

GLORY DAYS: THE CHALLENGES OF SUCCESS BEYOND LAW SCHOOL

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*And I hope when I get old I don't sit
around thinking about it but I probably will
Yeah, just sitting back trying to recapture
a little of the glory of, but time slips away
and leaves you with nothing mister but
boring stories of glory days.¹*

Those of you who are connected with the National Conference of Law Reviews deserve hearty congratulations. As we mark the turn of the century, Americans can celebrate, among other things, the stability and advances of the United States legal system, an achievement that speaks loudly to the successes of legal institutions, the enduring, yet flexible, nature of our laws, and the soundness of legal education. You — the leading students of our law schools — now carry the heavy mantle and must perpetuate and improve our legal system during the twenty-first century.

You have already proven yourselves to be students extraordinary, acute observers of the law, and responsible citizens of your law schools and of the wider communities in which you live. As editors of law reviews and journals, you have been charged with critical tasks. While our common law system does not honor the civil law tradition of giving great weight to scholarly writings (at least vis-à-vis judicial opinions), scholarship makes an extraordinarily important contribution to the prevailing legal environment.

Being named editors of your school's law review or journal, no doubt has already brought you great rewards, and deservedly so. You have gained the respect and admiration of your peers, professors, and families, and you have enjoyed the more material dividends that accompany the academic success that your positions reflect. Your experiences as law review editors will prove to be singular and immense.

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1. Bruce Springsteen, *Glory Days*, in *Born in the U.S.A.* (Columbia Recs. 1984) (CD recording).

Soon you will graduate from law school and begin your chosen careers — as associates at law firms, judicial clerks, corporate attorneys, or public interest lawyers. You will go to these positions with the records of achievement that you have amassed and can always recall with great pride.

But as you begin your new careers, you will need to garner a new record of achievement. You will travel in personal and professional circles with others who also have accomplished a great deal, and you will need to begin anew the process of making a name and reputation for yourself based not on your history, but on your continued ability to impress your supervisors, colleagues, and clients with your talent, commitment, energy, and humanity. If the future holds one certainty (issues of immortality notwithstanding), it is that you will be confronted with new and abundant challenges as you move through your professional careers, challenges that are likely to arouse the most intense of personal frailties.

Academicians harbor many of the insecurities and self-doubts that one day you may experience. While those of us in academia may seem to be comfortable in our current positions, we continue to battle institutional politics, worry about tenure and contract extensions, and have anxiety about competition among ourselves and others at our schools and in our fields of study.

Publication, of course, is critical to an academician's career. Because each issue of a law review or journal contains only a few articles, and there are many other scholars who may be better known or more talented, maneuvering for the same limited spots in law reviews or journals causes many members of the legal academia to experience near constant publication anxiety. We may spend years writing an article, and our livelihoods may literally depend on publication. So if you as law review editors think that you wield tremendous power, let there be no mistake about it — you do.

Given your duties on your respective law review or journal, you are in unique positions to interface with professionals on a reverse-power basis; that is, the more traditional lines of authority by those more senior over those more junior are for this purpose transposed. This presents an ideal opportunity to develop modesty and to exercise a sense of professionalism and respect toward others. For example, when you must decline a piece or make substantial revisions to an article in the editorial process, remember that a rejection for publication plays on an academician's fiercest anxieties. While your foremost responsibility is, of course, to the quality of your law review or journal, a high priority also should be treating

prospective authors with humility and grace. This advice applies to the editing process as well.

Additionally, this advice applies to working with your colleagues on your law review or journal. Learning how to supervise people and earn both their devotion and respect is a daunting, yet indispensable, task. Possessing a principal position on a law review or journal is an opportunity to develop skills that not many others have early in their careers. Take advantage of this fortuitous arrangement to learn how to earn the affinity and loyalty of your colleagues.

Given your individual histories, it is a near certainty that you will rise to the top of your chosen careers. But this will take time, dedication, attentiveness, and an abundance of the most beloved of human qualities. You will need to prove yourselves again and again as you reach higher levels of professionalism. The future will not allow you to rest on your laurels. Rather, your successes inevitably will lead to new challenges, which will demand your ever-increasing attention to perfecting mechanisms for working through them and for cultivating the most honored of human qualities.

You now have abundant opportunities to develop and exercise those qualities, which will serve you well in the challenges that await you. Seize these opportunities as indispensable tools for your future. Use them whenever possible, and build confidently, yet humbly, upon each step of your success so that you may look ahead eagerly to the future rather than look back wistfully at the *Glory Days* of your past.