



# Becoming a Lawyer and Careers in Law

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## Outline

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- How Do You Become a Lawyer?
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- Using a Law Degree in Other Careers
- Skills Lawyers Need
- A Lawyer's "Typical" Day
- Conclusion and More Questions
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## Introduction

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- Why Are There Lawyers?
- Adversary System/Right to Representation
- Public Perception of Lawyers
  - Shakespeare
  - Media
  - Watergate
  - Present

## Speaker Background

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- Practicing 26 Years
- Education
  - P.S. 139 (Midwood, Brooklyn)
  - Poly Prep (Bay Ridge, Brooklyn)
  - Cornell University (B.A. 1979)
  - University of Michigan Law School (J.D. 1982)
- Employment
  - Summer After First Year of Law School: Manhattan District Attorney's Office, Special Narcotics Division
  - Summer After Second Year of Law School: Chadbourne & Parke
  - Since Law School Graduation : Chadbourne & Parke

## Why Should I Become a Lawyer?

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- Money
- Prestige/Self-Esteem
- Help Others
- Have an Impact
- Interesting Work
- Wear Vests and Say Words Like “Whereas” and “Heretofore”

## What Are The “Downsides”?

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- Requires Many Years of Expensive Schooling and Study
- Very Competitive at All Stages
- Can Be Boring, Tedious, Repetitive at Times, Particularly Early in Your Career
- May Often Require Sacrifices in Terms of Having to Work Long Hours and Weekends, and Travel Frequently to Not the Most Exciting Places
- May Prompt You To Wear Vests And Say Words Like "Whereas" And "Heretofore"

# How Do You Become a Lawyer?

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- Pre-Law Education
- Law School
- Bar Exam and Admission

# How Do You Become a Lawyer?

## - Pre-Law Education

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- Important to:
  - Stay in school
  - Improve academically
  - Enjoy the life long process of learning
- High School
- College
  - “Pre-Law” Programs or Make Your Own
  - Follow Your Interests



## Areas Related to the Law

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- Finance
- Economics
- Communications (reading, writing, listening, speaking)
- Math
- Science
- History, Government, Global Affairs, Domestic Affairs
- Computers/Other Technology
- Society or Individual Well-Being
- Foreign Languages
- Different Cultures

# How Do You Become a Lawyer?

## - Law School

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- Lots of Choices
- National vs. Local
- Day vs. Night

# How Do You Become a Lawyer?

## - Bar Exam and Admission

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- Knowledge of Law
- Ethics

## Legal Practice

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- Interviewing for and Getting a Position
- Subject Areas
- Settings

# Legal Practice

## – Interviewing for and Getting a Position

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- Identifying Firms You Are Interested In
- On-Campus Interviews
- Office Interviews

## Legal Practice – Subject Areas

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- Litigation: People suing and being sued
- Corporate: Companies buying or selling other companies or parts of them and making other kinds of deals
- Trusts and Estates: Helping people provide for how their loved ones are to be cared for and how their property is to be distributed later in life and after their death
- Tax: Minimizing how much the government takes from what you earn or give to another
- Real Estate
- Bankruptcy
- Criminal Law Defense
- Landlord/Tenant
- Employment/Discrimination
- Sports Law
- Space Law
- Aviation Law
- And Many More . . .

## Legal Practice - Settings

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- Private Practice/Law Firms
- Corporations/In-House Counsel
- Government
  - Legislative
  - Executive
  - Judicial
- Teaching Law

## Other Careers in Law

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- Paralegals/Legal Assistants
- Investigators
- Other Support Positions



## Pro Bono

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- What Is That?
- What Is the Purpose?
- Examples

## Using a Law Degree in Other Careers

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- Benefits of Legal Training
  - Learn the laws
  - Learn to think like a lawyer
  - Learn to speak and write with precision - choose words carefully
- Many other positions for which having a legal background/training is useful
  - Major league baseball manager (Tony La Russa)
  - Sportscaster (Howard Cosell)
  - Politics: Barack Obama, Bill & Hillary Clinton

## Skills Lawyers Need

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- Determination/Commitment
- Analytic Ability/Problem-Solving/Decision-Making
- Reading Ability
- Writing Ability
- Speaking Ability
- Listening Ability
- Persuasiveness
- Interpersonal skills (understanding, courtesy, teamwork, client relations)
- Workplace Skills and Competencies (including habits/attitudes/demeanor/attendance/dress)
- Curiosity
- Creativity
- Balance: Work vs. Family
- Sense of Humor



# A Lawyer's "Typical" Day

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## Conclusion and More Questions

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- Questions After Today? [lsavell@chadbournel.com](mailto:lsavell@chadbournel.com)
- Find Out More About a Law Firm? [www.chadbournel.com](http://www.chadbournel.com)
- Find Out More About A Law School? [www.law.umich.edu](http://www.law.umich.edu)
- Find Out More About Lawyers Having a Sense of Humor?  
[www.LawTunes.com](http://www.LawTunes.com) | [www.LawHumor.com](http://www.LawHumor.com)

## Reading Material

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- "Why Are They Picking On Us?," American Bar Association Journal, November 1992, at 72-75
- "Harvest Time," American Bar Association Journal, November 1991, at 74-76
- "Dear Professor Rosenstein," Washington Lawyer, December 2003, at 32-35
- "The Appeal," New Jersey Lawyer, June 2004, at 45-48
- "Lawyers Should Go for Olympic Gold, Too!," National Law Journal, May 27, 1996, at A15-A16
- "A Lawyer Who Just Wants Some Fun," The New York Times, December 21, 2003, Westchester Section at 5, cols. 1-3
- "Merry Lexmas, Baby," The Deal, November 20 - December 3, 2006, at 7