

Dear Mr. Garwin;

I am a 2L at Thomas M. Cooley in Grand Rapids, Michigan. I am also 50 years old, which is probably why I am writing.

There were questions on Twitter. Here are my answers:

1. What problems does the cost of legal education cause or promote for the following:

Cost of law school should be directly related to post graduate earning capacity.

There should be a change from free scholarships for the "alleged best and brightest" to worthiness.

Simply because a student tests well, does not mean they will make a good attorney.

I would like to see less attention paid the "number" and more attention paid to the individual seeking the degree. My GPA from MSU was a 2.8. My degree was in Criminal Justice with a concentration in courts. My original goal was to be a probation/parole officer, which did not happen. When I went to MSU, I was 22 years old, a single parent raising a 2 year old and wanted a better life for us. I did not want to be a welfare mom. I also only bothered to do well in the courses that were important.

Simply because a course is required, does not make it relevant. If it isn't relevant, it is inadmissible.

In 1994, I returned to school and became a certificated Paralegal. My GPA was 3.8. That GPA was not factored in and I argue it should have been. That program was ABA approved. I did some work at a Paralegal.

Life should count as well. I was an Workers Compensation Claims Adjuster for over 10 years. I absolutely adore Workers Compensation!

If law schools are going to use a purely mathematical equation, that life experience as an adjuster should have a numerical equivalent added to my entrance score. I also have 8 years working as a unit secretary in medium sized trauma one medical facility. I worked in the float pool, which means I worked in every single department they had. Some shifts, I worked more than one. That experience should have a numerical equivalent.

What the majority of my peers have in common is they have 4.0's on the undergrad, but there undergrad degree is in English, Philosophy, Journalism, Political Science. In my mind, those are the new liberal arts degrees. You can't get a job with those. You are more likely to do better in law school, and they do. Does that make them equipped to be attorneys? I know of several of my peers that are in law school getting full ride scholarships because they couldn't do anything with their undergrad degree. My peers are interested in international business and only speak American. If I were interested in international business, my undergrad would have been a mix of business and foreign

languages, not political science. I have peers that are going into environmental law, their undergrad degree is in philosophy. I would have been heavy on the sciences. Each of these students believe it is the responsibility of the firms hiring them to provide the training.

Law firms do not have assets to train an attorney for over a year. As an adjuster, I trained several attorneys with their partners. But I refused to pay for the additional work for more than a few months. And Workers Compensation is not an easy area of the law to grasp. With Workers Compensation, you love it or you hate, you get it or you don't.

Law schools need to look at the total picture of the person. Can that student contribute in the classroom. I am prepared to present any case at any time. Most of my peers are not. Most of my peers don't brief. Many of them do not know how. That is a basic skill in my opinion.

"If I ran the zoo," said young Gerald McGrew, "I'd make a few changes." Dr. Suess

Entry into law school.

Perhaps some personality and skills interest tests. Do they naturally have the interest in law?

Look at the whole individual.

Look at their essay in their application of "why" they want to be an attorney. You can weed out who is in it for the money, power, or prestige. Is that the future of law? I hope not.

Scholarships should go those that are worthy, not just who has the highest scores.

Look at what their undergrad degree is in. I sat on a scholarship committee for my local claims association. We gave scholarships based on the classes they took, how they spent their time out of school, and where they wanted to go. Most years, that went to the kid who did not have the highest scores but they were the worthiest.

The Education.

More credit hours. There are a lot of electives I would take to make me more well-rounded.

Attendance: Can't be late. I suppose a judge might allow you to explain why you were late, but I am not sure it is tolerated. Can only miss a certain number of class hours, then you are automatically dropped and can be readmitted. Each law school should have a committee to make that determination. There are of course legitimate reasons for missing to much class. I had the flu, which lasted a week. I chose to stay home versus infecting the student population. Good Ethics. I could have provided a doctors note.

Class participation. Mandatory. I think a percentage of our grade should include participation. If the Professor calls on you and you have not prepared, black mark on your permanent record. Professors can tell when someone has briefed the case and doesn't get or used a canned brief.

More skills type courses. I don't think we do enough writing.

Ultimately, I would love to see a National Bar Exam, with State Certifications. You are admitted to the bar on a National Level and given a national bar number. But then you still have to sit for the state specific exam in order to be certified to practice in that state.

One more note: I don't think failing courses should count against you. If you fail them more than once, then they should. I think everyone should get a do-over. I have struggled with a couple of courses and failed one. If I fail another, I am done. You do not know how badly I want to be an attorney. I do not test well. I am smart enough to an attorney. I have the desire and the passion. I have life that continues to interrupt law school. I am caring for my mother who has dementia.

I am paying for law school through student loans. I will never get them paid off. I have been behind the "eight" ball my entire life. I do not know people who can give me a leg up or a hand to hold. I have had to fight my entire life to be where I am. Being an attorney is my last dream. I have fulfilled all of the others.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I apologize for being verbose.

Sincerely;
Elizabeth T. Paskiewicz