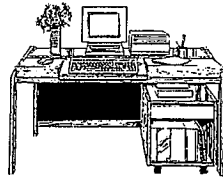


MAPLA

"Briefs"

FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT



Dear MAPLA Members,

Let me begin by noting the success of last November's MAPLA Conference, much of which is chronicled in this edition of MAPLA Briefs. I would like to extend special thanks to Mary Schilling for her inspiring leadership as President of the Board last year. Mary's service to MAPLA is unparalleled. She is, and has been for a number of years, solely responsible for creating, editing and distributing MAPLA Profiles, a mainstay of MAPLA's continuing existence and success. While she remains on the Board as the immediate past president, she will now also be utilizing her considerable talents as Conference Chair for the 2000 National Conference. We know the Conference will be a success with Mary at the helm.

I would also like to thank two outgoing members who have served diligently and well. Stephen McDougal of the University of Wisconsin LaCrosse rotated off the board this year after serving a two-year term. I would like to extend thanks to Steve for all of his work for the board, especially in conference planning for the past two years. I would also like to thank Tim Blackman, who resigned from the board after a move to a new, non-prelaw-advising position at his home institution, University of Chicago. Tim was our "computer whiz" who created and maintained our web page. Tim kindly consented to continue maintenance until we found another "techie" to fill his rather daunting shoes. I urge you to check out his awesome work at <http://www.mapla.org>. I

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know you join me in extending our sincere appreciation to both.

Mark your calendars for our annual MAPLA Conference, November 11-13, 1999, at the Marriott Hotel on Michigan Avenue in Chicago. Once again, our conference coincides with the Chicago Forum, only this time we'll occupy the same site! Elsewhere in the newsletter you'll find a tentative schedule and an early registration form. I look forward to welcoming all our continuing and new members there.

Ava Preacher
University of Notre Dame





Brings Together Advisors and Law School Reps in the Windy City

The Midwest Association of Pre-Law Advisors returned to Chicago at the Downtown Marriott November 12th through the 14th for the organizations 1998 annual Fall conference, and the well-attended meeting was both well received and highly informative. With the Chicago Forum taking place the same weekend, pre-law advisors had the opportunity to interact with representatives from dozens of law schools, both in formal meetings and in pleasant social events.

The conference had numerous highlights. The meeting began on Thursday afternoon with a workshop for newcomers conducted by Ava Preacher of the University of Notre Dame and Mariella Mecozzi of the University of Michigan, followed Thursday evening by an excellent dinner honoring past presidents. Keynote speaker for the evening was Illinois State Senator Barack Obama who provided a stimulating discussion of the problems of balance in the criminal justice system and the need for reform.

Friday's busy schedule included concurrent sessions on a variety of topics including Affirmative Action, placement, personal statements, and law school rankings. A tasty lunch and an outstanding dinner at the prize-winning Chicago restaurant, The Como Inn, were supplemented by a MALSA sponsored reception at Chicago-Kent Law School.

Also, Friday, MAPLA honored long-time member, Geri Clausen, who has moved on from being Admissions

Director at Marquette to her new position as Executive Director of Admissions and Financial Aid at Seattle University School of Law. Acknowledging Geri's service to the organization in which she functioned as the Board's liaison to the law school representatives, MAPLA President Mary Schilling praised Clausen for her loyalty, dedication, and hard work.

After Saturday morning's breakfast business meeting, the meeting concluded with a highly informative report on developments at Law Services.

Elsewhere in this newsletter, summaries of some of the 1998 conference sessions and panel discussions can be found; with these articles, it is hoped that those members of MAPLA who were unable to attend the 1998 meeting might be able to read about some of the information which attendees were able to take with them from Chicago. However, no summaries or articles, however thorough, can capture in any way the conviviality of actually being present at the meeting. Certainly the experience of encountering old friends and meeting new ones and learning from all of them is one of the most valuable assets of participating in the conference. The value of networking with other professionals cannot be over-emphasized. Already, plans are under way for the 1999 "pre-Millennial" conference; therefore before any prospective Y2K problems arise, plan on spending next November 11-13 once again at the Chicago Downtown Marriott for the 1999 MAPLA Conference. We look forward to seeing you there.

An Update on Affirmative Action

Proposition 209 has changed dramatically the application process for students seeking admission to California's public law schools. Two law school admissions officials from that state, one from a private school and one from a public institution, delivered an informative report on the effect on admissions caused by changes in affirmative action provisions. Rob Saltzman, Associate Dean at the University of Southern California Law School, observed the value of diversity for the composition of a law school class, noting how a variety of perspectives enrich a discussion of a particular issue. He

added that without classroom diversity, there can be no diversity in the profession. Furthermore, over the years, Saltzman argued, affirmative action has worked; while strictly numerical analysis of admissions shows that some students from disadvantaged backgrounds may have weaker entering credentials, the fact of the matter is that as graduates they obtain advanced degrees at higher rates than the general population.

Saltzman commented that admissions people "lost control of the debate", particularly when the assumption that

acceptance was based primarily on numbers became widespread; with the notion "that numbers alone admit the most qualified" came the "demonstrably false premise" that the "less qualified" were being admitted. In fact, such assumptions betray a major misunderstanding of the process of selecting students which invariably proves that "merit is not reducible to numbers". Instead, the admissions process is much more complicated, examining such factors as community involvement, challenges that are met and overcome, and experience; successful classroom performance of admitted students supports these more broadly based evaluation criteria. Rob emphasized that the importance of the personal statement now becomes enhanced; students must let admissions officers "know who they are" so that elements of diversity can be identified. He offered the advice that "just because a school doesn't ask about minority status, doesn't mean a student shouldn't tell a school about such special considerations." As always, pre-law advisors should discourage students from making decisions on rankings, and likewise they should discourage law schools from making choices based on numbers—that is, tell schools about special qualities of candidates whenever possible.

Ed Tom, Director of Admissions at California at Berkeley, a pioneer in affirmative action, cited the initially devastating effect Proposition 209 had on his institution in terms of minority admissions. Prior to 1996, the entering class at Boalt Hall consisted of 25 to 30% people of color; but with the passage of the initiative, minority applicants concluded that public schools did not want them. With the 1997 pool, there were substantially fewer minority candidates, and the school wound up with only one African American enrollee (as opposed to around thirty the year before), and that individual had been deferred the year before.

Ed lamented the negative publicity the school received, but the fact is that California schools have responded by pursuing other methods of gaining diversity. Some schools have used socio-economic status in evaluating candidates, deriving information from questions about banking accounts, questionnaires, and the zip codes of residences. However, a trial of that method in 1998 did not convince decision makers at California - Berkeley

that it could produce the most meaningful results.

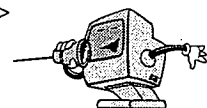
By contrast, Boalt Hall has chosen an in-depth, holistic evaluation primarily by changing the term "greatest" to "substantial" in identifying numerical considerations as a factor in choosing students. The selection process is now much more subjective, like "building a choir" according to Tom, with consideration of factors like graduate training, academic distinctions, difficulty of program, work experience, public service, progress in life, and classroom and public achievement all more significant. Consequently, the law school now looks far more deeply

into the applicant pool; Ed observed that last year he read *all* 5000 applications, and the range of accepted numbers has widened.

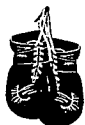
Reinforcing Rob's earlier point, the personal statement at Boalt Hall is now the equal of the LSAT and the GPA in the selection of candidates; the size of the

statement has doubled to four pages with several components including a resume and an addendum highlighting the distance the candidate has come since high school. Results have been promising; the 1998 class saw an increase in diversity, with the number of African-Americans rising from one to eight in the class, with two Native Americans where there had been none the previous year. The number of Hispanics doubled to around thirty in the class. An Associate Director for Outreach now uses designated funds to fly promising candidates in for a visit.

Both Rob and Ed welcome contact from pre-law advisors, and they publicized their e-mail addresses to emphasize the point. Rob is reachable at <rsalzman@law.usc.edu>, and Ed's address is <tome@mail.law.berkeley.edu>



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...the importance of the personal statement now becomes enhanced; students must let admissions officers “know who they are” so that elements of diversity can be identified.
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Differing Opinions on Law School Rankings Considered at MAPLA Conference Session



The controversy about the utility and validity of law school rankings was the topic of a lively panel discussion at the MAPLA Conference. Presenting the case for rankings was Amy Graham, Director of Data Research at *U.S. News and World Report*, who oversees the compiling of information on the annual law school rankings. Carl Monk, Executive Director of the Association of American Law Schools, and veteran pre-law advisor,

A slightly different view on rankings was presented in a paper circulated by Professor Bruce Leiter of the University of Texas. Although Leiter could not be present at the session, his paper defended the value of rankings for students; but he criticized certain aspects of the *U.S. News and World Report* ranking for misleading information, particularly in the "Faculty Resources" category which makes up 15% of the magazine's evaluation of a school. According to Leiter, this category penalizes large schools, state schools, and schools in low cost of living regions because it examines a school's gross per capita expenditures in everything. Such evaluations make the rankings less meaningful. Leiter suggests that the magazine should eliminate ordinal rankings and instead should rank schools by clusters. Nonetheless, Leiter acknowledges improvements have been made by the magazine, and he defends it as a useful service. Leiter, of course, has his own ranking system

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Gerald Wilson of Duke University, presented somewhat different views on the issue.

VS

which is available on his homepage:
<<http://www.dia.utexas.edu/depts/philosophy/faculty/leiter/main.html>>

Ms. Graham indicated that her "guiding principle" in preparing the information for publication is "service", that is, to help applicants with the important and expensive choice of where to apply. She argued that rankings permit "greater access to data," "standardization of information," and "attention to student concerns" (for example, "what is the meaning of placement statistics?"). Ms. Graham claimed that such rankings are helpful for a variety of reasons; most notably, they are objective and independent, they compare schools uniformly, they are based on accepted measurements of quality, they condense a great amount of information, and they incorporate data unavailable to individual applicants (like reputation surveys). Students use them to compare academic quality, to decide where to visit, and to identify questions to address to school officials. Quality measurements that are utilized include: selectivity, placement, faculty resources, and reputation among lawyers and law school officials. The magazine is careful to re-evaluate the data periodically, continually reassessing the methodology; to ensure fairness, schools are given the opportunity to respond.

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**quantifying the
unquantifiable**
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leiter/main.html>

Less supportive of rankings was Carl Monk who argued that quality of faculty cannot be ranked unless the faculty are observed in the classroom. Monk commented that the Association of American Law Schools supports ABA Publications, and though it does not support rankings, it does not attack the right of such listings to be published; however, the organization does question the wisdom of undertaking such a ranking. He added that other publications like *Newsweek* similarly ques-

tion the value of such listings because they attempt "to quantify the unquantifiable." Similarly Monk finds significant fault with the Leiter ranking which he argues depends too heavily on factors like faculty membership in the Academy of Arts and Sciences and membership in the American Law Institute. Monk observed that by those measurements, the only school to show significant improvement was Leiter's own University of Texas. Sadly, Monk concluded, statistics show applicants depend far too heavily on numerical rankings in their choices.

Finally, Gerald Wilson presented the pre-law advisor's point of view; agreeing with Monk on the value students place on listings of law schools, Wilson cited his own survey at Duke which showed 96% of Duke undergrads attending law schools were aware of rankings, and a simi-

lar percentage were affected by them in their application choices. 41% of them reduced their choices because of rankings. Forty percent of those polled said reputation was the most important factor in choosing a school, and 31% of them said it was the second most important factor. Wilson observed that it then falls to pre-law advisors to make students realize that rankings are not as important as the question of what makes a particular law school the best one for an individual's consideration. Wilson cited as more meaningful than rankings the decision-making factors familiar to most advisors: admission, affordability, opportunity, location, employment, the nature of the student body, accessibility of faculty, special programs, and what Wilson called the "fuzzy/wuzzy" factor which consists of a student's "gut reaction" or "sense of community" at the school.



Update from NALP Reveals Job Market Status for Law School Grads

The concern about whether a job awaits the law school graduate is a permanent question for those contemplating entrance to law school. Gail Peschel, Director of Career Services at Valparaiso University School of Law, provided pre-law advisors at the November MAPLA Conference with a detailed handout summarizing the 1997 Employment Report and Salary Survey and a useful overview of statistics from the National Association for Law Placement.

Peschel showed that of the 40,114 graduates of the class of 1997, over 38,000 were represented in the survey, and employment status was known for over 35,000 of them. Over 31,400 (89.2%) were employed, up 1.8% over the previous year. Of the 10.8% who were not employed, about 772 of them were enrolled in full time academic degree programs, and 839 were not seeking employment. Some 27,421 were employed in legal positions. 55.6% could be found in private practice; 14% were in business; 12.3% were in government work; 11.1% were judicial clerks; 2.8% were in Public Interest Law; 1.2% were in Academic Positions; and another 1.2% were in Military Positions. Of those employed in law firms, the largest total (31.6%) were in small firms of 2 to 10 attorneys. About 10.4% are in firms of 11 to 25 attorneys; 6.7% are in firms of 26 to 50; 6.6% are in firms of 51 to 100; 11.2% are in firms of 101 to 250; ten percent in firms of 251 to 500; and 5.4% are in firms of 501 or larger. 4.9% reported that they were working

solo, and the remainder were in firms with size unknown. Of graduates employed in areas outside law careers, 69% were in Business.

For the class of 1997, the median and mean starting salaries were \$41,000 and \$48,986 respectively, the highest salaries reported since figures were first compiled in 1985. About forty percent of all salaries were in the \$30,000 to \$40,000 range, and salaries in the range of \$30,000 to \$35,000 were the most frequently reported. Salaries of more than \$70,000 accounted for about twenty percent of those reported.

Finally, Peschel strongly recommended pre-law advisors examine a useful publication called *600 Things You Can Do with a Law Degree* published by Federal Reports. She noted that students considering a career in law must decide whether the debt they will incur is worth the salary they are likely to earn. Although salaries are up for most firms, when salaries are divided by billable hours, the hourly wage is sometimes as little as \$15 to \$28 an hour. A cost/benefit analysis is essential in the planning stage.

Peschel explained that the job search for law students begins as early as the first year, because many seek a position for their first summer. She also noted that the combination of the JD/MBA is not overwhelmingly helpful unless the person has not had previous experience in

business. Trends show that the aging of baby boomers may influence professional areas likely to be more in demand for law careers; health care law, age discrimination law, elder law, and disability law seem likely to

command the interest of lawyers in the future. At the same time, environmental law, still touted as a "boom" area, may not be as strong a growth area as previously assumed.



Teaching and Learning in Law School Classrooms

The Friday sessions of the MAPLA Conference concluded with a witty and informative presentation on what realities students need from pre-law advisors about law school. Veteran Law School Professors, Ann Lousin of John Marshall School of Law and JoEllen Lind of Valparaiso provided an insider's view of law school instruction and law school life.

Professor Lousin observed the major changes that have occurred in law schools over the last thirty years. She cited especially the increased number of women in classes (from about 3% thirty to forty years ago to the current total of 44% nationally) and the increased number of minority students as probably the most significant transformations she has experienced in law school. She added that the atmosphere in the classroom has changed; specifically, the antagonism caused by the Socratic Method has declined as a more cooperative approach has been adopted as the most typical way to teach law. She noted the increased use of group study and group reports as a manifestation of this change. But preparation for class is still essential. Today, law school is more expensive with clinics that are very labor intensive becoming much more common. The need for computers and the expense of library holdings also make

law school more high priced. She concluded lawyers are now more a part of the world; that is, law is not just an intellectual exercise, but rather is a profession that addresses people's everyday needs.

Professor Lind observed that law schools are looking for students who can be self-reliant, self-starting, and independent because law is much more a business than ever before. At the same time, students are more consumer oriented themselves, and out of necessity they tend to be more knowledgeable about the value of a law career in contrast to the costs. She agreed that the Socratic method is no longer as widely employed as it once was, and students are finding in class they need not be as competitive as they may have feared. She noted that law careers are continuing to specialize, and students increasingly are aware of the demands of the profession. Professor Lind indicated the first day of law school, though, is still a "stunning and often scary experience" when students realize they must "hit the ground running." Being called on at random and having to read and digest large textbook assignments can be intimidating. Students must demonstrate a sense of responsibility in the classroom from the start. Once that understanding is achieved, law school is manageable for most students.

Update from Newtown at Fall '98 MAPLA Conference

Jim Leipold, Assistant Director for Admission, Education, and Pre-Law Programs from the Law School Admissions Council, concluded last Fall's MAPLA meeting with an informative session on the latest news from Newtown. Leipold, who previously served as Admissions Director at Temple, updated those in attendance on a variety of concerns, from Action Reports to technology developments.

Among recent developments, Leipold indicated that the Action Reports have been expanded to include information on all law schools to which students apply. Advisors will receive more complete reports than in the past, when they were sent information on schools only when the number of applications exceeded a total of five.

A new Forum in Dallas has been added to alternate with the Houston Forum. For the third year a summer Forum in Washington D.C. has been scheduled because of the success of the D.C. events the last few years. Also an event in the Bay Area has been added for November 8, 1999, the Monday following the Los Angeles Forum.

Preliminary statistics for 1997-1998 indicate a 1.4% rise in the number of applicants and a 0.2% rise in the number of applications; this increase is the first since 1991, but application numbers remain flat for most schools. Leipold indicated the June test registrations were down 5.4%, and the September test also showed a decline of 2%.



The compact disc version of the information from LSAC is available to all pre-law advisors. Applications can be printed from the CD, which also debuted in an internet version on October 19th. Law Services continues to aim for a system for electronic filing on the web; such a system still seems a few years away since not all law schools have the capability of handling such a system.

Leipold reported that new information items are coming from Law Services. A new Financial Aid brochure is being prepared, and LSAC now has a fifth information video in preparation; the new video is designed to examine the concerns of Native American applicants. Other videos currently available at a cost of \$12 examine such topics as gay and lesbian applicants, stories from the real world of law, minority applicants, and a general overview of the application process.

On the prospect of a computerized LSAT, Leipold observed that Law Services is in the fourth year of a five year study. Two problems center on a likely \$40-\$50 per test increase in cost related to the rental of space for test administration and the current limited availability of computerized test site locations. Advantages could include multiple sub scores, the possibility that there might be less race disparate results, and the goal of a computer adaptive test that would automatically "bump up" test question difficulty as the test-taker progressed through the exam. Nonetheless, a computer test does not seem imminent in the short term.

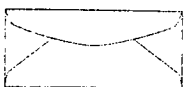
Leipold indicated the Letter of Recommendation service seemed to be progressing well, though problems existed in its first year of operation. Campus based letter of recommendation services that forward their letters to the LSDAS Service should include postcards for each letter they forward with the letter-writer's name (and the address of the undergraduate service—if they want the postcards returned to the on-campus service). Letters must be accompanied by the LSDAS form and are rejected without it. Candidates can obtain information on their files identifying the number of letters received, the names of the recommenders, the date the letter was processed and scanned, the status of distribution of the letters, and the option the school has selected for receipt of the letters. Leipold noted that criteria for completion of the LSDAS file has not changed; what has changed is the time when the report is sent—which

is conditioned by various factors. Leipold outlined the options and reiterated that use of the letter service remains optional. Individualized letters should not be sent to the service. Also, any letters that exceed the limit of three will be marked "unused". LSDAS will archive the letters for a maximum of two years.

Leipold concluded his report with an overview of preliminary data from a February, 1998 survey conducted with 6,000 applicants who were asked what influenced their admissions choices. The results were compared to a 1991 survey, and showed that "job success" had replaced "location" as the most influential factor in selecting a school. Clinics and internships, personal attention, reputation, and bar passage success all were cited by over fifty percent of the respondents. Of lesser importance (with fewer than 40% citing these factors) were social environment, program availability, surroundings, and cost, though older applicants were more concerned with location and evening programs. For high academic performers, reputation, job success, and location were more highly regarded as factors to be considered.

Information from Law Schools remained very important to candidates, but videos and web pages were becoming important ways for students to gain exposure to schools. The largest percentage of students, a total of 95%, still reported exposure by means of catalogs and brochures, but 72% reported exposure via web pages and 40% from videos. Letters from faculty and staff were cited by 66% of the respondents; other points of exposure included advertising (38%), student calls (38%), faculty calls (35%), calls from graduates (28%) and letters from graduates (28%), visits with students (58%), with staff (58%), and with faculty (48%) also were cited along with class visits (cited by 42%). The survey also considered information that came from sources other than law schools.

Interestingly, pre-law advisors are less influential in providing information than might be expected. 68% of those who responded consulted the *US News and World Report* survey and of the high academic achievers 85% used it. 31% excluded schools because of the report (35% of the high achievers), and 43% applied because of it (49% of the high achievers). Leipold emphasized the report was preliminary; a final report is not expected for awhile.



MALSA Officers for the 1998-1999 School Year

The current roster of officers for the Midwest Alliance for Law School Admissions consists of the following individuals:

President- - - - -	Stephanie Gregg, Thomas M. Cooley Law School
Vice President - - -	Michael Burns, Chicago-Kent College of Law
Secretary - - - - -	Andrea Heatley, Detroit College of Law at Michigan State University
Treasurer - - - - -	Deborah Meyer, John Marshall Law School
Law School Liaison for MAPLA - - - - -	Judith Malen, Northern Illinois University



Tales from the Pre-Law Advising Front



Each issue, the Editor will try to collect stories and anecdotes from pre-law advisors that represent common concerns to share with other advisors. The hope is that these tales will be both edifying and amusing. The main goal is continue the conviviality and friendly atmosphere of MAPLA meetings. Please send such stories to Steve Shafer at:

Pre Law Advising Service
University of Illinois
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
270 Lincoln Hall
702 S. Wright St.
Urbana, Illinois 61801
or e-mail to scs@uiuc.edu



I

"But I *have* to use the LSDAS Letter of Recommendation Service, don't I?"

Though I had been her pre-law advisor since her freshman year, the young girl gave me a skeptical look that convinced me that for the moment she thought I either had lost my mind and become unreliable or was merely a misinformed idiot disguised as her college's pre-law dean. It was early in the application cycle this past Fall, and the query was coming from an apprehensive senior student with impeccable credentials whom I knew to be

both meticulous about details and conscientious to a fault. Her voice betrayed a high level of anxiety and confusion.

I had just explained to her that the LSDAS letter service was designed to *supplement* pre-existing Letter of Recommendation Services, not replace them; this specific message had been communicated consistently at pre-law advisor conferences during the Newtown Update Sessions at earlier meetings. Indeed, last Spring when the Registration book arrived in our office, just to be certain, I again inquired with our friends at Newtown and repeatedly was reassured in conversations that there was no intention of supplanting existing services. Indeed, the booklet itself made the specific point that "students are not required to use this service", though admittedly the wording elsewhere in the booklet was more ambiguous on that point. Nonetheless, our service could co-exist and could continue to be used by our students. Or so I was told.

Armed with that knowledge, I confidently observed to the doubting applicant that the new option was intended primarily to provide a useful alternative for those at colleges and universities that did not have closed recommendation letter services like ours; it also would be especially beneficial for the increasing numbers of applicants who had been away from undergraduate study for several years and who therefore did not have an imme

diate affiliation with a school and its services after an interval of work or graduate study. As such, it was a valuable addition to the options for applicants, but it need not concern our students who had access to a long-standing, successful service.

The fact of the matter is that any rational examination of the alternatives would make the determination that a confidential campus based system like ours has substantially greater convenience and utility for a student. At our school, the Pre-Law Letter Service I supervise for all U. of I. undergraduates has existed in the college office as a free of charge option for our pre-law students (and for graduates who opened a file with us during their undergraduate years) for over twenty years; with the large number of candidates applying to law school through our office, students gratefully have come to rely on this arrangement.

In many ways, the campus based service has superior qualities to the option available at LSDAS, apart from the fact that on this campus it is free. For instance, the file can be opened early in the undergraduate's career, and letters can be solicited while the student proceeds through school; that is, the individual need not wait until he or she opens a file with LSDAS to obtain letters from faculty with whom he or she may lose contact. The fact that there is no limit to the number of letters students can keep on file also is an advantage. Although files always are kept secure and closed, since students are not restricted to a certain number of recommendations, they can identify different combinations tailored to the specific law schools they are seeking; that is, if an undergraduate has worked with a faculty member coming from a specific school, the applicant can list that letter as going to one school, but not to others. We also keep our letters on file for five years after the student graduates.

Additionally, our turn-around time for responding to the requests to mail the letters is a matter of days rather than weeks. Though the hope of electronic applications may render our little service *someday* less timely, the fact of

“ you *must* use the LSDAS Letter of Recommendation Services ”

the matter is that with the logistical problems LSDAS has experienced this year, our letters are being sent in a much more timely fashion.

Also, the personal touch is undeniably an advantage. If a student discovers a law school has not received his or her letters, the indi-

vidual simply calls us, and that afternoon a new set of letters is sent.

Finally, I tried to make clear why our letter of recommendation option would be desirable to keep even from the perspective of Law Services and the law schools. I explained to my advisee that she need not worry since it would not be in the interest of LSDAS to be inundated with letters from pre-existing campus based services since such a massive influx of letters might well slow the process of communicating information to the schools themselves.

But the more I tried to reassure her, the more I could see that convincing her was problematic. Indeed, she had learned that several of the schools to which she was applying said they *required* the letters to come from LSDAS, and when she showed me the applications, to my utter amazement, I saw she was correct. Now, instead of being able to use our service as she had been led to believe, the literature from the law school was contradicting my information and implicitly leading her to wonder just how accurate was any advice her advisor had been giving her over the years. And I realized with the five hundred or more students applying to law school each year from our university, she would be the tip of an enormous iceberg of problems for me. And Leonardo di Caprio thought *he* had problems on the Titanic!!!

The upshot was that in the student's presence I phoned the particular law school, spoke with the Admissions Director who knew me and our service well, and inquired about whether or not letters sent from our service directly to the law school would be acceptable. Of course, the reply was as I expected: our service would continue to be perfectly acceptable.

This inquiry began a new list in my office. Every time an applicant would come to my office with a question

along these lines concerning a different school, I would phone the school cited. Although it sometimes took more than one phone call, invariably I was told to reassure my students and to continue to use our service. I would then add them to the list, and when another student would ask the same question, I could indicate the answer already had been obtained.

Still, some students insisted that regardless of this reassurance, they wanted their files to be forwarded to LSDAS, a request with which, of course, we complied. But usually the reason for their request had to do with the fact that they themselves had phoned the law school, had spoken with an office worker (*not* the admissions dean or director), and had been given a contrary answer. In the case of more than one law school, I had to make follow-up phone calls to clarify why a student had been given information different from what I had obtained

from the admissions director. With our usual hundreds of applicants, this confusion has been an unnecessary, time-consuming problem. In conversations with other advisors who have similar services at their schools, I have found my experience is by no means unique. At the November MAPLA meeting, Jim Leipold from LSAC reiterated that it was not the intent of Law Services to replace pre-existing letter of recommendation

II



Last Spring, I am happy to report that our campus Pre Law Club started a new tradition. With a very energetic board of officers, the club members decided the previous Fall that in addition to the usual evening meetings every three weeks with speakers on different fields in law or on the application process, they wanted to hold a one day professional conference in late March.

As faculty advisor, I had been somewhat skeptical of their chances of pulling off a successful event. I reminded them that this effort required much planning, many letters to speakers, the necessity of securing an available conference facility, a method of obtaining and distributing refreshments, and the effort to publicize the event both to club members and non-club members effectively. Costs would have to be anticipated, and a budget would

programs, and he understood that all ABA endorsed schools were continuing to accept letters from such campus based arrangements.

For our friends at law schools and at Law Services who might be reading this column, therefore, I would like to offer a suggestion in the form of a plea. Before next year's applications go out to students, *please* add the phrase "or from a pre-existing closed letter of recommendation service on your campus" to your discussions about letters of recommendation in the text. We need to be able to help our students; they already are anxious

“ letters of recommendation from a pre-existing letter of recommendation service *are* acceptable too ”

enough about applications, and sometimes, if they question the validity of what we as pre-law advisors tell them about one part of the process, they will doubt anything we tell them. Again in conversation with a number of Admissions Directors, this request seems to be understood and well-received. Therefore, please help us and address this problem.

have to be prepared. To my surprise, the officers accepted the challenge, and they worked diligently.

The outcome was truly wonderful. With the help of my graduate assistant, the club pulled off an extremely successful event at the campus student union. Faculty from the law school spoke in panel discussions on such topics as immigration law, medical malpractice and health law, and environmental law. One of the local public defenders gave a presentation. A personal injury lawyer spoke about his career and some of his cases, and the club arranged for a question and answer session with a panel of local law students. A local fast food company prepared a sack lunch at a discounted price.

This pre-law club event is one that could work just as well elsewhere. Certainly, the value of this event was

evident. It gave club officers experience in the logistics of planning and preparing such an event. More importantly, aside from the value of the information provided, students had an opportunity, some for the first time, to attend a professional conference and to meet students with similar career interests. This Spring, a second an-

nual conference is already being planned, and students here at the University of Illinois are looking forward to it. Many advisors probably already have hosted such a day long conference for students. If so, please let me know about what kinds of things you have done, and I will report them in this column.

Review of Roger I. Abrams, *Legal Bases: Baseball and the Law*.

Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998. 226 pages. \$27.95 by Dr. Stephen Shafer, Assistant Dean and Pre-Law Advisor, University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign.

As a pre-law advisor, I often encounter students interested in Sports Law; in addition to mentioning the sports law journals at Marquette and elsewhere, recommending interesting readings that can give undergraduates a flavor for the field is always a useful starting point. In that regard, a new publication by the Dean of the Rutgers Law School in Newark, Roger Abrams, is a welcome addition to this bibliography. Abrams is well equipped to handle the topic; after having taught Sports Law for almost fifteen years both at Case Western Reserve and at Nova Southeastern (where he also served as dean), Abrams has served as a salary arbitrator in major league baseball and has written extensively on sports law and on labor arbitration. Although his professional qualifications for an examination of the subject are those of an expert, Abrams manages to write this concise study in a fast-moving style and in language that both the scholar/professional and layman will understand and appreciate.

Abrams structures his book around certain important issues and individuals whom he describes as an "All Star team" of baseball figures, each illustrating different aspects of some of the conflicts and legal precedents concerning the national pastime. He opens his study with a chapter examining issues of the law in relation to the beginnings of organized baseball in the nineteenth century. He discusses the formation of the National League and the importance of Hall of Fame player John Montgomery Ward, who also was an attorney; it was Ward who served as one of the leaders of the Players' Revolt in 1889 with his lawsuit against the New York Giants.

Abrams then explores the evolution of player contracts, focusing on the case of Napoleon Lajoie. A chapter on

the "reserve clause" and baseball's long-standing exemption from the anti-trust laws centers around ex-player Curt Flood's historic challenge; it features concise summaries and critiques of the historic 1922 *Federal Baseball* decision, the 1953 Toolson case, and Justice Blackmun's 1972 majority opinion in the *Flood vs. Kuhn* case. Abrams includes a chapter on Marvin Miller and the emergence of the Players' Union; in another chapter, he also discusses legendary general manager Branch Rickey (an attorney) and his successful efforts to desegregate baseball in contrast to Charlie Finley's unsuccessful 1976 lawsuit against Commissioner Bowie Kuhn which was thrown out by the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals.

Abrams next considers the cases of two players from the seventies and eighties, pitcher Andy Messersmith and catcher Carlton Fisk, whose appeals changed forever the structure of baseball. The author's excellent analysis of the landmark decision in the Messersmith arbitration case which ultimately led to free agency in the sport is particularly revealing; although the importance of Messersmith's victory is often cited in popular publications, Abrams' chapter is both effective and enlightening because sportswriters citing the historic outcome usually gloss over the details and the importance of arbitrator Peter Seitz. The decisions of two other arbitrators, Tom Roberts and George Nicolau, are discussed extensively in the chapter that centers on Carlton Fisk's successful class action appeal against the "collusion conspiracy" of the owners in 1985 and 1986. A chapter on gambling and crime in baseball explores the case of Pete Rose, his suspension from baseball, and his efforts to appeal his suspension in the courts.

Abrams completes his "All Star Lineup" with an out-



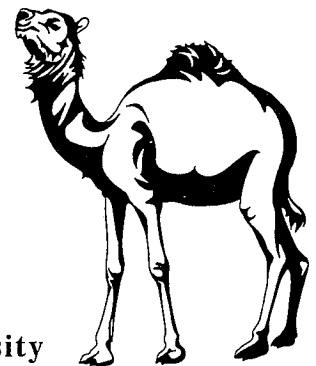
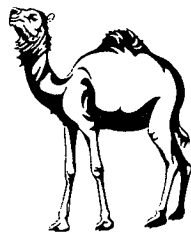
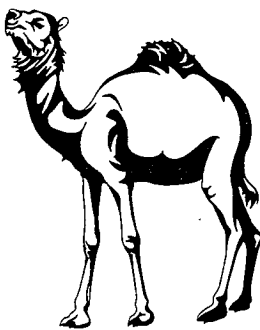
standing final chapter on the labor turmoil and the strike in baseball in the 1990s. This last chapter examines the importance of the decision by Federal Court Judge Sonia Maria Sotomayor to issue an injunction requested by the National Labor Board which led players and management back to the negotiating table. In a concluding section, Abrams provides an overview of legal issues concerning baseball likely to be adjudicated in the future.

The considerable virtues of Abrams' book far outweigh any problems. The book does an effective job of explaining extremely complex labor issues in easily understandable terms. The author masterfully walks a tight-rope between two audiences that might easily be disappointed; that is, Abrams is able to address both those who are interested in the book from a historical/legal perspective and those who are examining the subject because of their interest in baseball. Abrams reaches both audiences without being condescending or oversimplistic on the one hand and without being overly complex and obscure on the other. As a pre-law advisor and historian, I found Abrams very effective at placing the issues within a historical context; as a member of SABR (the Society of American Baseball Researchers) and as a base-

ball fan, I found the insight into the changes in my favorite sport revealing and insightful.

The book's readability is an additional positive; this is particularly true for pre-law advisors who must consider such factors in recommending books to students. In particular, sports-minded undergraduates likely will find the volume a relatively painless introduction to some of the issues in labor law. At the same time, though, some might criticize the book for this very characteristic, arguing that the effort to make the discussion comprehensible for the general reader at the expense of greater detail or of language more typical of a law journal is a disadvantage, rendering the work less helpful on a professional level. Along these lines, Abrams' bibliography is rather disappointing, though he does include some references in his end notes.

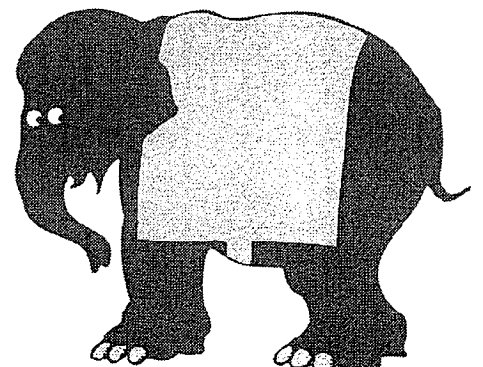
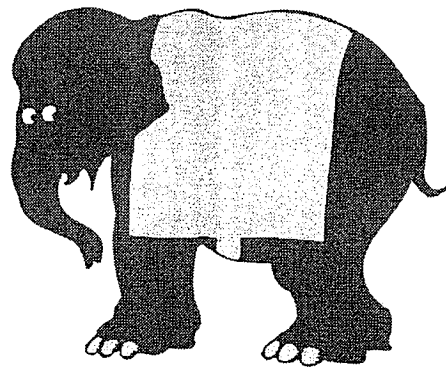
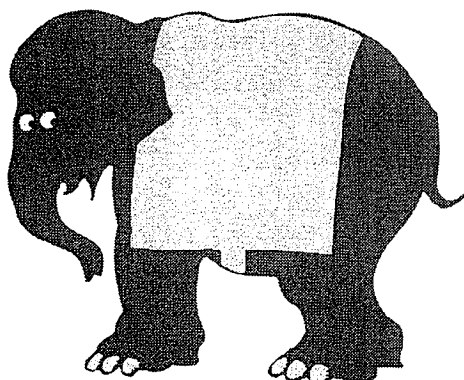
Certainly, the book is not intended as a comprehensive history of baseball and labor law. But, as an intelligent introduction to the subject and as an example of sports law, Abrams' *Legal Bases: Baseball and the Law* is an essential addition to the libraries of pre-law advisors and historians of American Culture, as well as baseball fans in general.



1999 MAPLA Caravan

Monday, October 11
 Tuesday, October 12
 Wednesday, October 13
 Thursday, October 14

Ohio State University
 University of Illinois
 University of Michigan
 University of Notre Dame



MAPLA'S FALL 1999 CONFERENCE, NOVEMBER 11-13, IN CHICAGO!

Plan now to join us for MAPLA's Fall 1999 Conference in Chicago, November 11-13!

A pre-conference Workshop for New Advisors will begin at 2:00 p.m. on Thursday, November 12, and the Conference will open formally with a Reception at 6:00 p.m. in the Chicago Marriott Downtown, 540 North Michigan Avenue. It's a great location right on the Magnificent Mile where the Chicago Law Forum will be held concurrently. We invite law school admission representatives to join us for Friday morning sessions, our keynote and lunch.

The registration fee for the conference is \$125 for Pre-Law Advisors, including the 1999-2000 membership fee. The Law School Representative registration fee is \$140, including the 1999-2000 associate membership fee. (If you are unable to attend the conference, you may pay membership or associate membership dues by using the Conference Registration Form.) **Conference Registration Deadline: October 15.**

Conference room rates at the Marriott are \$172 for singles, \$192 for doubles, \$212 for triples and \$232 for quads. These rates are confirmed for Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights. **Hotel registration deadline: October 21, 1999.** Call the Marriott at 312.836.0100 for reservations. For information on roommates, call Ann Wrigley, 614.292.8502.

PRELIMINARY CONFERENCE PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Thursday, November 12

12:00 noon -6:00 p.m.	Registration
2:00-5:00 p.m.	Workshop for New Advisors
6:00 p.m.	Opening Reception (Cash Bar)
7:30 p.m.	School dinner

Friday, November 13

7:30 a.m.	Continental Breakfast
8:15-9:15 a.m.	Concurrent Sessions
9:30-10:45 a.m.	Interactive session with Law School Representatives
11:00 a.m.-11:45 p.m.	Keynote
11:45-12:30	Lunch
1:00-2:30 p.m.	Concurrent Sessions
2:30 p.m.	Refreshments Break
2:45-4:00 p.m.	Mock Admissions Exercise
4:00	Free time

Saturday, November 14

8:00-9:00 a.m.	Sit Down Breakfast/Annual Meeting
9:15-10:45 a.m.	Plenary Session: Update from Newtown
12:00 noon-2:00 p.m.	Lunch at Forum