

assess and demonstrate the attainment of professional competence without infringing judicial independence.

LEGAL EDUCATION GENERALLY

[no material in this edition]

LEGAL ETHICS

[no material in this edition]

LEGAL PROFESSION

When the rot sets in: the disillusionment and dissatisfaction of young lawyers with the legal profession

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21 *Brief* (Journal of the Law Society of Western Australia) 5, June 1994, pp 6-10

Having joined the legal profession in the belief that it is special and respectable and might be reasonably lucrative, more and more lawyers seem to be becoming increasingly disheartened with the gulf that exists between the widely perceived and idealised life of being a lawyer and the reality of day-to-day life in and away from the office. The work which lawyers do is rarely stimulating and disputes that are real and complex to lawyers are, to the rest of society, inexplicable and irrelevant. To get an idea of how the legal profession feels, the authors spoke to a range of lawyers and ex-lawyers. As a result, this article is largely anecdotal.

The illusion of what it means to be a lawyer starts well before entering

legal practice, even before law school. The type of education received at law school bears no similarity to legal practice and a commonly held view is that legal education does not start until one commences practice. For instance, where at law school are law students taught that a lawyer must also be a manager, an administrator, an accountant, a secretary, a student, a teacher and a lawyer all in one?

It is undeniable that law, as a profession, is now an all-encompassing business and that what law schools therefore lack is reality. There is a conflict between the law student's original perception of law as a vocation and the solidifying reality of law as a business. Clients are uninterested in the law and want answers to their problems immediately. The client-centred approach means that lawyers devote more time to client-oriented activities, such as preparing detailed itemised accounts, attending lunches and seminars and preparing tender applications for new client - work which could be attended to through the employment of legal administrative assistants.

Too many lawyers say that their performance and value to their employer is judged solely by their ability to achieve billing targets. The situation is exacerbated by the lack of any feedback from partners and many young solicitors say they have no idea whether they are doing a good job or not. The idea of billing targets instils a sense of fierce competition between the solicitors in a firm, which destroys the possibility of the development of any team spirit. Many women complain that the firms are still run by the old boy network, where

females are subordinate to males and the best work goes to the boys.

In summary, the authors recommend that, if you dislike your area of practice, try another one. Partners should speak to their employees. Quit being a lawyer and do something else which uses your legal skills - many who were interviewed and are now working in corporate or government sector jobs enjoy going to work.

LIBRARIES & INFORMATION

[no material in this edition]

MANDATORY CLE

REVIEW ARTICLE:

Report to the Board of Governors on the evaluation and recommendations respecting MCLE for the D.C. Bar

Task Force on Mandatory Continuing Legal Education
M D Minsker (Chair), 1994

This review item is the report of a task force appointed to inquire into the feasibility of introducing a mandatory scheme of professional legal education (MCLE) for the District of Columbia Bar (USA) and devising the structure of the recommended scheme. It is noteworthy, not just because it traces the procedures followed, including the review of relevant literature and the collection of data, but also because it contains an excellent resumé of the main features of the dialogue about the worth of MCLE and its impact on lawyer competence. Of course, although many of these arguments