



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF LAW



75 years 75 stories

Celebrating 75 years of modern
legal education, one conversation
at time

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GRAVITY



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Background

During the 2024/25 academic year, the University of Toronto Faculty of Law celebrated the 75th anniversary of the modern law school.

To mark this tremendous milestone, GPLLM student **Claudio Klaus** set a networking goal to meet with 75 U of T Law alumni before he graduates.

This booklet captures the essence of Claudio's "Law 75" journey, featuring the wisdom and guidance Claudio collected during his conversations with our esteemed global community of U of T Law alumni.

Hailing from a variety of practice areas, industries and career stages, their stories and advice offer a wealth of knowledge to students and our broader community, reflecting the importance of fostering meaningful connections, community and lifelong learning.

About Claudio

Claudio Klaus is an internationally trained lawyer and student of the U of T Faculty of Law's esteemed Global Professional Master of Laws (GPLLM) program.

Having worked as a legal extern at the Arizona Supreme Court and as judicial clerk at the Roraima State Court of Appeals in Brazil, Klaus is now transitioning into the Canadian legal market, exploring business and charity law.

In addition to his studies, Klaus is an active volunteer, serving as communications officer for the law students' section of the Canadian Bar Association (CBA) and the newsletter editor of the student section executive committee of the Ontario Bar Association (OBA). He also produces and hosts *Studying Law Around the World*, a podcast dedicated to exploring the global landscape of legal education and crafting content that bridges borders, connecting legal minds worldwide. So far, he has produced over forty episodes with guests from more than 19 countries.



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I'm so grateful for the chance to start my 'legal' journey at U of T law school! It was a precious gift that launched me into a lifetime of incredible opportunities in the justice system. The professors were generous and encouraging, my classmates were wonderful friends and together we embraced the aspiration to make the best professional contributions we could, with integrity and humility. My advice to future graduates? Follow your heart and brain fearlessly—they'll be your truest guides.



The Hon. Rosalie Silberman Abella
(LLB 1970, *Hon.* LLD 1990)

Samuel LLM '55, SJD '59 and
Judith Pisar Visiting Professor of
Law, Harvard Law School

Distinguished Jurist-in-
Residence, University of Toronto
Faculty of Law



My advice is to keep an open mind, not just about what you think you'll enjoy, but about what you discover truly excites you. Law school and real-world practice are very different. Explore, adapt and once you find your passion, work becomes effortless.

For those drawn to litigation, remember that law is about people. Pick up the phone. Talk to your clients, opposing counsel and witnesses. The best trial lawyers aren't just legal experts; they're great communicators, relatable and empathetic.



Derek V. Abreu (JD 2000)

Legal Counsel, Preszler Law Firm



There is a real pressure in law school to choose traditionally ‘safe’ or ‘successful’ options. But the choices you make at this time can have lasting effects. With this in mind, I would encourage you to follow your interests whenever possible in order to forge the career and life you really want for yourself.



Manula Adhihetty (JD 2022)

Law Clerk, Sullivan & Cromwell
LLP

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Believe in yourself. Success may be delayed, but with persistence, smart work and determination, you will achieve your goals. Remember—you've got this!



Manas Agarwal (GPLLM 2021)

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The journey to becoming a lawyer in Canada as an internationally trained professional is not just about passing exams—it’s about resilience, adaptation and unwavering determination. Every challenge, from accreditation to licensing, is an opportunity to grow, both professionally and personally. Trust the process, seek guidance from those who walked the path before you, and remember that your unique background is not a barrier but a strength. The legal profession in Canada values diversity and your perseverance will be rewarded. Stay focused, stay committed and success will follow.



Arthur Alvim, (GPLLM 2023)

Founding Lawyer
Alvim Law



Being an in-house lawyer means deeply understanding the business, speaking its language and working closely with business leaders as a trusted partner. It's not just about legal expertise; it's about combining that knowledge with business insight and problem-solving skills to help drive the company's success.

For students and young lawyers aspiring to become in-house counsel, focus on understanding the company's needs and adopting a growth mindset. A strong in-house counsel acts as an enabler, and is always striving to find creative legal solutions that support business innovations rather than blocking them.



Luciana Andrade (GPLLM 2021)

Senior Manager, Corporate
Counsel – Legal & Compliance
Canada, Edwards Lifesciences

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Keep an open mind. You might start out thinking you know exactly where your path will go, but life often takes unexpected turns. Opportunities show up when you least expect them. The world is changing fast and it is more connected than ever. Stay curious, ask questions and be open to things that do not fit your original plan. Some of the best chances come when you are willing to explore what you had not considered.



Muhammad Ansab (JD 2019)

Senior Associate, Clifford Chance



The best advice I can give is to take time to foster relationships. The connections you build in law school will shape your career and life in ways you cannot predict. Your classmates will become your friends, colleagues, clients, and even opposing counsel. They will be there through the ups and downs of law school and as you grow, you will lean on and learn from each other. Invest in those relationships because they will carry you further than any single class ever could.



Sarah J. Armstrong (LLB 2002)

Partner, Fasken

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In my recent experience, the practice of law has become a platform for building something of your own. Whether you establish a firm, develop a niche, or find new ways to serve clients, an entrepreneurial mindset sets you apart.

Equally important is building and maintaining strong relationships—they are the foundation of long-term success.



Hasan Atasoy (GPLLM 2022)

Founding Lawyer
Atasoy Law Firm

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Don't give up! Stay persistent and keep focusing on building connections in the areas you're passionate about. Your dedication will lead the way.

"The only limit to our realization of tomorrow is our doubts of today." —Franklin D. Roosevelt



Milan Banhegyi (GPLLM 2023)

Litigation Associate

HGR Graham Partners LLP

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My advice to aspiring lawyers is to seek out mentors who can offer insight into the fields you're drawn to. Starting early gives you the best chance to build a strong foundation, align your passion with your practice, and pursue work you can see yourself doing—and enjoying—long-term. I was fortunate to choose land use planning and development law early in my career because I had clarity about my interests and pursued an opportunity that aligned with those interests.



Rowan Barron (JD 2023)

Associate, Overland LLP

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Finding your place in law takes time. If you only follow the work assigned to you without ever sitting in front of a client or learning how to bring in business, you limit your own potential. The real challenge isn't just knowing the law, it's knowing how to make yourself the commodity. Where you start your career does not define your career. You are the protagonist of your story and how far you go depends on how much you're willing to invest in it!



Yuce Baykara (LLM 2012)

CEO, KSI Law



Use your time wisely and take every opportunity that comes your way, even if they seem difficult or impossible to achieve. You will always learn from them. Speaking from experience, I had to restart my law career twice in two different countries and despite the challenges, these experiences are what I'm most proud of. The same applies to our daily work as lawyers. Do not be afraid to take on new tasks and challenges. Approach them with a positive attitude and a willingness to learn.



Mariana Reis Beckermann
(GPLLM 2023)

Articling Student
McCarthy Tétrault

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My advice is: try something new, ask for opportunities even when they aren't advertised and stay close to the people who believe in you. The best career moves I ever made came from these three things. That mix opened more doors than any formal path could.



Misha Boutilier (JD 2018)

Counsel & Advisor to the
Chief Justice of Ontario

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Success comes when you follow what truly interests you, not just what feels safe or expected. There are many ways to use your legal education and being a lawyer is just one of them. The key is to ask yourself: What do I care about? What excites me? And then...How can I create that feeling in a professional space? Instead of just following the obvious path, figure out where you want to be and work backward from there. And along the way, remember to find balance. Your career should be important, but it doesn't need to be your whole life. Make space for things that bring you joy outside of work.



Cory R. Boyd (LLB 2000)

Co-Managing Partner
Rubin Thomlinson LLP



Always keep the big picture in mind. When you start out as a new attorney, ask thoughtful questions. Find out how your contribution fits into the larger project, be it complex litigation or a commercial transaction or anything in between. Don't just go through the motions—take the time to understand why you're doing what you're doing. Curiosity and drive to learn are what define great lawyers.



Alexander Buckley (JD/MBA 2017)

Director and Counsel
Westbrook Partners



Your first year as a lawyer may be the most important year of your career. It is when you start to build your professional reputation. Focus on being reliable, diligent and respectful—clients and other lawyers will remember that. A strong reputation can quietly help you grow into being a trusted advisor, the gold standard in a professional career.

Stay open minded about where your path might lead—the role you end up loving may not be the one you first imagined.



Terry Burgoyne (LLB 1981)

Partner and General Counsel Emeritus
Osler, Hoskin & Harcourt LLP

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It's okay to not know the answer. Young lawyers often feel pressured to have all the answers, but the real skill is knowing how to find them. Saying, 'I'm not informed enough to have an opinion on that right now, let me get back to you,' sets you apart. With experience, you'll get faster, but even the best lawyers take their time to get things right. Trust the process.



Justin Chan (GPLLM 2022)

Counsel, Aviva Trial Lawyers



Ask yourself honestly, is this the work you want to do? Law offers a huge variety of paths, from criminal and civil litigation to corporate and real estate law. What keeps most lawyers engaged is the intellectual challenge and problem solving. That is why articling is so valuable. If you choose a place with diverse practice areas, you will experience different fields and discover what truly fits you. So go in with curiosity, explore widely and most importantly, make sure this is what you really want!



Kirby Chown (LLB 1979)

Ontario Regional Managing
Partner (retired)
McCarthy Tétrault LLP

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A law degree opens doors beyond the legal profession, shaping your path wherever life takes you. More than understanding rules, it teaches critical legal thinking, a skill that sharpens your perspective in politics, business, media and everyday life.



The Hon. Tony Clement, P.C. (LLB 1986)
CEO, Tony Clement International



In your legal practice, you may not get every opportunity you want. You may not fulfill the dreams that drew you into law school. Your work might, at times, seem mundane, tiresome and pointless. It never really is. Remember that the practice of law is, first and foremost, about service. Serving clients—helping them protect their interests and achieve their goals—and serving society or, more particularly, serving justice. Don't ever make the mistake of becoming convinced that those ideals are too lofty to live for. They are, rather, the most practical foundation of what we do. Anything you do in law that doesn't exemplify service, falls short of the genuine practice of law.

Invest your authentic self into the work you do. That's not about being selfish or self-centred; it's about honouring your character, your values, your talents, your heritage and your hopes. Remembering where you come from, what you bring, where you want to go and why.

Speaking personally, cherish your relationships. At the end of the day, that is where your finest treasure lies.



Michael H. Clifton (LLB 1998)

Associate Counsel
Miller Thomson LLP, Vice-Chair,
Condominium Authority Tribunal
(Ontario)



As you step into your legal careers, remember that the path is rarely linear.

- *Explore diverse avenues:* the legal field is vast. Attend conferences, network with professionals in different sectors to learn what they do, so you can decide what career to pursue.
- *Build meaningful connections:* cultivate relationships with your peers and mentors. These connections will be invaluable as you navigate your career. Attend bar association events and professional gatherings.
- *Embrace continuous learning:* the law is constantly evolving. Stay curious, seek out opportunities for professional development and be open to learning new skills beyond purely law.
- *Learn about your client's business:* when working for a client, you will provide greater value to your clients if you know more about their industry, how their products work, how they market and sell their products. Become a business professional with a legal background and you'll thrive.

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- *Prioritize well-being:* the legal profession can be demanding. Maintain a healthy work-life balance and prioritize your mental and physical health.
- *Be patient and persistent:* Finding the right career path takes time. Be patient with yourself and don't be afraid to take calculated risks. Your dedication and hard work will pay-off.

Remember, your legal education has equipped you with valuable skills that can be applied in countless ways. Embrace the journey and create a career that is both fulfilling and impactful.



**Christiana Abbade Do Couto (GPLLM
2023)**

Manager, Business Affairs
Geotab

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Don't be afraid to take risks. It's so easy to stay in your comfort zone, but a little extra stretch can take you to places you never imagined. Anyone at U of T Law is incredibly smart and capable. You can thrive in any work environment. But real growth happens when you push yourself just a little further, even when it feels uncomfortable. That small step beyond what feels safe can make all the difference.



Meaza Alula Damte (JD 2023)

Associate, McCarthy Tétrault



Take risks, because you never know where they'll land you. Don't be afraid of the unknown because what you think you know in law school is a very small piece of what's actually out there. This is true for jobs, relationships, opportunities, experiences, extracurriculars and *pro bono* work. You're not going to find what's right for you without taking risks, and I know it can be really scary to do that, but somehow it almost always works out. You can plan and plan and plan your life as much as you want, but the reality is that so much of it is out of your control. However, you can control the risks you take and it will usually pay off. And for the times that it doesn't work out, it is critical to have a strong support network there to catch you and help you take on the next challenge.



Ryan Deshpande (JD 2021)

Counsel, Justice Canada



Think outside of the legal profession—getting a law degree provides you with a skill set that extends far beyond the strict practice of law in the private sector or government. The more you can translate the skills you gain, whether through legal training or law school, into areas like business, entrepreneurship and innovation, the more valuable your degree becomes. That's where you're going to see it pay dividends. However, obtaining a law degree solely to become and remain a lawyer is becoming less common. It should become the norm to view a law degree as a skill-building springboard for making an impact in an increasingly decentralized world—one that relies on innovation, technology, lateral thinking and solving future challenges rather than simply upholding a system that is, in many ways, becoming outdated.



Hana Kiran Dhanji (JD/MBA 2017)

CEO & Founder

The Law School Edge

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Don't be too hard on yourself. Things have a way of working out, even when the path feels uncertain. Take the time to ask yourself what really matters to you, not just for the next year but for the next 10, 20 or even 50. What kind of work will make you feel fulfilled and aligned with your values? That is the key to feeling happy and motivated at work. And no matter what your path looks like, make space for what brings you joy, whether it is family, hobbies or seeing the world. That balance is everything.



Eleonora Dimitrova (JD/MA 2010)

Executive Director
Law in Action Within Schools
(LAWS)

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Life can be tough on its own. Articling and junior associateship generally make it tougher. The good news for beginners: no one expects you to know everything, or sometimes, anything. If you're in the latter camp, one thing that can always set you apart is a positive attitude. Being a good person goes a long way in life; the legal field is no exception. While it may not always feel authentic, positivity and a willingness to help can go a long way in leaving strong impressions.



James Dunn (JD 2022)

Associate

Osler, Hoskin & Harcourt LLP

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Law school is your chance to freely explore different areas of law before you start practice. Once you secure a position, you can keep pushing for growth. Stay curious during articling and your first few years of practice, try everything once and stay open to new opportunities because your future practice might find you in the most unexpected way.



Andrew Easto (JD 2022)

Associate, Hicks Morley

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For those still in law school, build bonds with your classmates. The best part of law school is the people. Outside of law school, these are the people you will lean on when looking for jobs and you'll sometimes get the chance to work with or across from them. Do not be afraid to reach out to your old classmates once you are out.



Trent Erickson (JD 2022)

Associate, Blakes



The three key things that will help you thrive in the profession:

1. *Reasonableness*: being able to find workable solutions to the parties' problems and engaging with opposing counsel civilly, to effect the most just outcome for your client;
2. *Hard work and effort*: while smarts will get you far as a lawyer, nothing in law will get you further than preparation and effort;
3. *Mentorship*: look for champions and mentors who will see the best in you and encourage you to thrive as a lawyer.



Marco P. Falco (JD 2004)

Partner, Appellate Litigation &
Judicial Review, Torkin Manes LLP

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Use your time wisely—networking is important, but when finals approach, prioritize them. Good grades matter a lot early in your career.



Benjamin Fenech (JD 2018)

Corporate Associate
Covington & Burling LLP



Law school can be very challenging and stressful, particularly in your first year. My advice is that while academics are very important and should not be taken lightly, be sure to also leave plenty of time for all of the other amazing opportunities that the law school has to offer.

Whether it was mooting, volunteering, or simply attending social events and meeting new people, many of my fondest law school memories took place outside of the classroom. As much as these opportunities were a fun break from studying, I think they also made me a better law student in many ways. I'm also confident they will make me a much better lawyer in the future as well.



Liam Forbes (JD 2024)

Associate, Bennett Jones

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There is no perfect formula or ideal path in law.

Be proud of your ‘unusual’ journey, leave your comfort zone and allow yourself to have ambitious goals.



Luma Damasceno Góes (GPLLM 2024)

Articling Student

Blake, Cassels & Graydon LLP

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Law is not just a profession, it's a vocation—a commitment to justice, service and continuous learning. Master the art of clear writing early, and you'll set yourself apart as a lawyer who not only understands the law but makes it understood.



Adam Goldenberg

Former Adjunct Professor
University of Toronto
Faculty of Law



If you are interested in a career in international human rights, there are a few ways to start laying the foundation. Consider participating in the International Human Rights Program or taking the joint JD and Masters of Global Affairs. Build real-world and global experience by volunteering or interning with human rights organizations and learning another language. Don't hesitate to reach out to people working in this field, as these conversations sometimes lead to unexpected opportunities.

If you are not sure what you want to do when you graduate, don't worry and try not to compare yourself to your classmates who seem to have everything figured out—I know that's hard! Enjoy your time at law school and explore all that it has to offer. And changing your career path is possible! If you are in a job that you do not love or feel passionate about—as was my (brief) experience as a corporate lawyer—try something else. A legal education is a great professional foundation for many different types of careers!



Diane Goodman (LLB 1983, LLM 1991)

International Human Rights
Lawyer

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AI will impact law but not immediately.

Fields like litigation, negotiation and advocacy rely on skills it cannot replace, so it might be wise to focus on developing those.



Monica Goyal (JD 2008)

VP, Legal Innovation
Caravel Law

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If you enjoy variety and feel ready for new challenges, don't be afraid to move around, while still maintaining a career in law. Great opportunities can come from that. Some people thrive in the same law firm or company their entire careers, to great success. But you can still prosper—and build an enriching and enjoyable career—by exploring different paths.



Jeffrey Haar (LLB 1993)

General Counsel, Varicent

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Be driven but stay flexible. You might think you know exactly where your career is headed, but the legal world is full of opportunities. Where you start isn't where you have to stay. If something isn't the right fit, you can change. There is so much more to law than one set path.

Keep an open mind and you will find the right place for you!



Margaret Ng Thow Hing (JD 2007)

Chief Legal Officer, La Jolla
Institute for Immunology

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Be curious—it's how you grow, challenge ideas and uncover new possibilities.

Be humble—because the power of the law isn't just in knowing it, but in using it to make a difference.



Criss Hochhold (GPLLM 2024)

Articled Clerk

Mike Murphy Law Group

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Ask as many questions as you can and don't hesitate to share your opinion. Early on, my mentors encouraged me to do that and it shaped how I work. On every deal, the first person I brought in was the most junior, because that's who I'd spend the most time with. I liked seeing how they thought, what they questioned and I never limited them to their role. I saw them as my buddy, not just so I could teach them, but so I could learn from them. Often, their insights, free from the usual norms, opened up new ways of thinking I hadn't considered. That fresh perspective can be incredibly powerful.



Clay Horner (LLB 1983)

CEO, HBH Strategic Advisors

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Don't lose sight of the basics that you learned in kindergarten. Be kind, respectful and listen to others. As I write this, I am working opposite five U of T classmates on various transactions. Maintaining a professional and friendly relationship not only makes the job more enjoyable, but it often keeps the work focused and leads to a better result for all parties involved.



Benjamin Iscoe (JD 2014)

Partner, Dentons

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As you go out into practice, remember to keep track of the law itself. The law is ever-evolving and complex and much of what you learned about in law school will change substantially over the years. While your time as a law student may end, you will remain a student of the law for life.



Brandon Kain (LLB 2003)

Partner, McCarthy Tétrault LLP



If I could talk to my younger self, I'd say three things:

First, don't take everything so seriously. It's hard when you're young not to feel like every issue is the end of the world, but most of the time, things really do work out.

Second, invest in your relationships. This profession runs on the connections you build. The people around you will help you grow, stay grounded and get through the tough parts.

Finally, take care of yourself. This is a long game. If you're not okay—mentally, physically, or otherwise—you won't see it through. So don't forget to look after yourself along the way.



Sahil Kesar (JD 2019)

Associate, Blakes



The greatest takeaway from law school isn't just the knowledge you gain, but the connections you build. The friendships, student organizations, and community involvement shape your journey in ways you may not fully appreciate at the time. The legal world is smaller than it seems, even abroad and having a U of T Law degree, along with strong relationships and a solid reputation, can open doors you never expected. Don't be afraid to seize those opportunities when they arise.



Amy D. Kwong (JD 2024)

Law Clerk, Sullivan & Cromwell LLP

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I encourage U of T Law grads to explore the world of opportunity out there.

We can compete on any stage—not just hockey.

Canadians have a lot of goodwill internationally which should not be underestimated.



Lijim Lau (LLB 1991)

Principal, Law Office of Lijim Lau

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Study what truly interests you at law school, not what you think you should. The legal profession is still an apprenticeship-based profession; you will learn practice skills on the job. Stay open to unexpected career opportunities and if you want to do something—or move overseas—don't take no for an answer. Rejection is not the end, it is just a redirection. Build resilience and keep your sense of humour.



Jackie Leggett (JD 2005)

Special Counsel, Clayton Utz

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Growth happens when you step out of your comfort zone.

Whether it's reaching out to professors for opportunities beyond the classroom or seeking new assignments in your first summer job, taking risks and embracing challenges are key to mastering anything.



Karlson Leung (JD 2018)

Litigation Counsel, Ontario
Ministry of the Attorney General

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Treat law school and legal education as a blank canvas, let yourself be surprised. See the experience and the credential as a Swiss Army knife; it can open doors to many careers. And if all else fails, you can always practise law, not a bad fallback position. Set big goals and think long-term, even if life doesn't follow your exact plan, what matters is moving in the right direction.



Brien Lewis (JD 1993)

President, Transylvania University



Success comes from recognizing signals, learning from feedback and adapting with an open mind.

Dream of what is possible, even before you know how to achieve it. Stay curious, develop your skills and keep moving forward with purpose and persistence.



Albert Lin (JD 2013)

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Lean into difficult situations. Growth happens when you are scared yet still decide to step into the unknown. My biggest breakthroughs came when I embraced discomfort instead of falling back on the comfortable and well trodden path. The next generation of lawyers can do the same by being curious about emerging industries, immersing themselves into mixed cultural environments, treating mistakes like tuition and not failure and being content with daily proof that you're moving forward.



Daniel Lo (LLM 2012)

Chief Legal Officer
Acheron Trading



Future lawyers:

Put the work in, be confident in your work, and admit when you don't know something. And don't be afraid to ask for what you want. Pursue your interests.

Take care of yourself outside of work and school!



Ryan MacIsaac (JD 2012)

Senior Counsel, Uber



Your legal career is a long journey, not a straight path. There will be unexpected turns and moments of change. Don't be afraid to take a route you didn't plan for, it might lead to something fulfilling in ways you never imagined. And if you ever want to return to something later, you can. Embrace change. Embrace unexpected opportunities. A career isn't just about the destination.



Teresa MacLean (JD 2014)

Director of Legal Recruiting &
Placement, Latitude Legal

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Breaking into the legal profession isn't always about following the beaten path.

Sometimes, exploring adjacent roles that connect with counsel can open unexpected doors and help you build meaningful relationships along the way.



Khayal Mammadov (GPLLM 2022)

Legal Counsel, AtkinsRéalis



Perspective matters.

It shapes how you serve your clients and how you grow in your career. Law is not just a transaction. It is a long game of trust, interpretation, and care. Our role is not only to deliver legal services but to help move the language of the law forward, making it more accessible for those who need it. That is part of the greater purpose of being a lawyer.



David A.P. Marshall (JD/MPP 2016)

Partner, Paul Weiss



As cheesy as it sounds, never be afraid to be yourself—you are your biggest strength.

The world needs your uniqueness, and when you stop trying to fit into a mold, you'll find the courage—and opportunities—to shine in ways you can't possibly imagine.



Fernanda Martins (GPLLM 2023)

Litigation Associate, McMillan



Becoming a lawyer is a commitment to being a lifelong learner. Stay curious, be your own advocate and let your interests guide you along the way.

Our profession is at its best when we show up to our work, and for each other, with authenticity.



Alexandria Matic (JD 2018)

Tyr LLP

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It is important to always keep learning. Pay attention to your clients, understand their ideas even if they are unfamiliar and be willing to learn along the way.

As a student, you can get ready for this by doing basic research, speaking with professionals, or going to conferences. Conferences are helpful not only for staying informed about new trends but also for figuring out if this area of law suits you. Since many specialized legal groups are small, attending these events can help you build connections and make yourself known in that community.



William Mazurek (JD 2021)

Litigation Associate, Torys



To future generations, I have two thoughts.

First, while there are those who have come to see the practice of law more as a business than a noble profession, perhaps naively, I remain hopeful that it will retain its nobility. In that spirit, I urge those who follow to remember that your reputation is your most valuable asset. It takes years to build up and can be lost overnight. So in all that you do, let honesty and integrity be your guideposts; let your word be your bond; and stand up for what you believe in, even though it may be inconvenient in the moment.

Second, the world moves quickly, all too often forgetting the value of that which came before. But remember this. At its core, the law is a deeply human process and unless and until AI can be imbued with the emotions that define us, we must not allow technology to take over our courtrooms, lest we erase the very humanity that is the essence of justice.



**The Hon. Michael J. Moldaver
(LLB 1971)**

Counsel and Mentor
Goodmans Litigation and
Dispute Resolution team

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To thrive in the legal profession long-term, it's essential to enjoy your work and prioritize your well-being.

Adaptability and continuous learning are also key to success in an evolving legal landscape.



Alex Ognibene (JD 2016)

Associate, Fasken

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Take a practical approach to your law school journey and licensing. Break it down into manageable steps, stay focused and give it your all. Work hard, study hard and stay consistent. The effort you put in now will pay off in the long run.



Wanessa Oliveira (GPLLM 2020)

Compliance Counsel
Boston Scientific Canada

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Listen to yourself even when others question your choices. This is your journey, and many others have walked it before you, proving it's possible.

Law is about passion, perseverance, and making a difference and if you are in it for the right reasons, your work will speak for itself. It won't always be easy, but remember that compassion can change the world—especially when your work touches the lives of others.



Natalia (Natasha) Paniushkina
(GPLLM 2020)

Counsel II, ivari Canada

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“Strong (legal) technical skills, along with a commitment to lifelong learning, form the baseline for any lawyer. But at its core, the practice of law is about people. It's a profoundly rewarding profession if you are genuinely motivated to help others. Building trust with clients and fostering supportive, reliable relationships with colleagues are essential. What sustains a legal career, I've found, is working with people who inspire you, seeking out great mentors, building a practice that reflects your authentic self, and showing yourself compassion along the way.”



Hyunju (Crystal) Park (GPLLM 2020)

Associate, Gowling WLG (Canada)
LLP

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The career we chose demands a lot at every step. There will be challenges, tough clients, and moments that test you. But if you stay resilient, act with intention and keep a positive attitude, you will find success no matter what comes your way. All you can do is try your best every single day!



Andrea Parodis (GPLLM 2024)

Legal Assistant, Hicks Morley

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Remember why you went to law school. Most people who choose this path are incredibly bright and motivated. Many of them started with a deep desire to make the world a better place in their own way. That doesn't necessarily mean going into public law, but it usually means wanting to contribute to how our society functions. Whether that's through business, policy, advocacy, or something else entirely, that purpose matters, so don't lose sight of it. Check in with yourself as your career unfolds. Ask yourself if you're still doing what you really want to be doing!



Kimberly Potter (JD 2010)

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So many of us struggle with imposter syndrome and forget how far we have come. Believing in yourself might sound cliché, but it is very important. Just making it to law school is a huge accomplishment. Graduating and passing the bar—that takes determination. You know more than you think you do. Be confident. Don't be afraid to ask questions. Keep learning. And remember—you are doing better than you think!



Victoria Purdy (JD 2023)

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The legal profession often emphasizes notions of conformity and many students can feel pressured to take well-travelled pathways to practising law. I was often told that a career practising public international law and outer space law was impossible to achieve—not true! Don't be afraid to rebel against these notions of success and forge your own path as a lawyer. The most interesting careers come through perseverance, staying curious and tasting the 'buffet of law' that the U of T Faculty of Law offers!



Gregory Radišić (LLM 2023)

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The law school has given me lifelong friendships and set me on my journey of advocacy, teaching, community work, law and now diplomacy. Law was my bridge between political theory and practice in politics and public policy. I have unforgettable memories of great teachers, who in time have become friends, and shall always be grateful for an unforgettable three years, and a lifetime that would not be what it is without the Faculty of Law experience.



The Hon. Robert K. Rae (LLB 1977)

Canada's Ambassador to the UN
& President of UN's Economic
and Social Council

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Choose your legal path based on who you are, not what you see on TV or what others expect. Use all the tools available to understand yourself and find the right fit. Live authentically. Life is short and it's important to avoid regrets about not being true to yourself. Prioritize your health. Developing healthy habits early ensures a better quality of life in the future. Invest in hard work now because the effort you put in today shapes the opportunities you'll have tomorrow. Your future self will thank you!



Derrick Raphael (GPLLM 2016)

CEO, ICON Talent Partners
COO, ICON Leadership Institute

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Follow what really interests you when choosing your area of law. Doing so will keep you highly motivated and engaged. And even if it may seem more prudent to choose another area—for example, another area may seem to provide more flexibility as your career progresses—unexpected doors can open when you stay true to your interests.



Jim Robson (JD 2015)

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When I sat in my first-year contracts class, I couldn't have imagined the path my career would take—but every step mattered. To today's law students and recent graduates: make connections, stay curious, explore widely and don't be afraid to follow dreams you haven't fully imagined yet. The future unfolds in surprising ways, with unexpected adventures always on the horizon!



David Roney (LLB 1991)

Partner
Sidley Austin LLP, Geneva

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Success is not dependent on what you know, its who you know and successful networking is about building real, genuine connections. Be nice to people, stay in touch and nurture your relationships. Opportunities come from people in your network, not just thin air



Benjamin Rozek (GPLLM 2023)



Be intentional.

That's the advice I give every young lawyer and law student who reaches out to me. You don't need to have everything figured out from the start, but always ask yourself: What's important to me? Not what matters to the firm, not what others expect—what matters to you? That one question will shape your path in a meaningful way.

Stay self-focused, not self-interested. That means making sure you are part of the equation when decisions are made. It's not about putting yourself above others; it's about making space for your own goals, needs and values.

And remember, this is a marathon not a sprint. One day you'll blink and realize you're in you're a senior associate or partnering, wondering where the time went. So don't just go through the motions—make each step count.



Peter A. Saad (JD 2008)

Managing Partner
Loopstra Nixon LLP

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Never allow others to diminish the nobility of our profession. Lawyers play an essential role in fighting injustice and vindicating the rights of the marginalized. Each of us has the capacity to make this world and our profession better in small and large ways. But to do so, we must uphold civility, not as a form of weakness, but as a strength that allows us to engage in ‘respectful dialogue’ even in the face of the most polarizing issues. We as lawyers must lead by example, rejecting all forms of hatred, advocating with dignity and ensuring that justice is never compromised by discrimination or prejudice.



Mark Sandler (LLB 1978)

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My advice has three parts: First, never stop learning—stay curious and open to new ideas. Second, don't overlook opportunities. Even when you're busy, take a moment to evaluate them before saying no. Third, build meaningful relationships. Networking isn't just about personal gain; genuine connections can open doors years later. A quick coffee chat or a short walk can go a long way. Surround yourself with smart, diverse thinkers and prioritize face-to-face interactions—they matter!



Ranj Sangra (JD 2001)

Associate General Counsel at
Ballard Power Systems Inc.
President of the Canadian
Corporate Counsel Association

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Stand out in the legal market by embracing what makes you unique and sharing it confidently.

Leverage what makes you, you!



Eliane Leal da Silva (GPLLM 2020)

Associate, Gardiner Roberts LLP

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It's great to have a plan, but the best things often come when you stay open to new opportunities. Just because you haven't pictured yourself in a certain role doesn't mean you wouldn't thrive in it. Whether it's public, private, or nonprofit work, your skills are more transferable than you think. Keep an open mind—you might find the right fit in places you hadn't considered.



Sherna Tamboly (JD 2017)



First, professionalism matters. Be on time, be prepared, follow up when you say you will and communicate openly when things change. These small actions build trust and confidence.

Second, clients want solutions, not roadblocks. It's easy to say, 'The law doesn't allow it'. But the real value comes from asking, 'What's the goal and can we find another way to get there?' Always look for a path forward, managing risk creatively.

Finally, stay open to opportunities and be curious. Some of the best career moves come from unexpected connections. Our law school provides excellent preparation for the practice of law and for many other careers.



John Turchin (LLB 1978)

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Be curious. Ask questions. Look where no one else is looking. I found my articling opportunity in a newsletter. Because I stayed informed, I walked into my interview already prepared. The best opportunities are often in places others overlook. Stop following the same worn out paths. Your next big break might be hiding in an unexpected corner.



Henaa Mall Vaidya (LLM 2021)

Worker Adviser, Barrister &
Solicitor, Ministry of Labour,
Immigration, Training and Skills
Development

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Law school is hard work, but it is also an opportunity to forge bonds that will last.

The relationships with those you study with, laugh with and lean on when it gets tough will carry you through law school and far beyond. The legal world is small and your community will keep showing up in ways you did not expect.



Saskia E.L. De Vries (JD 2023)

Associate, Sullivan & Cromwell



Many lawyers who took non-traditional career paths will tell you this: I was probably less afraid of risk than most lawyers. People who choose to study law usually like stability and certainty. That is a great mindset for many legal jobs, but in fields like business and media, being too cautious can hold you back. The truth is your legal training gives you skills that are valuable far beyond a traditional law firm. Critical thinking, problem solving and the ability to analyze complex issues are in high demand everywhere. The key is to stay open to new opportunities, take smart risks and understand that the legal profession is changing. The most rewarding careers are often the ones you did not plan for but were ready to seize when the moment came.



Tim Wilbur (JD 2003)

Global Managing Editor
Canadian Lawyer Magazine

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A mentor—who is also my father-in-law—told me it takes a decade to become a lawyer.

Invest yourself in each aspect of your work—including its setbacks and successes—as that experience builds the perspective you need to give good advice to the clients and causes you support.



O. Andrew F. Wilson (LLB 2000)

Partner, Emery Celli Brinckerhoff
Abady Ward & Maazel LLP



Your career is a marathon, not a sprint. Stay flexible and remember three things:

- Believe in yourself—success sometimes requires a bit of delusional self-belief;
- 100 percent to the opportunities that present themselves—you never know when a bump along the way or a diversion from your initial goals may turn out to be exactly what you needed
- Recognize that the practice of law is a storied profession that is structured around certain norms, but push back when necessary—we need the next generation of lawyers, and to keep them in the profession, we also need them to be vocal about the things that are important to them and the boundaries that will help them flourish in the long term.



Amanda Wolczanski (JD 2021)

Associate, Torys

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The career paths we often learn about in law school can seem linear and well-defined. At a firm, for example, you typically know what your promotions will look like, how your compensation will grow and what skills you're expected to build. That kind of structure offers stability—and there's real value in that. But we're also entering a time of extraordinary change, as technology and AI reshape the legal profession in ways we're only beginning to understand. The next decade will bring new roles, industries and opportunities we haven't even imagined yet. A strong legal foundation will always matter. But those who are willing to take risks, explore unconventional paths and embrace the unknown will be especially well-positioned to lead and thrive. Stepping into something unfamiliar can feel uncertain—but it might also be the most rewarding move you make.



Sally Wong (JD 2017)

Strategic Business Development
Manager, Harvey

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Success as a lawyer is rooted in taking ownership of your work from the start. Treat every deal and file as if it were your own, no matter how early in your career. This mindset makes the work more meaningful and will allow you to extract the greatest value from it. Equally important is recognizing that the law is a people-driven profession. In the middle of the rush of deals and deadlines, always prioritize building trust, maintain your empathy and look to cultivate strong, lasting relationships.



Yousef El Zohiry (JD/MBA 2023)

Associate, White & Case



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