

July 2021

## The Layman's View of a Lawyer

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### Recommended Citation

John H. Denison, The Layman's View of a Lawyer, 6 Dicta 22 (1928-1929).

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that time. Possibly we may have some member of the legislature who might abolish all taxes in the years to come and then some future poet in singing his praises may write:

“He took the tax away  
And built for himself an everlasting name.”

But until Colorado appoints this poet laureate let us resign ourselves to the adage that two things are certain, Death and Taxes.

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## THE LAYMAN'S VIEW OF A LAWYER

The chief function of a lawyer is to predict for his client what the court will or would do under given circumstances.

Every lawyer knows this; or, if he gives a little thought to the point, will acknowledge it, but the layman views the matter otherwise. Use to him the term “great lawyer” and he sees Rufus Choate before a jury, or Daniel Webster before the Supreme Court of the United States. The picture which he does not see is that before such appearances each of these great men has been consulted and has given his opinion as to what the result will be, is likely to be, or ought to be under the facts as they are detailed to him.

But the function of prediction is more frequently performed to guide the client in his future conduct. This may be called prediction before the fact, the former prediction after the fact.

The client who asks advice before he acts gets more value, and usually for less money, than he who acts and then asks whether he can win a lawsuit.

Law students often have the layman's view, but a majority of them are learning that the law is not the career of an orator but of a prophet.

—*John H. Denison.*