



Colleagues in Law

A Celebration of Alumni Achievement



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Class of 2006

Dean's Counselor

1. Of what success are you most proud?

In my life, I'd have to say my family. Professionally, I'd say it's nice to know I'm one of the few attorneys under 30 years old who has had a million-plus dollar settlement. It feels good to know you can help your client in such a big way.

2. What does being a Western State alum mean to you?

I run into Western State alumni every day. In Compton Court this morning, I met one. I have these types of encounters on an ongoing basis. This type of camaraderie is rare in the legal community.

3. What do you like most about the practice of law?

Um...<laughs> I like helping out people and my day is never boring because I never know what issue my clients will need help resolving. Every day I learn something new about the practice of law, my clients, and myself.

4. What do you like least?

Dealing with unfriendly opposing counsel who think it's all about them and not the clients. Not surprisingly, this usually happens in Civil!

5. How has the practice of law changed from when you first started?

I don't think the practice of law has changed, but I think that I have changed how I practice law. The more cases I've taken on over the years, the more comfortable and confident I've become in myself.

6. What do you see as the most important/pressing issue in the legal system?

Unfortunately, some judges forget that you have a constitutional right to a trial, and no one should be punished for exercising that right. It seems like some judges sentence people harshly if they opted to go to trial. If convicted, sentences are often maximum terms, which are much more severe than they would have been had the case been plea bargained.

7. How do you view Western State's position in the legal community?

Western State graduates are in great numbers in Orange County & Long Beach. You're running into fellow alumni everywhere you go. I got email this morning from a Western State graduate referring me a case—and one this afternoon asking me for advice. That's how crazy it is. If you're from Western State, there's always an alumni nearby who will extend a helping hand if you reach out.

8. What is your first memory of Western State?

<smiles> In the first year of my Torts class, I heard my name called to answer Professor Keller's question, "What is 'Custom'?" I proceeded to say, "'Custom' is a vague term. What do you mean?" And she replied, "'Custom,' as in the title of the chapter you were supposed to read." In that moment, I realized law school is very different than college had been.

9. What are your favorite memories?

I had a great time when my wife and I volunteered at the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) clinic. It's nice that Western State offers its students a chance to assist its community.

10. What advice would you offer to attorneys just entering the practice?

I think it's really important to be kind to everyone you meet. The practice of law involves meeting and communicating with various types of people every day. Certain cases can bring out passion in attorneys, which can be good. However, passion can sometimes lead to frustration and impatience. I think we would all benefit to remember the golden rule we learned when we were younger: "Treat others as you would like to be treated."

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