

## Law School Advice

I read with interest the comments of Chief Justice Donald W. Lemons (*Virginia Lawyer*, April 2015) regarding the advice he has for prospective and current law students. These are questions that many of us hear, some from our own children: “Should I go to law school?” “If I am in law school, what is my future?”

Let me share the answer that I give:

Thinking about going to law school? Good for you. The law needs smart people who can solve problems. There is a never-ending supply of consumers, rich and poor, whom you can help lead through an ever-more-regulated society. As times change, we need people who can protect individual liberty, protect the flow of good ideas, help people make practical decisions about their legal situations, and become heroes to their communities.

You will have to think “outside the box.” Forget about going to the fanciest, “highest rated,” and most expensive law school you can find. It’s not worth it. Most of the people you will come across in your career don’t care what law school you went to. The debt you incur going to an expensive law school may enslave you later and prevent you from living a fulfilling, productive life.

You will have to think outside the box in other ways, too, as most law schools are good at preparing you for a world that no longer exists. Instead of Law Review, you should sign up for those classes that tell you how to run a

business, how to read a spreadsheet, how to get clients, and how to become influential to your community. Sure, your law school probably doesn’t have those classes. Mine didn’t. You may have to enroll in some business classes at your local community college. Go ahead. Do it. Hour for hour, it is far more valuable than Law Review.

I want you to know something else about your decision to be a lawyer. Lawyers can be heroes. It’s cool to be a hero. There are many ways for lawyers to be heroes today. Sure, you help clients, and when they survive whatever challenge they face with you at their side, they will see you as heroic, but there’s more. When you run a profitable practice that doesn’t drive you crazy and allows you to get home in time for dinner and soccer and ballet and “date night,” you become a hero to your family.

Finally, when you not only survive but thrive as a small business owner, you become a hero to your community — employing people, paying taxes, and being an inspiration for all the other small business owners in your community who are, after all, the economic engine of America.

I want to thank you for considering becoming a lawyer. We need people who can make a real difference in someone’s life. You just have to think a little differently than I did when I started.

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## Letters

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