

Yale Law School

by Chris Thomas

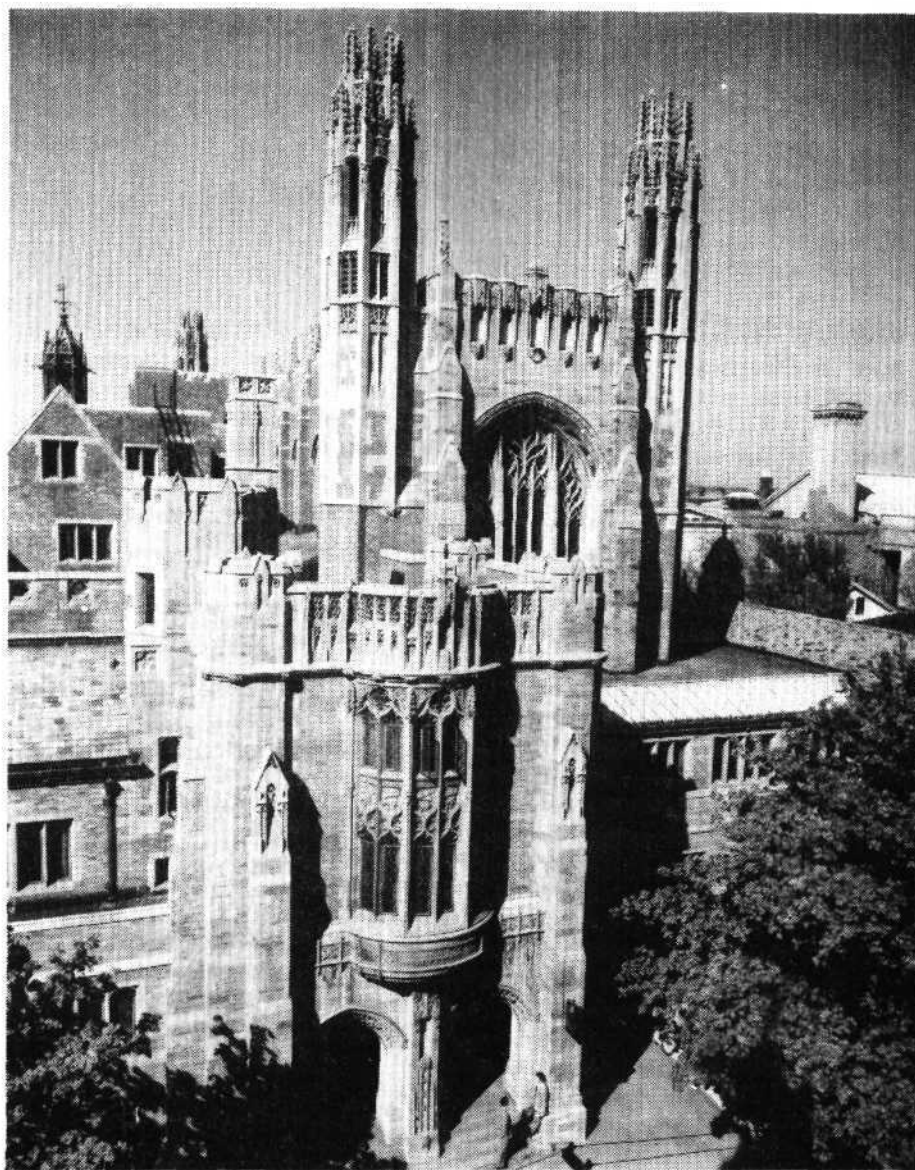
Founded in 1801, Yale Law School in New Haven, Connecticut is a private institution with the primary purpose of training lawyers while encouraging research in law. With the long tradition of taking a broad view of lawyers and law in society, the Law School has sought to train lawyers for public service and teaching as well as for private practice, to "advance inquiry at the boundaries of the law as well as to inculcate knowledge at the core," as the admissions bulletin states. Consistently ranked among the top law schools in the nation, one wonders just how great this school really is.

Admission to Yale Law School is the most selective in the country. Eight percent, or 407 of the 5391 applicants, were accepted in the most recent first-year class. The School tries to maintain a class size of around 175 students, with 183 in this past year's entering class. The median LSAT percentile of that first-year class was 97. The median GPA was 3.8. The lowest LSAT percentile accepted was 79. Eleven Columbia College graduates enrolled, as compared to fifty-seven Harvard graduates and thirteen Brown graduates.

The matriculating class at Yale is demographically diverse. 46 states are represented, with 38 percent of students from the Northeast. 22 foreign countries are represented, including Cameroon and Ukraine. 42 percent of the student body is female. Nine percent of the class is Asian, eight percent African American, two percent LatinoAmerican, and one percent Native American. The average age of the entering student is 24, ranging from 20 to 44. A very high percentage of the student body remains to receive a law degree, with only one percent withdrawing after the first year for academic or personal reasons. The faculty consists of 59 full-time instructors and 34 part-time instructors, thirteen of whom are women. The ratio of full-time faculty to full-time students in an average class is one to ten.

The total yearly bill at Yale Law School is \$19,780, not including necessary expenses such as books, food, housing,

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Courtesy of Yale University

etc. Admission is need-blind, and according to the Law School bulletin, "the average financial aid award places the students' net costs below that of other schools with high tuition". Approximately two-thirds of the student body receive some form of need-based financial assistance. Living accommodations for a limited number of students are available in the Law School dormitories, at an annual rental fee of \$2,830 to \$3,480 per academic year. The University assists in locating housing for married students and others who cannot

be accommodated in the dormitories.

To earn the Juris Doctor degree (J.D.), candidates must complete 82 total credits, 19 of which are for required courses. First-years are required to take courses in Constitutional Law, Contracts, Procedure, and Torts. Each student is assigned to a seminar of not more than seventeen in one of these subjects. The only requirements after the first term are Criminal Law and Administration I, to be taken before graduation, three units of supervised analytic writing, and a substantial paper of at least two units of

credit. Students register for no fewer than twelve and no more than sixteen units of credit in any term. In addition to the regular programs leading to a J.D., Yale has a number of special programs. These include the Master of Studies in Law, the Master of Laws, the Doctor of the Science of Law, and a number of joint degrees, such as the Juris Doctor/Master of Arts in religion, the Juris Doctor/Master of Public and Private Management, and the Juris Doctor/Master of Philosophy.

The Law Library has over 800,000 volumes and microform equivalents housed in the Law School, including a separate

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Foreign and International Law Annex connected to the Law School building. At the end of each semester, the library is open twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

Student organizations include the Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Law Students' Association, Project SAT, which conducts an SAT prep course for financially needy New Haven public school students, and the Yale Federalist Society, which provides the Law School with a forum for discussing conservative and libertarian ideas. Publications include the Yale Law Journal, the Yale Journal of Law and Feminism, the Journal of International Law, and the Yale Law and Policy Review.

Placement services are available through a specialized law school placement center. This center employs a staff that provides comprehensive services and educational programs for the students. Virtually all Yale Law graduates have their choice of jobs when they graduate. Of the 95 percent of the class of 1992 who reported their employment, 42 percent took judicial clerkships, 44 percent took jobs with private law firms or business organizations, eleven percent took public interest or government jobs,

and three percent took academic jobs, fellowships, and miscellaneous positions. Virtually all first and second-year law students who seek summer legal employment accept jobs in law firms, the government, or public interest organizations. The average starting salary range for 1991 graduates was \$35,000 to \$85,000.

New Haven has more to offer than just Yale, though the University does dominate the city. The University has responded to the problems of urban crime with more thorough security measures. There are many diverse ethnic restaurants, and New Haven is the birth place of both the hamburger and the American pizza. New Haven has institutions such as the famous Toad's Place, where bands such as the Rolling Stones have been known to hold impromptu concerts, the low-key Daily Caffe, and the Shubert Theater, once considered the testing ground for new Broadway plays. New Haven is an inexpensive two hour train ride from New York City and a mere 3 hour train ride from Boston.

Unfortunately, law students hardly ever get to enjoy any of these offerings. When I asked one student about social life at Yale, he just laughed darkly before a wave of melancholy passed over his face. Few law school students anywhere choose going to law school for its social life, and Yale is no exception. Some law

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students complain of "cabin fever", feeling cooped up in the one little Law building all three years. Others note that University social activities are aimed primarily at undergraduates, but most law students are a serious, purposeful group of people who never lose track of their main reason for being in New Haven: to receive what is possibly the finest legal education in the world.

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