

LAW SCHOOLS IN MINNESOTA

- all are good

(1) **University of Minnesota** Law School, Minneapolis - West Bank Campus - gets students from all over the country, part of a very big school

(2) **William Mitchell** School of Law St. Paul on Summit Avenue

(3) **Hamline** University School of Law, St. Paul on Hewitt Avenue

(4) University of **St. Thomas** School of Law, Minneapolis - near the downtown, LaSalle Av.

- U of MN Law costs about half as much as the other three because it is a "public" rather than "private" institution. Most applicants pick the U of MN as their first choice, it is well regarded.

- Wlm Mitchell is the oldest law school in the State and graduates "real lawyers" who are trained, not just educated, and probably has more alumni in the State than any other Law School. (Lawyers hire lawyers.) Wlm Mitchell was known for their night-school program that attracted older students, but all the law schools have night classes now.

- Hamline Law is new, about 30 years since it was accredited; St. Thomas is even newer, about 7 years old.

LAWYERS SHOULD:

(1) Like to read.

(2) Like to think and make decisions.

(3) Have thick skin - the ability to not get emotional when you don't get your way, when others are being demanding, rude, etc. You have to stay focused and solve the problem.

(4) Have a certain amount of comfort in talking to people, although this skill can be developed as you get to know what you are talking about.

(5) Have a good memory - for facts, laws, mistakes others made, where things are, who people are, - the more you know, the better.

(6) Be able to listen, and to perceive unspoken information.

(7) Enjoy helping people.

(8) Have a good self-image (an "air of authority"), because people won't hire a lawyer with a poor self-image. Interestingly, some people prefer to pay high legal fees to feel sure that they hired a good lawyer. There is some logic to that thought.

(9) Be able to present facts persuasively.

(10) Be honest and careful.

THE LAW AS A PROFESSION

- Is stressful.

- Is intellectually stimulating (not boring).

- Is a power trip (some times).

- Is classy and cool, but makes lawyers the butt of a lot of bad jokes (and a few good ones), because we have so much to be proud of, we are not allowed to be offended.

- Is good pay.

- Is not for the faint of heart.

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HOW TO BECOME A LAWYER

(1) Every lawyer needs to have a **license** to practice law (like a driver's license, it's a little card. There's also a larger certificate to hang on your wall.)

(2) To get your license you need to pass the **Bar Exam** for the State where you will work, (each state has a separate exam, some states group together for a multi-state exam).

(3) Passing the Bar requires studying hard for it, but to take the Bar Exam you must have graduated from an accredited **law school**, which takes about 3 years. It's like college.

(4) To get into law school you need a **four-year college degree**, grades of at least a B, and a good score on the LSAT exam. You can get into law school and take the Bar Exam with a juvenile record. But adult crimes and civil frauds on your record can get you disqualified.

(6) To get into college, you need to have a **GED or high school degree**, and the better your grades, the easier it will be to get into the "college of your choice."

- Almost no one looks at the above and thinks, "I want to do all that."

- Take it one step at a time and keep your options open.

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BEING A LAWYER

- The Law is a "learned profession" with some automatic respect for your achievement in becoming a lawyer.

- Lawyers can join their local Bar Association and be a member of a powerful club.

- Many elected officials are lawyers, all judges are lawyers, most of the laws are written by lawyers.

- As far as clubs go, a lawyer can also join the State Bar Association, the American Bar Association, and many different topical associations.

- Lawyers specialize in Business Law, Civil Practice, Criminal Law, Family Law, Employment Law, Probate & Trust Law, Real Property Law, Tax Law, Personal Injury, and other areas. No lawyer does it all. Often a lawyer will shift from one specialty to another for something new to do.

- Law school costs about as much as a house, so most lawyers take out student loans and have pay them back.

- Or you can work your way through law school, take out less in loans and owe as much as a car at the end of three, four or five years. If the schooling is something you want, the cost of it will not stop you. It's an investment.

THE JOB OF BEING A LAWYER

- The top 10% (by GPA) of law school graduates, and the Ivy League graduates, can get starting salary jobs of \$120,000+ per year (at age 24), but they must work about 80 hours per week. No kidding. These people are nuts. They often burn out, recoup, find another job and go on with a more normal schedule. The ones who thrive on long hours and stress are very wealthy and busy.

- Average lawyers earn around \$70,000 per year and feel the pressure to work 70 hours per week. To be successful, you have to be prepared. To be prepared you have to spend time preparing.

- If you enjoy the work, the long hours are enjoyable to you, but your spouse and children will complain.

- If you want to have "a life," there are regular jobs, government and financial work, book editing for Westlaw, mediation and real estate work that pay, sometimes just as well, with less stress and 40-hour work weeks.

- If you want to work for yourself, there is nothing better than being a lawyer.

- The Law is a demanding mistress.

- For every lawyer who wins a case, there is one who lost. All lawyers win some and lose some, or they write wills and stay away from the courtroom.