. I seldom understand why they say what they do. Nevertheless, this chance comment put the whole thing in perspective for me.

The second great truth concerned law school itself. It was spoken by a classmate of mine during the spring of our first year. He was talking to another first

year and he said "I can't believe this place. I came here all fired up, ready to do justice and help the oppressed . . . and after one semester I find myself asking questions like, "but where does it say in the lease that orphans don't have to pay rent?"

Somewhere between those two poles—getting through the week without violence and evicting the orphans—lies the theme I've been searching for. I'm not sure exactly how to phrase it, but I think it has something to do with keeping a sense of perspective.

Law school is not an easy place to keep a sense of perspective. Law school is a place for fanatics. I remember the first day—a third-year law student took a group of us to the Union terrace for a beer and a talk on law school. He had a mimeographed checklist of things to cover. At the top of the list was "Have some fun—remember to relax every now and then." I thought that was pretty silly. Why, I thought, would any sane human being need to be reminded to have fun? Then I noticed that the woman next to me was taking notes . . .

And it got even worse. I quickly realized that while many law students are sane human beings, capable, with proper therapy, of leading useful and productive lives, law school is not a sane environment. The impact was brutal. Peoples' behavior began to change in unpredictable ways. For example, normal people sleep when they are tired. A law student, deep in the throes of exam mania, will run a caffeine IV directly into her vein in order to stay awake. A law student will excitedly tell a friend that he has discovered a new way to stay alert. If you just keep a thumb-tack in your shoe, nestled against your instep, you're good for an extra six hours. Then, his voice hushed to a conspiratorial whisper, he'll say—"don't spread that around—I don't want to mess up the curve."

What causes people to put themselves through this? Like most of you, I have spent more than a few hours wondering why I ever came here. For some of us, it's a sense of social conscience, for others it's ambition and for still others it's the inability to get a job with a liberal arts degree. I don't know what drives other people to law school.

For me—I was just trying to get a little respect. When I graduated from college with a bachelor's in psychology I was amazed to find that other people weren't quite as impressed with that as I was. So there I was, washing dishes in Door County, when I got the offer of employment from the prison. I was ecstatic. I called my father and shouted "I got a job, I got a job!" He seemed happy and asked me what I'd be doing. "I'm going to be a

social worker!" I announced proudly. There was a long pause. Finally, I heard him muse, "A social worker . . . oh, one of those."

I was "one of those" for almost four years.

I couldn't stand it anymore. I had to get out. I finally hit upon the legal profession. My father was a lawyer and a judge. If I became a lawyer, he couldn't look at me with those big sad judge-eyes and say "Oh . . . one of those." So I sent for the LSAT and applied to law school.

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Apparently, according to the latest polls, lawyers are slightly more popular than deadly radioactive waste, and slightly less popular than drug-crazed cannibalistic Satan worshipers.

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And then, things got worse. I learned, much to my chagrin that lawyers are not universally respected and admired. My christian friends began to quote the Bible to me. "Woe unto ye, ye lawyers for ye laden men with heavy burdens and lift not a finger and ye bill too much for thy time." Or something like that. My literary friends kept quoting that blasted Shakespearean line about "The first thing let's do, let's kill all the lawyers." My family began to send me newspaper clippings indicating the prestige of lawyers has sunk to a new low. Apparently, according to the latest polls, lawyers are slightly more popular than deadly radioactive waste, and slightly less popular than drug-crazed cannibalistic Satan worshipers. And, to remove my last shred of hope, my mother sent me a *Newsweek* article on employment prospects for law school graduates. The news was grim. Evidently I could look forward to spending my legal career working in Pig's Knuckle, Arkansas, for the "Two Guys Legal Clinic." I began to think seriously about going to technical school for a course in bait shop management.

But I persevered. I refused to be discouraged. And of course, things got worse. I became a first-year law student. For those of you who haven't been through it, this is difficult to understand. Decades ago, the profession decided that the best thing to do with first-year students is scare the living hell out of them. This is known as "learning to think like a lawyer." Apparently, lawyers spend a lot of time sitting around contemplating all

the terrible catastrophes lurking on the distant horizon. That and asking silly questions. Silly questions are essential to good lawyering. My contracts professor explained legal thinking to me. He said "There has to be something special about the way that lawyers think—otherwise the economic consequences would be . . . well, unacceptable to the profession." And so I spent a year sweating, drinking gallons of coffee and muttering cryptic phrases like "12(b)(6)" and "res ipsa loquitur." Res ipsa loquitur by the way, for you uninitiated ones, is a Latin phrase that translates roughly as, "Tell the doctor to write a check."

At the end of my first year I was hardened. I no longer felt the compulsion to wave my hand wildly in class whimpering "me, me, call on me." In fact I rarely felt the compulsion to attend class. On the occasion that I made a cameo appearance, I was perfectly capable of ignoring silly questions. I could say, "I'm not prepared" without blushing. In fact, I said it with pride, knowing that I was impressing the professor with my savoir-faire and uncanny grasp of the realities of law school. I could no longer be intimidated.

And then, things got worse. Second year law school has been compared—unfavorably—to a year in the Gulag. My work load tripled. I tried desperately to get my required classes out of the way. I tried desperately to find a clerkship for the summer. I tried desperately to get a date. I forgot about getting a date and tried desperately to get my mother to return my calls. No one wants to talk to a second-year law student. There is good reason for this. I was obsessed. At Thanksgiving I regaled my family with the intricacies of estate planning. At the grocery store I explained to a store clerk that I could buy a six pack after nine o'clock because I picked it out of the display before nine and this constituted an acceptance of the offer and a completed contract. She called the manager and it got very ugly—but I don't want to talk about that. In any event, I learned another valuable legal concept my second year. It's called "close enough for jazz." Close enough for jazz is how a second-year law student deals with an impossible workload. You buy the canned study aids, you pound through your notes until you almost understand and when the exam rolls around—well, close enough for jazz.

And then things got worse. I became a third-year law student. Now my mother began answering my calls. In fact, she began calling me every few days to say, "Have you got a job yet?" Up in the wilds of Northern Wisconsin where I was born, a twenty-four hour prayer vigil began. I began considering the priesthood. After

all, by this time I was used to not having dates. Besides, I figured the Vatican could cover my educational loans—or at least, help me change my name to Friar Tuck and move me out of the jurisdiction.

Meanwhile, the Two Guys Legal Clinic of Pig's Knuckle, Arkansas, wasn't returning my calls. But I don't want to talk about that, either.

And then, things got better. I got a job and this morning at 4:30 a.m. I completed my obligation to the law school. It has ended. Maybe now I'll finally have a chance to rejoin the perspective I've lost over the last three years. Maybe I'll get a tan and more than one suit and maybe, just maybe, a date.

On the other hand, maybe I'll settle for getting through the week without violence. Goodnight—and take it easy on the orphans.

## Seek Beyond the Private Life

*Anthony Earl, Governor,  
State of Wisconsin, (1983–87)*

I was very flattered to receive the news that this graduating class had chosen me as your convocation speaker. Believe me, after the events of the past few months, it is gratifying to be chosen for anything—but this is a special honor.

It has been good for me to get back to the law. Though I occasionally miss politics as I mull over the recent national political events, I've come to agree with Mark Twain that more often than not, truth is stranger than fiction—because fiction has to make sense. Coming back to the law has also reminded me what a good preparation a legal education can be for people who like many different kinds of challenges in their lives. Few callings offer the variety of tasks and the scale of service that is open to the person with legal training. I believe the heart of our democracy is the institutionalization of conflict resolution through the political process and the legal process. There is nothing that introduces you to the tensions and interests that make up our society better than the law. This has certainly been true for me. Let me elaborate from a personal perspective.

When I graduated from law school at Chicago in 1961, I took my training first to the Navy, then to local government as a prosecutor and as the first city attorney of Wausau. Later I went into private practice and was elected to the Legislature.

The legislature was an education in itself. There you really see the realities



and tensions of a state like Wisconsin coming together within a setting in which tradition resists change, Republicans fight with Democrats, Democrats fight with each other, and governors are fought by the mayor of Milwaukee.

Later, as Secretary of Administration, I had a variety of assignments which included everything from preparing the budget to overseeing the capitol police.

My final assignment in government before becoming governor was Secretary of Natural Resources. I became a regulator, and in this job I came to fully appreciate the difference between the letter and spirit. I am not a biblical scholar, but I do believe the biblical admonition—that "The letter killeth and the spirit giveth life." The worst kind of lawyering is to lose track of the reason for a law and try to make the law exculpate you from what you've done or give you some special edge to do what you would like to do. I found it too often the case that people would find safety by claiming that the letter of the law wouldn't permit them, or others, to do something.

And on the other hand, there were those who were willing to violate the spirit of the law by putting a new meaning to the letter. This came out in the suits over the Menomonie Valley prison site, where the Brewers sued to prevent the prison from being built, and another group sued to require it to be built. Both sides claimed that the environmental impact law dictated the result they

wanted. Personally, I believe that Judge Parrish's ruling that baseball attendance figures were a part of the environment is a terrible abuse of the environmental impact law that is not in its spirit and is sure to weaken it.

## Education and Obligation

What I have just described to you is the education of a governor—but in all of that, it would have been a poorer experience and, I suspect, a far briefer one had I not had a legal education in the first place.

The fact is that a lawyer is especially well suited for the variety of challenges in government. A good lawyer understands, or ought to understand, both sides of an argument. A good lawyer is a good advocate. A good lawyer understands that progress is not always in one leap, but often in small, incremental steps. A good lawyer understands that confrontation is seldom as effective as cooperation, and compromise is not a sell out.

And a good lawyer understands that if you win a contest just by the numbers, without persuading enough people of the soundness of your position, you will lose it as soon as the numbers change. You've got to get a deeper victory.

These are the kinds of things my own legal education left me with, and something more: A sense of professional obligation to give something back to society.

This is something that concerns me a lot these days, as I watch the debate over support for public education and the University of Wisconsin in particular.

Whether it is from the Board of Regents or the people who put together the film "Choices," we hear a common theme: they say it is scandalous that the University of Wisconsin has such low tuition.

They say that because they have made the judgment that higher education benefits only the individual and society benefits little at all. This is a sharp departure from Wisconsin tradition, which holds that support for public education is worth it because an educated populace makes for a better society and a strong democracy.

Now, too many would treat education as though it were like any other personal service: if you're the beneficiary, you pay the price. Unfortunately, this idea has caught hold and is gaining support because all too many people who come out of school behave in just that way. They don't give anything back to society, and if there is an area where that is true in spades it is the law.

Lawyers used to give more pro bono time. Lawyers used to represent hospitals for nothing. Now, hospitals are the source of a great amount of paid legal business.

Lawyers used to feel a responsibility to provide representation for poor people. Now, we've institutionalized it through the public defender system and the Legal Services Corporation. I hope some of you will join these organizations. That's good, but at a minimum lawyers who do not represent indigents ought to make it a part of their professional activity to make sure that those programs—both of which have been under attack—are well-funded and work well.

I think we have forgotten that the law is not simply a business; it is a profession. And public education, supported by tax dollars, should mean that your admission to this profession carries an obligation to give something back to the society which made it possible. Society as a whole must see some benefit, or else the day will not be far off when those who choose higher the education will be asked to pay the whole cost. From my point of view, this would be tragic, not only because it would reduce the profession's respect in society, but also because we would surely narrow the base we draw from to limit the number of poor and minority individuals who could enter it.

So, for the sake of the profession, for the sake of a good society, and for the sake of fairness, I want to urge you as graduates to give something back. Help

your communities. Help your neighborhood associations or churches. And consider public service, including political office. Jack Kennedy used to say that every mother wanted her child to become President, but no one wanted that child to become involved in the tawdry business of politics on the way to the White House.

Well, the fact is that you don't have good government unless you have good politics, and you don't have good politics unless you have good and knowledgeable people getting involved.

You're the cream of the crop. You are the future of the profession and, in important ways, the future of the constitution. I hope, as the graduating class of the year in which we observe the 200th anniversary of the constitution, that you will not content yourselves to honor it by listening to "Six Constitutional Seconds" on the radio.

I hope you will honor it as the privileged, educationally enriched people who were the framers of the constitution did 200 years ago this summer: by seeking something larger than a private life filled with private gain. They sought and formed the honor of service. So can you. I wish you all the best. God bless you.



## First and Foremost, Most Disputes Go Nowhere

Prof. Howard Erlanger,  
UW Law School, Class of 1981

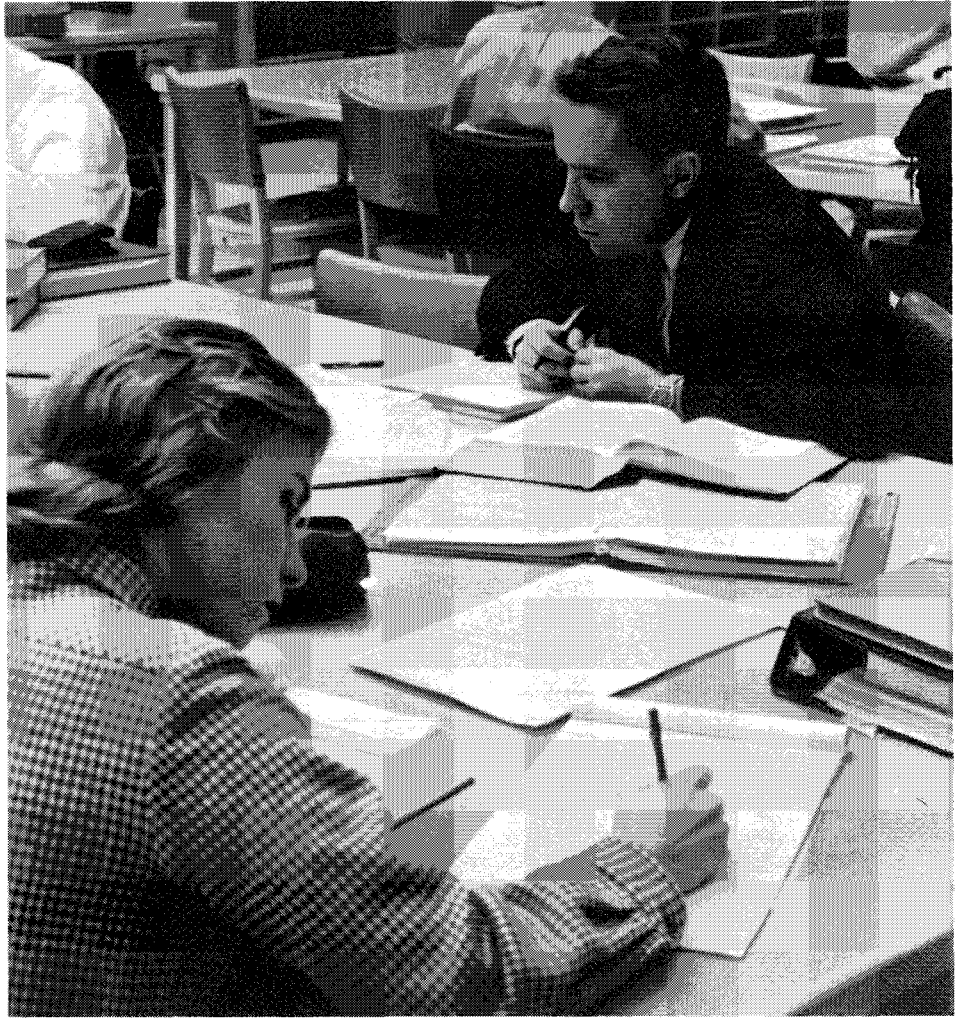
In planning my remarks for this evening, I went to see the Dean. I asked him to advise me on how I could best further the goals of the Law School in the brief period allotted me. He said, "Don't take this as too awesome a burden, but I think you should view it as the last chance the faculty has to reach the students: a chance to correct errors in instruction; to set things straight; to tell them everything we didn't tell them in class. Five or ten minutes should be plenty of time for that."

I told the Dean that this reminded me of the case of *Acme Parachute*, that I studied long ago. In *Acme Parachute*, a manufacturer discovered that it had made an error in its instruction material. But it was "just a simple error," so they took out an ad in the local paper to correct it:

ATTENTION! ATTENTION!  
TO ALL PURCHASERS OF  
THE ACME DELUXE PARACHUTE  
On page 3, paragraph 2,  
line 7 of instructions,  
where it says  
STATE FULL ZIP CODE  
it should read  
PLEASE PULL RIP CORD.

All kidding aside though, I do believe there is something to be accomplished in this last chance that the faculty has to address the students. I would like to use those few minutes to try to put your legal education in perspective and to draw out some themes that may have been under-emphasized.

In the theory or philosophy of legal education, there are many different approaches. For example, some people believe that legal education should focus on rules, on "the law." To them it is axiomatic that in law school, you should learn the law. Others believe a focus on the policy or theory behind the rules will serve students better, by helping them understand why the rule is there, and thus be better able to interpret it and to predict change in the law. Still others would focus on law in action, or the sociology of law, arguing that unless students understand the social context in which the rules are played out, they will not understand what the law means to real people in real situations. Finally, some would focus on specific practice skills: What forms do you use? Where's the courthouse?



A key fact of your education at this Law School is that there is no agreed upon method of instruction. I'm sure many of you have noticed that. And I'm sure the variation in approaches often seemed chaotic. But I don't believe this apparent chaos—this eclecticism—is a problem. Rather, I believe it is a strength.

Where we have fallen down, though, and the "error" that I hope to remedy tonight, is that we have not done as good a job as we might have, of showing you why it is important to have experienced all these different perspectives. That is, we haven't helped you integrate the various parts of your education. Because the fact is that we can't train you in "the law"; the law changes every day. And no matter what courses you take in law school—you have no way of knowing whether those are the courses that will be relevant later in life. What you're going to be called upon to do in your career is to draw on the legal skills you learned in your various courses, and apply them to new legal situations.

What we haven't emphasized enough is that it's not the substance of the

courses you took that's truly important, but rather the variety of ways of analyzing legal problems. Thus, maybe you had a property course that emphasized policy; a contracts course that emphasized sociology, and a tax course that emphasized rules. That's not as chaotic as it seems, because we weren't really teaching you property, contracts, and tax. More fundamentally, we were teaching you policy analysis, sociology of law, and statutory analysis. Sure, we could have pulled it all together in one course for you—but who would have enrolled in a 14 credit course in taxation of property contracts?

Finally I want to use this opportunity to reinforce some things that many of you have heard me say before. The first of these points is the importance of the law in action. Law in action is not just important, it's critical. Oliver Wendell Holmes, one of the greatest jurists and legal analysts the country has ever produced, recognized this when he wrote: "Law is but a prediction of what the courts will do in fact; and nothing more pretentious is what I mean by law." For

Holmes, then, law was not something abstract; law was not "black letter." Instead, it was the real actions, by real people—judges in this instance—that in fact made up the law.

Now, there is a sense in which I believe Holmes was fundamentally right, and a sense in which he may have been wrong. He was right to focus our attention on law in action. But he was wrong to the extent that he focused our attention on the courts as the source of that action. Because in spite of all the apparent activity in the courts, some simple facts remain:

First and foremost, most disputes go nowhere: The property law you learned in Law School gives way to the property law you learned as a kid: "Finders keepers, losers weepers!"; "Possession is 9/10ths of the law!"

Secondly, when there is some resolution, most often it occurs before a court case is filed, and most often without the advice of an attorney.

Finally, even when lawyers are involved, and even when a suit is filed, the overwhelming majority of cases are settled out of court.

Many would say that it is exactly in this context that the quote by Holmes applies: He didn't say that "law is what the courts do." Rather he said "Law is a prediction of what the courts will do." The argument would be that bargaining and informal settlement take place "in the shadow of law"; that the prediction of what the outcome would be at trial leads to a situation in which trial is unnecessary.

There's certainly a lot of truth to that, but at the same time, if you're going to practice law effectively, you have to realize that the story is much more complicated. I and some colleagues have just completed a study of negotiated settlements in divorce. The lawyers and clients we talked to said things like, "In divorce, a lawyer's work is 99% psychotherapy, 1% law"; or "The client undergoes two divorces—an emotional one and a legal one; the lawyer's job is to help the client through both divorces." Predicting "what the court will do" may not be that important in this context if you know your client (a) can't afford to go to court and (b) isn't emotionally up to it, anyway.

Let me add a somewhat different example. Wisconsin has become a community property, or "marital property" state. One consequence of this change is that, except by agreement, spouses can't create an old fashioned joint tenancy anymore. You're supposed to create "survivorship marital property." I know this is the law. I've read the statute. Heck! I

teach the course! So, when I bought a car last December I went to the Department of Transportation and said, "I'd like to title this car with my wife, as survivorship marital property." The clerks response? "We don't have that." I'll let you guess who won: Is the law what the statute says? Is it what the court would say? Or is it what the clerk said?

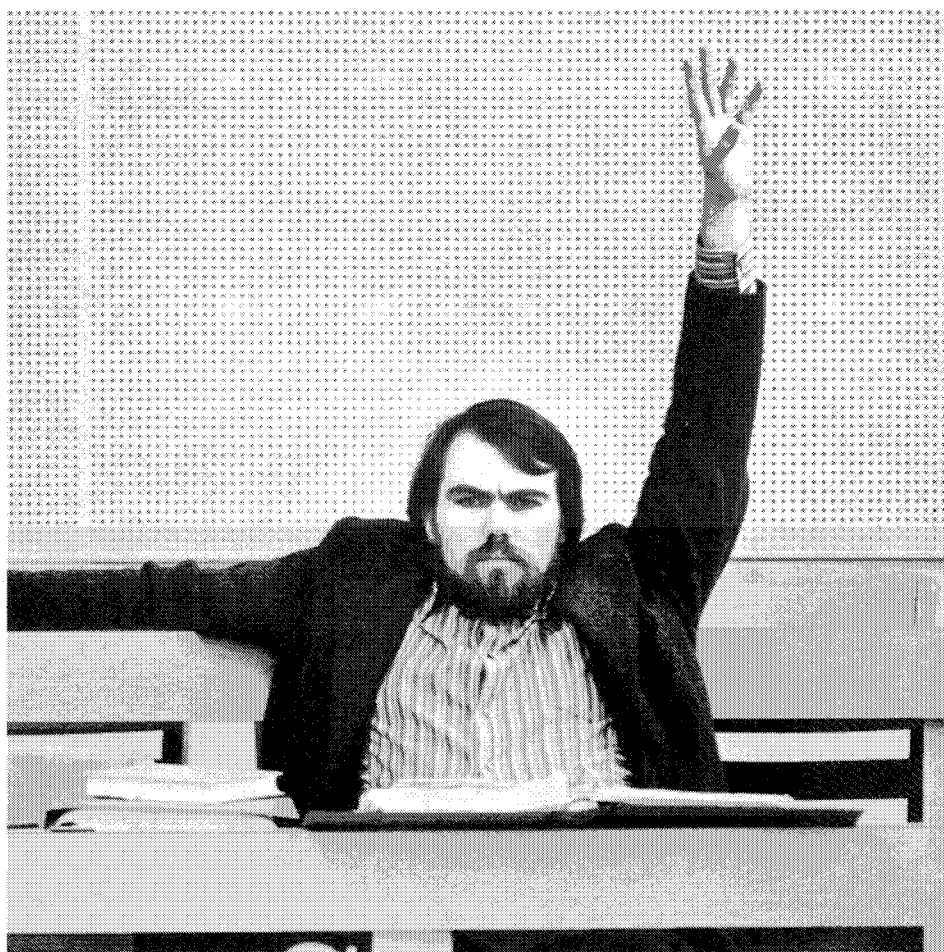
Law in action is the reality of practice; "Don't leave home without it."

Finally, a word about common sense. One of the biggest problems we have in teaching law is that students often are reluctant to apply common sense to the problem at hand. All of you survived anyway. But as a lawyer, you'll find that you'll need your common sense. If you left yours at the door when you entered law school, be sure to collect it when you leave.

Lawyers sometimes underestimate the common sense of non-lawyers; new lawyers are especially prone to this problem. Consider the following story, one that David Reinecke, a Madison attorney who lectures at the Law School, frequently tells at the end of classes. You may have heard it before, but it bears repeating.

The prosecutor had a very strong case against the murder defendant. But the DA was missing conclusive proof of the death of the victim, because the body was never recovered. The young defense attorney could see that the case was lost by the look of the jury during the final arguments. So the defense attorney said to the jury, "I'm going to count to 5 and clap my hands; when I'm done, John Smith, who supposedly was murdered, is going to walk through the door." He did it, and everyone looked at the door. The attorney announced, "That's reasonable doubt! THE LAW says you must acquit the defendant!" But the jury convicted, on short deliberation. The Foreman was asked why: "We noticed that when everyone looked at the door, the defendant didn't!" That's COMMON SENSE.

Well, my time with you is up. I hope that I've given you some food for thought that you can integrate with the variety of perspectives you have absorbed over the past years. I know that if you draw on those perspectives, you will have a very successful career. Congratulations to all of you. I wish you well.



## No, You Can't Get There That Way

*Daniel Waite, Class of 1986*

Thank you Dean Thompson, for that  
introduction,  
And thank you, too, classmates so kind.  
You've assigned the task, I'm here to  
convey  
Just what's on our collective class mind.

The job isn't easy, in fact it's a hard one,  
Because all our feelings are various.  
To attempt a consensus of such diverse  
backgrounds  
Is bordering on the quite perilous.

You see, we're from everywhere: North,  
south and east,  
West and some points in between.  
Our ideological spectrum is broad,  
Our political feelings are keen.

But we've got one thing, one tie that  
binds us,  
We've all got one common trait.  
Three years ago, we all came to Madtown  
To learn Contracts, Torts and Probate.

The first weeks that we spent here were  
confusing and harried,  
At times they bordered on panic.  
However, we knew we were all in the  
same boat,  
No one noticed it was named the Titanic.

We were drowning in cases and statutes  
and rules,  
We were grilled with the method  
Socratic.  
When we realized we'd have to do this  
for three years,  
Well, our responses weren't at all  
diplomatic.

Even the building conspired against us,  
Even it seemed our foe.  
For, once you entered the front door,  
You didn't know which way to go.

You stood in the lobby, the place of  
entrance,  
Wondering just what to do.  
You looked about you and made quite a  
discovery,  
Somehow you got on floor number two!

You spotted a professor and asked for  
directions,  
"L447, you say?"

"Just go straight ahead," he responded,  
then paused,  
"No, no, you can't get there that way."

"Go into the library, ask someone there,  
I'm sure that they'll help you," said he.  
And so you thanked him, and followed  
the signs,  
You didn't know just how hard this  
would be.

Entering the library, lo and behold,  
You defied physics as you passed through  
the door.  
Going in, you left behind floor number  
two,  
Suddenly, you were on the fifth floor!

You went to the desk, you asked for  
directions,  
You listened intently, you pondered.  
But because of the way that library is  
built,  
For the next seven hours you wandered.

Classes, too, were a chore in the first  
year;  
Ideas came fast and came furious.  
But what happened to us when exams  
came around . . .



Well, some thing it was permanently injurious.

We reviewed, we outlined, and we re-re-reviewed,  
We were certain we were thoroughly ready.

We entered the rooms and opened the blue books  
With hands both assured and steady.

We read through the questions, we were given three hours;  
One hour each, not too hairy.  
But when we looked up after answering just one,  
There was one hour left; that was scary.

We raced through the answer to the second question,  
Trying to get back on track again.  
We finished the second just as the proctor  
Called out "Minutes left now are ten."

Needless to say, the third answer was rushed.  
Indeed, our responses were skimpy.  
The proctor called time, we handed it in,  
And left the room feeling quite wimpy.

Somehow we made it. Yes, we survived.  
They say it came out in the wash.  
We returned for a second year, bound and determined,  
Our spirits, the school would not quash.

The year started quickly; old friendships renewed,  
Summer associate experiences related.  
We knew that our tasks in the law firms we'd worked at,  
Made all of our textbooks outdated.

Still, we went to classes. We were insufferable;  
Knowing it all, so we thought.  
We studied, that's certain, later to learn  
You can never study as much as you ought.

'Cause classes were "easy," we had to find

Something to occupy our idle time.  
We joined other students, in other endeavors,  
Sometimes with no reason or rhyme.

PAD, PDP, BALSAs,  
AILSA, Law Review.  
The Journals, the Guild, the Race Judicata,  
Just to name a few!

The Community Law Office, clinical programs,  
Moot courts, ABA-LSD.  
All of these efforts filled in our schedules.  
We worked at them contentedly.

Suddenly, it seemed much too soon,  
Exams were upon us once more.  
We digested three months of reading in six weeks,  
And prayed for a compassionate score.

We made it again. Son-of-a-gun!  
We had just one more year to go.  
We had been warned, but we still weren't prepared,  
For that last year went by oh so slow.

By then we were old hands, third years, survivors.  
The process was no longer scary.  
In fact, we were such a well-seasoned lot  
That we knew our way 'round the library'.

We spent the year counting the days to the finish,  
When we'd be let out of the place.  
'Til we realized the "incompletes" had to be finished,  
Then time seemed to pick up its pace.

The papers were written, research was completed,  
All in record-breaking time.  
Exams were upon us, and then they were past us.  
Handing the last one in was sublime.

So now we're all done, we'll be leaving quite soon  
For locations both widespread and various.  
But there are things we'll remember, things we'll hold on to,  
No matter where our careers carry us.

We'll remember arising before the sun,  
Not too sure we were alive,  
Dashing through windchills of forty below,  
To get to our 7:45.

We'll remember the Law Revue (play, not the book),  
We'll remember the Homecoming skits.  
Both brought to you by the PDP people,  
Their efforts were always big hits.

We'll remember the coffee and bagels and donuts,  
And other various dishes.  
We'll remember all of those PAD sandwiches;  
Professors really are quite delicious!

We'll remember the parties, the impromptu bashes,  
And all of the Last Clear Chance dances.  
We'll remember that well-defined tenet of Contracts:  
"Ya pays yer money and ya takes yer chances."

So, after we've left here, sometime in the future,  
When you're frantically working on cases.  
Think back to the three years we all spent together,  
Remember a few of our faces.

Remember all of the friendships we shared,  
Remember those who aren't with us tonight.  
I wager you'll think law school wasn't half bad;  
I bet you'll think it was all right.