

January 1926

## The Young Lawyer's Problems

Horace N. Hawkins

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.du.edu/dlr>

---

### Recommended Citation

Horace N. Hawkins, The Young Lawyer's Problems, 3 Denv. B.A. Rec. 14 (1926).

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Denver Law Review at Digital Commons @ DU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Denver Law Review by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ DU. For more information, please contact [jennifer.cox@du.edu](mailto:jennifer.cox@du.edu), [dig-commons@du.edu](mailto:dig-commons@du.edu).

## *The Young Lawyer's Problems*

By HON. HORACE N. HAWKINS

The question with which Hamlet wrestled, "To be or not to be," was not much more serious than the problems which present themselves to the young lawyer when he has received his highly-prized "sheep-skin". Where and how should he begin the climbing of the ladder which leads to the rewards reaped by the successful lawyer? Should he begin his work in a city, or in a smaller place? Should he secure a position in the office of an older lawyer, or should he swing out his shingle, and "go it alone"? He is told that the cities are filled already to the saturation point with members of his profession. He is also informed that in a town he will probably starve to death, because there is little legal business. No wonder that the young man stands bewildered at the threshold of his career. Every older lawyer who remembers the day when he himself stood, like Moses, looking out into the Promised Land, should be willing to aid the young man by helpful advice. It is frequently cynically said that it is a waste of time to give advice to young people. The statement is untrue. There are few good citizens whose lives have not been molded, to some extent, at least, by earnest advice received in youthful days. Let us therefore see, whether some help in the nature of advice can be given to the boy who, after years of dreaming of the day when he would be a member of one of the greatest of all professions, stands confusedly at the cross-roads, wondering which way to go.

The first, perhaps the best, piece of advice that can be given, is that the young man should face his problems with confidence in himself. Let him say to himself, and if need be, over

and over again: "Others have solved the questions which are before me, and what they have done, I can do." Nothing is more necessary to a successful career at the bar than self-confidence. By this term is not meant that offensive egotism which prompts the small-minded man to shout from the house-tops his own importance, but instead, that quiet and confident belief in one's own ability to do the things necessary to be done. Confidence in one's self begets confidence from others. There never yet was a successful lawyer who did not believe in himself.

There is one other thing of the greatest importance, which the young man standing at the cross-roads should be told. He should understand before he starts on any of the roads which branch out before him, that the law is a profession in which, above all other professions, hard work is absolutely essential if success is to be achieved. Most young men have not had this fact sufficiently impressed upon them. More lawyers fail of success because of sheer laziness than because of any other one thing. Wherever throughout the land an attorney has achieved the reputation of being a "big lawyer" you can stake your eternal existence upon the fact that that lawyer is a hard worker. The young man with a sheep-skin should start to travel none of the roads before him until he has first determined that he is going to be a worker in his profession. If he cannot reach this determination, he should hunt a job along some other line. The profession of Madison and Marshall, of Jefferson and Webster, is not for him.

There is still one other piece of advice which can not be too strongly em-

phasized. Let the young man resolve with all his force of mind that he is not going to be what is commonly called a "tricky lawyer." There was never yet a lawyer who made a lasting success in life by dishonest practices. The greatest asset of a lawyer is the reputation of being an upright man, and every great lawyer the world has known has had that reputation.

Assuming that the young man with a law license under his arm has sound common sense, has confidence in himself, is willing to work, and is determined to deserve success through a life of honorable conduct, the bar bids him welcome to its midst, and wishes and predicts for him the success which he richly deserves.

And now to return to the questions stated in the beginning of this article. Should the young lawyer's initial location be in the city, or in a smaller place? This is a question which cannot be answered the same way for every young licensee. Some general observations, however, may be made. Many of the most prominent lawyers in our cities have begun to practice in a small place, and have moved to the city after having acquired money enough to tide over the "starvation period." It is ordinarily easier to begin to earn a living at the law in a smaller place than in a large city. A young lawyer soon becomes acquainted with every one worth knowing in a town or in a small city. Older lawyers may acquire clients through having an established reputation. The young lawyer's business comes from his acquaintances. Every acquaintance is a potential client. The more acquaintances he has the more business he has. A successful lawyer is generally a good judge of human nature. He understands the motives and ambitions, ideals and prejudices which animate and move his fellow men. It is easier to learn human nature in a small place than in a city. On the

other hand, there are advantages in practicing in a city. The lawyer's fees are larger. It is easier to acquire a state or national reputation. People throughout the country generally think the city lawyer a wiser man than their home town lawyer. In this they are frequently mistaken. The hard-headed country lawyer is a most dangerous antagonist, as many city lawyers have learned to their cost. If a bright and intelligent, hard-working young lawyer has means sufficient for his support for a year or two, he would be justified in opening an office in the city, and probably that would be the wisest course for him to pursue. At the end of that time he ought to be able to have a respectable clientage. If he has not sufficient means to start out for himself, let him try for a position in an established office. If he secures such a position, he should resolve that his working as a hired man is not to be permanent. His eventual goal should be an office of his own. Let him not worry about there being so many lawyers in the cities. There is always in truth and in fact, room for one more. Neither should he worry or become pessimistic about the old lawyers having the cream of the practice. Nature is kindly, and in the course of time the old lawyers drop off the legal bough like the leaves in autumn. If the young man is not able to open an office of his own in a city, and cannot secure a position in an established office, let him locate in a smaller place. His fees may not be so large, but neither will his expenses. All in all, the country lawyer is about as well off as the general run of city lawyers. Wherever the young man locates, be it in a large city, or elsewhere, let him not be afraid that his qualifications will fail of recognition and appreciation. It is said that murder will always out. So will merit. There never was yet a good lawyer but people found it out. The very winds whisper

it through the length and breadth of the land.

So here's to the young lawyer with confidence in himself, who has resolved to work hard in his profession, and to lead an honorable and useful life. He is on the road to success in his calling.

#### RECENT TRIAL COURT DECISIONS

*(Editor's Note.*—It is intended in each issue of the Record to note interesting current decisions of all local Trial Courts, including the United States District Court, State District Courts, the County Court, and the Justice Courts. The co-operation of the members of the Bar is solicited in making this department a success. Any attorney having knowledge of such a decision is requested to phone or mail the title of the case to Victor Arthur

Miller, who will digest the decision for this department. The names of the Courts having no material for the current month will be omitted, due to lack of space.)

Owing to the vacation of the courts no material was available for this column for this issue.

#### POOR "SQUIRE"

The clergyman is "Reverend Mr. This,"  
Or, if a Romanist, he's "Father That,"  
And each physician's "Doctor," man  
or miss,  
Because of what is stored beneath his  
hat.  
All officers of arms, on land or sea,  
Addressed by military titles are,  
And so it's passing strange, it seems  
to me,

There's no official title for the Bar.

—J. C. S.

## *University of Denver Law School*

By HUGH MCLEAN

Notable changes mark the opening on September 15, 1926, of the thirty-fifth year of the University of Denver Law School. The resignation in June, 1926, of George C. Manly, Dean of the School since 1910, has left the administration of the School temporarily in the hands of a Faculty Committee, consisting of George E. Tralles, Chairman, James Grafton Rogers, Richard Peete, Robert E. More and Hugh McLean. In conference with Chancellor Harper and the Board of Trustees it is hoped that the difficult task of finding the right man as Dean to carry on the high traditions and excellent record of the School, and to meet the new problems constantly arising, may, during the coming school year, reach a happy conclusion.

While Dean Manly has happily, not severed his connection with the School.

and will retain his Freshman course in "Legal Bibliography and the Use of Law Books", it has been necessary for him to give up his course on "Constitutional Law." The Committee is extremely gratified in having been able to secure Justice H. P. Burke, of the Colorado Supreme Court to take this course. Judge Burke's well-known interest in and enthusiasm for this subject, with his gifts of clear-cut thinking and incisive speech, will undoubtedly make this course one of the outstanding ones in the curriculum.

The unfortunate illness of Charles R. Brock, who has for many years taught Equity Pleading, has made it necessary to find a supply for this course for the current year, until Mr. Brock's recovery; and an arrangement has been made for Justice John H. Denison to take Equity Pleading as an