

A LEGAL EDUCATION APPLIED TO COACHING COLLEGE FOOTBALL

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I. INTRODUCTION

In 1983, I received a letter in the mail that would have an enormous impact on my life: my letter of acceptance from Pepperdine University School of Law. My wife, Sharon, and I were newlyweds, living in Wyoming, saving every penny we could. To make ends meet, we both worked at a fireworks store, and I held down a second job at a local hotel. After we decided to make the trip out to California and start a new journey in our lives, we packed up our Subaru with everything we owned—our 19” television, a run-down stereo, pots and pans, an alarm clock, school supplies, wedding gifts, and our clothes.

We arrived in California excited but nervous at the prospect of settling down in a new city. We started looking for a place to live with nothing to go on but the phonebook. It was getting late, and because I was still waiting for my student loans to arrive, we had to stay in a seedy motel in a bad neighborhood. We had no problems getting started the next morning

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due to police sirens that were kind enough to make sure we were up on time.

We spent our second day in Los Angeles much like the first, looking for a place to live. Fortunately, I remembered that my friend, Russ, lived in the area and might be able to help out. I was able to get a hold of him on the first try. Russ said that his parents were gone for the summer and we could stay with him. This was the first of many fortunate events that got us through tough times.

We stayed at Russ's for a week while we continued to drive our overstuffed Subaru looking for a home. We eventually found a delightful little apartment in a stucco building in the middle of the barrio. Our foldout couch doubled as the master bedroom, crickets chirped all day, bars covered the window, and we had a beautiful view of the concrete hole called the L.A. River, which seldom had water in it.

Despite all my problems, I felt fortunate to go to law school. I looked forward to a promising future. I soon decided that after I graduated, I would not only work to fix my own problems, but I would work hard to help others fix their problems. I have found that by coaching young student-athletes, I can help them to fix their problems, achieve their goals, and grow into the best people they can possibly be. Even though many years have passed since I received my Juris Doctorate, my law school education continues to have a tremendous impact on my abilities as a successful college football coach.

II. THE LAW SCHOOL YEARS: LESSONS LEARNED

After finally settling into our new home, it was time to begin law school. I will always remember Professor Faw's address to the first-year class at orientation. He said that a law student does not receive a degree in case or rule memorization. Instead, law students learn how to apply a variety of facts and a certain amount of precedent to solve a problem.¹ A law degree is a degree in problem solving. My Juris Doctor has helped me solve a number of the problems I have faced throughout my coaching career.

A. The Culture Shock of Being a First Year Law Student

Pepperdine University is a beautiful school overlooking the ocean in Malibu, California. Looking back on my memories of Pepperdine when I first arrived, the image reminds me of an episode of *Baywatch*. The image is so compelling; I am not surprised that eventually someone made a lot of

1. See STEPHANIE GOOD, LAW SCHOOL 101: HOW TO SUCCEED IN YOUR FIRST YEAR OF LAW SCHOOL AND BEYOND 190 (Sphinx Publishing 2009) (2004).

money by creating that TV series. After a short period of time as a first-year law student, it became apparent to me that all law schools are the same on the inside, regardless of how they appear on the outside.

Pepperdine had great facilities, nice people, and a great view of the Pacific Ocean. But once inside the classroom, it was the same as any other law school: incredibly competitive. I dealt with people that were smart, ruthless, idealistic, noble, and morally deficient. Regardless of my classmates' personal character, all were very capable students and everyone wanted to achieve a high status in the highly charged academic environment. The talent in a law school can be intimidating if you are not careful. The nature of the classes was also intimidating as well as overwhelming. We were bulldozed by a pile of information, more than I thought anyone could master. It was challenging, fascinating, boring, and tedious all at the same time. The environment created a sense of guarded solidarity among fellow students, despite our varied walks of life.

I was the youngest in my law school class with the exception of another fellow from Michigan State named Kurt. I had a unique background for Southern California because I grew up in Cody, Wyoming, a town with a population of approximately 6,000. I graduated college when I was only twenty-two years old. Kurt and I would ask fellow students how old they were to find someone younger, but we never did. Despite our youth and enthusiasm, we quickly developed a high level of respect for age and treachery. We soon discovered that everyone was smart and competitive and that some people were willing to go to nefarious depths in pursuit of class rank. For instance, students would sometimes work together on an outline all semester only to discover that the other students had kept the good stuff for themselves to keep a competitive advantage.

Looking back, the application process for law school taught me many lessons that apply to football. For instance, medical school is harder to get into than law school.² Once you enter medical school, however, they try to keep you there and help you work through any adversity.³ Law school, on the other hand, handles things like we do in college football. We select the best and the brightest athletes, and then we try to run them off the day we get them on campus. This was precisely my experience in law school. Both law school and college football view it as important to harden and

2. Compare American Association of Medical Colleges, <http://www.aamc.org/data/facts/2008/2008summary2.htm> (last visited Aug. 29, 2009) (detailing national acceptance rates to medical schools), with Law School Admissions Council, <http://www.lsac.org/Applying/lsac-volume-summary.asp> (last visited Aug. 29, 2009) (detailing national acceptance rates to law schools). American medical schools accepted approximately 45% of applicants in 2008. American Association of Medical Colleges, *supra* note 2. Law schools, however, accepted almost 67% of applicants in the same year. Law School Admissions Council, *supra* note 2.

3. See Stephen B. Shanfield & Andrew H. Benjamin, *Psychiatric Distress in Law Students*, 35 J. LEGAL EDUC. 65, 69 (1985) ("Law school appears to be less nurturant of students than medical school.").

battle test your charges the best you can before you turn them out into the real world.⁴ We recruit and select only the best of the high school and junior college athletes we can find, get them on the team, and then we try to cut them. Coaches feel it is better to learn lessons from within rather than out on the street. I believe there is something solid to this kind of thinking. If you are going to represent someone in the most trying times in their life, and be their advocate, then you should be someone who has the toughness to act on their behalf. I certainly think that from a mental and emotional standpoint, law school is a great way to prepare for this level of cutthroat preparation.

B. The Futility of Pennoyer and the Lessons Learned from Recitation

Once inside the classroom, I quickly learned another lesson from our recitation of cases in class. In law school, after you read your cases, you come to class and the professor stands you up and makes you recite the case. The game the professor plays is that the student talks and the professor cuts them off. The professor picks an issue in the case for them to elaborate on and watches them struggle through a series of interruptions or hypothetical situations that may or may not be relevant. One of the ultimate rites of passage that comes to mind, and I suspect this is the case for most, is *Pennoyer v. Neff*, a case covered in first-year Civil Procedure.⁵ The probative value of *Pennoyer* is questionable to anybody that is truly honest with themselves.⁶

In my class, the unlucky student called upon to recite *Pennoyer* was brutalized from beginning to end. When the student finished, the professor said in a rather sinister tone, "Sit down, Mr. Smith. Call your parents and tell them that there is very little chance of you ever successfully becoming an attorney. However, I understand there are openings for assistant managers at McDonald's." This was said in front of approximately ninety people. Everybody in the class will always remember the poor individual picked to recite *Pennoyer*. I suspect this may overshadow anything else he would ever accomplish.

Another case I remember during my first year of law school was *Western Union Telegraph Co. v. Hill* from torts class.⁷ In that case, an apparently attractive woman comes into a clock repair shop needing her clock repaired.⁸ The proprietor of the shop makes all kinds of lurid

4. See GOOD, *supra* note 1, at 15.

5. See generally *Pennoyer v. Neff*, 95 U.S. 714 (1877) (leading civil procedure case that all first-year law students have to endure).

6. See Terry S. Kogan, *A Neo-Federalist Tale of Personal Jurisdiction*, 63 S. CAL. L. REV. 257, 257-58 (1990).

7. See generally *W. Union Tel. Co. v. Hill*, 67 F.2d 487 (5th Cir. 1933) (infamous torts case).

8. See *id.* at 487.

comments to the woman along the lines of, "I'll fix your clock honey," and "I'll be happy to clean your clock anytime."⁹ The professor called on a student who was not one of my favorite classmates. He was a very uptight individual who wore sweaters and argyle socks and took himself far too seriously. I was delighted when he was selected to recite the case. The student proceeded to go through a bunch of "P v. D" rhetoric: "P walks into D's place of business and D says, 'I will fix your clock,' and P takes offense to D's statement." The professor had an incredibly bored expression on his face. He hung his head down and moved it around in a dramatic fashion and suddenly burst out in a loud tone: "You have managed to take some fairly exciting facts and make them incredibly booooooring!"

Situations like the one above, and many others, made me learn that in law school, life, and college football not everyone is going to like you. Law school was good preparation for going on the road in the Big 12 Conference and playing Texas A&M in College Station, the University of Texas in Austin, and the University of Oklahoma in Norman. I embraced reciting cases if I was prepared, because I enjoyed the give and take with the professor. I was not particularly concerned with offending someone. This was tough for some fellow students, however, and I know several that quit. Certain individuals could not deal with having to stand up in front of people to recite a case, not to mention handle the combative nature of the comments and questions from the professor and fellow students.

The most difficult professor in regard to case recitation was a contracts professor who was visiting from Harvard. She said it was too over the top for people to stand up in front of the class. They needed to relax, learn a little, and enjoy law school. Despite the fact that students did not have to stand up in her class, she was by far the most formidable professor when it came to reciting cases. It was great preparation for going into hostile stadiums and environments, whether it be fans, media, or opposing teams, and having to deal with adversity and points of view contrary to mine.

C. Heated Discussions and Missing Books: How Law School Teaches You to Deal with a Hostile Environment

Outside of the classroom, law school conversations can get very heated among law students, especially among first-year students. Every day at lunch I would either sit inside or go out on the patio. Students were arguing feverishly about everything from business, to sports, to politics, to what neighborhood was best to live in. First, you are inundated with law all the time, and it gets to a point where it is all you can think about. There is a kind of mental wrestling match going on constantly as you get your arms around the concepts and express yourself verbally and in writing. Shortly

9. *See id.*

into the first year, you can scream and yell at each other and then happily go to lunch together afterwards. After a couple of months, you start to assume everyone will feel and think your way, but this is not necessarily the case. The rest of society is not necessarily prepared to have heated arguments and then go off and be friends afterwards. I learned this lesson the hard way during an awkward discussion with my father-in-law.

After I got married, we ate at my in-laws' house fairly frequently. My father-in-law was a college professor who thought he enjoyed vigorous discussions at the dinner table. Being in the middle of my first year of law school, it was impossible for me, or any other first-year student, to avoid any level of debate or discussion. My father-in-law enjoyed playing the devil's advocate to the women in his life, which included my mother-in-law, my wife, and my wife's sisters. The topic of discussion during one particular meal was the superiority of the Japanese culture over the American one. My father-in-law cited several examples for his argument: their cars were better, their employees exercised at work, they had a tremendous level of enthusiasm, and although they made less money, they were a far more efficient culture than the Americans due to the fact that they were able to live on less. After making several points that I thought were valid, such as high suicide rates in Japan, the fact that my father-in-law hated exercise, and the only car manufacturing they led us in was small cars, he began to get a little upset. Like a lot of first-year students, I did not know when to stop. I pointed out, after the discussion started to wind down, that if Japan was so superior and if he liked it better than the United States, then he was welcome to pack up and move to Japan where I felt he would be much happier.

Over the process of discussions like these, you discover that you need to be able to control your emotions. Attorneys need to be able to control their emotions in the heat of battle, whether verbal or matching wits, just like a coach needs to control his emotions on a football field. Law school was a good training ground for me to learn to control my emotions in pressure situations.

Outside the classroom, things remained intense and competitive in more than just our conversations with each other. Our assignments required specific books and cases, but shortly after the professor gave us the assignment these books would mysteriously end up missing. It is clear that these books were not missing for legitimate reasons; obviously, some ruthless individuals felt by taking and hiding the books they could undercut their competition and disrupt their classmates' ability to work on the assignment. In these instances, I would drive to UCLA's Law Library and use the books there, where the students did not have the same assignments we had at Pepperdine. Other times, we would have to walk around our library until we found the missing books. Once, I found a number of the books sitting in an individual's carrel, hidden under his backpack in a coat.

Needless to say, I made sure everyone knew who the culprit was that hid the books. I hoped to pay back the thief and intimidate any others with the same idea.

Just like college football, and anything else in life, it takes a certain amount of treachery and adaptation to be successful. In the world of recruiting top-quality athletes you are sometimes the victim of misinformation and sabotage. You need the ability to react to the situation and educate individuals. This ability will allow you to put your best foot forward and help the student-athlete make the best decision he can about the program that is right for him.

D. Moot Court: The Adversary Process in Law and in College Football

Law school's idea of extracurricular activities is mock trial and moot court competitions; basically, another way for us to prove ourselves against our fellow students. I participated in moot court, which is another part of legal training in which the students simulate an argument before a court of appeals. For my first competition, I did not have a real nice suit, but I figured there is a certain amount of flamboyance in being a litigator. Therefore, some of my fellow students talked me into taking a more casual, mountain-west approach to my apparel. I decided to wear jeans with a casual sport jacket and a cowboy hat. So in my jeans, tweed coat, and cowboy hat, I gave my moot court presentation. I was a good legal writer and I was confident in my ability to win. My partner and I were pretty sharp guys with sound arguments. I felt our logical reasoning would be so compelling that the judges would rule in our favor. I could not have been more wrong.

At the end of the moot court competition, the judges gave their critique. Some were professors, and some were attorneys and actual judges in the community. They critiqued us on how they felt we did on our overall presentation, so I sat there waiting on my evaluation. I felt good about the brief we wrote, our arguments, and that everything was overwhelmingly leaning in our direction. As I sat there smugly, the two judges began their critique with, "Mr. Leach, first your dress." They proceeded to go item by item down each article of clothing I wore and concluded by saying that they did not appreciate my lack of respect for the legal system. They did not address any of the arguments we presented or any fine points we made in our brief. It was then I realized that when you are addressing an audience, the message is only good if the audience receives it. After the lecture on dress in moot court competitions, it dawned on me that I could have the best thoughts and ideas in the world, but if they are not properly received, I am not doing myself or anyone any good. If you want to inspire student-athletes or talk to donors, you must present the message in a manner that will best reach your intended audience.

E. Negotiations: Finding a Way to Win

My favorite class in law school was negotiations.¹⁰ Not only did I learn a great deal during the course, but I also earned a high grade. The class was structured so there were two sides to a problem, one side for the plaintiff and one for the defendant. Sometimes we worked as teams, sometimes as individuals, but overall, what we were really doing was negotiating for a grade. We had a certain amount of time—a few minutes, a few hours, or an entire week—to go out and try to negotiate a resolution to the problem presented. If you got the most for your side, you got an A on your assignment. If you got the least, then you received a C, and no law student wanted a C.

One of our mock negotiations that I still remember today was a scenario involving a fake prison riot. The prisoners took over a prison because they wanted better conditions and had taken a number of trustees hostage who were on a tour of the prison. In the scenario, the Governor's office and the media were situated outside the prison walls. My opponent in the mock negotiations represented the Governor's office, and I represented the prisoners.

The Governor's office obviously wanted the hostages released, but my clients wanted better conditions, which included better clothing, more televisions, better meals, and more conjugal visits. We went back and forth for several hours, with my side demanding this many more televisions, and their side insisting they can only give that many televisions. Their position was that prisoners who are in for murder should not get conjugal visits, and my clients insisted upon the visits for every prisoner and on and on. Finally I said, "Listen, I will give you everything you want, but if we accept this, the prisoners are going to cut off body parts and throw them over the prison wall, where they will land at the feet of the media." My opponent said, "Ok, we will give you twenty-five television sets, but we will not give you fifty." I responded, "That is going to cost you one set of genitals and two hands and the prisoners will throw them over the wall and they will land at the feet of the press, and you can explain it." My opponent pointed out the unreasonableness of my clients' threats. I pointed out that my clients were not reasonable, that is why they were in prison in the first place.

At this point, my frustrated opponent insisted that the prisoners cannot threaten to cut off body parts to gain leverage. I continued to fight on and argued for my clients' position for more conjugal visits and television sets. Finally, after pointing out that the media would be unable to resist taking camera footage of the gruesome scene, my opponent began to give in to my

10. See, e.g., Donald G. Gifford, *A Context-Based Theory of Strategy Selection in Legal Negotiation*, 46 OHIO ST. L.J. 41, 42-45 (1985); Chris Guthrie, *Using Bargaining for Advantage in Law School Negotiation Courses*, 16 OHIO ST. J. ON DISP. RESOL. 219, 219-21 (2000).

client's demands. In the end, we prevailed and got what we wanted, namely superior meals and unlimited conjugal visits. The lesson I learned here is that situations in a negotiation setting are constantly changing. You have to find ways to adapt to those situations by finding your opponent's weaknesses and addressing them on the move.

Another lesson that I learned during negotiations that proved useful in coaching football is to get people to relax and get them talking when negotiations begin. When a recruit comes into my office with his arms folded, I sometimes perform magic tricks to get him talking. I pull out a deck of cards and sit down with him. This allows a recruit to relax and helps with opening up a line of communication. As the recruiting process goes on, the perceived lack of time is what forces a decision, because people will not act until they must. I show the recruit that his opportunity may be taken away and given to another recruit. But it's important to never promise a recruit anything you cannot deliver or bad mouth the competition. The recruit also deals with the competition, and what you say can turn around and bite you in the end.

In both the legal and athletic fields, the ultimate objective is to find a way to win. Law students are not only concerned with gaining practical knowledge and experience, but also want to find a way to win by getting the best grade they can and ultimately the job they want. To win at law school, a first-year student soon learns that when the final exams are graded, you better have done everything you can to earn a high ranking in your class. Likewise, a football team learns to win when the coach and his players begin to work together and develop chemistry. I am not saying you should disregard the rules and win at all costs, but if you learn how to win, and give your best efforts, you may end up winning a game that you otherwise should have lost.

F. Achieving Success: Preparing for Exams and Preparing for Your Opponents

When it came to exams in law school, we spent an entire semester studying difficult, complicated concepts among some of the smartest people in the country. Then, at the end of the semester, we would take a test that lasted three hours. This test was the total evaluation of our semester experience and was our one opportunity to exhibit what we learned from an entire semester of studying. The results of those three long, but seemingly short, hours would be the total determination of our final grade.

Law school exams were almost always in essay form, and the professors designed the questions so that it was impossible to cover all of the material. I do not remember taking any exam in which, after reading the question and writing my answer as quickly as I could for the full length of the exam, I was ever able to cover all of the material in the time allowed.

By the end of the exam, I always had a lot more that I wished to say but had to do the best with the time I had.

Like law school, trials and football require you to study material and take exams when there is insufficient time. The first step you have to take to succeed at law and football is to identify the source of conflict that you have to attack. Once you have identified this source, you have to make strategic decisions that will best feature your position. After that, you put your head down and fight as hard as you can without looking up. In the end, if you made good choices, utilized your time wisely, and then battled feverishly, your chances of success are good. As much as we all disliked law school exams, some of the parallels I have described here have helped me in my career as a football coach.

Law school exams put you in a position where you have to make choices on what materials and issues are going to best exhibit your knowledge and understanding of that class. The failure to select the material that best exemplifies your knowledge of the subject within the three hour time limit will result in a bad grade. You cannot cover everything, but the key is to cover as many of the important things as you can and hope you did a better job than your fellow law students. This is very similar to the structure of preparations for a college football game.

Our team begins the week on Sunday by studying the material, which is the video of our next opponent. While reviewing the material, we will identify more tendencies, schemes, and techniques than we could ever possibly address. The challenge is to select the qualities of our opponent that best match our scheme and techniques so we can quickly put together a game plan and begin practicing it no later than Tuesday. We practice our game plan as specifically and precisely as we can all week long. On Saturday, we try to execute that game plan and feature our best material during the limited playing time. If we are sufficiently prepared and execute the plan efficiently and effectively, our chances of winning increase substantially.

III. LOVING THE LAW

It is also important in the midst of all the intensity, energy, effort, fascination, gratification, drudgery, and boredom of law school that you maintain perspective. It is easy to let the constraints of law school get out of hand. As a result of these challenges, you see people develop drinking, gambling, drug, and marriage problems due to the level of intensity that goes along with the experience. When I was in law school, as kind of a battle cry when things got tough, we would chant "I love law!" to one another. Your fellow classmate may respond, "You got to love the law!" Unfortunately, the chant was not enough to prevent some individuals from breaking down under the pressure.

There was a rather extreme case concerning a fellow law student, whom I will call John Doe. John was a very uptight, intense, and driven law student who reminded me of Clark Kent. He was dating a wealthy female student who was an heiress to a prominent business. The heiress, who was quite easygoing, eventually broke up with him. Perhaps because of the break-up and the stress of school, John ended up running naked down the Pacific Coast Highway during rush hour yelling "I love law!" Rumor has it that he eventually ended up in a mental institution in New Jersey. If you are overdriven and do not keep life in perspective, then you will have a difficult time being fully effective and can end up like John Doe.

I never felt I would end up like John Doe, but like a lot of young people, I struggled with what I wanted to do, what I was meant to do, and what I would do in the future. To procrastinate going up to my carrel to study, I sat in front of the library and read the sports page from cover to cover and sometimes read books by Gerry Spence.¹¹ At the time, Gerry Spence was a trial attorney who epitomized what I hoped to achieve by going to law school. I wanted to be a torts attorney and fight for the little man against corporations and insurance companies and to somehow make a difference. I wanted to impact our society in a positive way because of principle, not just money. I was an idealist and pretty much always have been. Gerry was from Wyoming and we had even lived in some of the same towns. I felt like I related to his background and was hoping to achieve some of the things he personified.

I once wrote him a letter which said something to the effect of the following:

Dear Mr. Spence: You are at the top of your field in law and have accomplished what I would like to achieve. You are doing what I went to school for. Was it worth it? Do you love law? Do you hate law? If you had it to do over again would you? Are there any changes you would have made in regards to pursuing law?¹²

To my surprise, Gerry Spence took the time to write back:

Yes I love law. Yes I hate law. But, most importantly, I am consumed by law. I think about it all the time and yes, I would do

11. See Gerry Spence: An Attorney for Justice and Freedom, <http://www.gerryspence.com/index2.html> (last visited Sept. 7, 2009). Gerry Spence is a nationally recognized trial attorney from Wyoming. *Id.* Among other achievements, he has published sixteen books and has been instrumental in several high profile trials. *Id.* He has never lost a criminal case, has not lost a civil case since 1969, and has more multimillion dollar verdicts without an intervening loss than any other attorney in the United States. *Id.* He also founded the Trial Lawyers College, where he implemented a revolutionary method for training trial attorneys, in an effort to equip the next generation of attorneys with the tools to continue his fight for the ordinary citizens and the abolition of the death penalty. *Id.*

12. Letter from Mike Leach, Head Football Coach, Texas Tech University, to Gerry Spence, Founder, Trial Lawyers College (on file with author).

the same thing again because it is fulfilling to do something you are consumed with. If you are consumed by law go be an attorney. If you are not, find something else.¹³

This was not an earth-shattering moment for me, but it made a good point. It suggested that I carefully consider what exactly consumed me. I think a good definition of what a person is consumed with is what you think about when no one is around. What you think about going from the sofa to the refrigerator. What you think about when filling your car at the gas station. I thought about law some, but mostly I thought about sports, football in particular. One thing I knew was that when I got out of law school at the ripe old age of twenty-five, I had a strong resistance to the idea of putting on a suit, sitting in an office every day, and strictly doing paperwork. Initially, I wanted to do something different than law and take time to see the world. I wanted to do some other things so that I could proceed into my ultimate career as an attorney with as few regrets as possible. There was never a time, however, when I thought I would not eventually become a lawyer.

When I graduated from law school, I was married, had a child, was broke, and owed the government \$38,000 in student loans.¹⁴ Therefore, the notion of going to Europe to find myself for a year was basically out of the question. Feeling lost, I did what a lot of professional students do: I decided to get another degree. I went to the United States Sports Academy, took out another student loan, and obtained a master's degree in sports science. I had always been interested in coaching and did not want to grow old wishing that I had tried coaching for a while. Wanting to get this out of my system, I decided to coach football for a couple of years at most and then settle down to practice law. Ultimately, one year led to the next, and I'm still coaching.

IV. THE ROAD TO TEXAS TECH

The year I began coaching was the year they limited the number of graduate assistants each team could have at Division I schools. It was impossible for me to get a job as a graduate assistant for a Division I football team. The high schools did not want me either because I did not have the teaching credentials. During my first year as a coach, I made \$3,000 at Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo, California, which was a Division II school. I substituted for a local school district in the off-season to make

13. Letter from Gerry Spence, Founder, Trial Lawyers College, to Mike Leach, Head Football Coach, Texas Tech University (on file with author).

14. See American Bar Association Statistics, <http://www.abanet.org/legaled/statistics/charts/stats%20-%202020.pdf>. According to the American Bar Association, law students in 2007-08 averaged approximately \$71,436 in student loans for public schools and \$91,506 for private schools. *Id.*

ends meet. My wife also worked various jobs so we could support our family. My next job was at College of the Desert, a junior college in Palm Desert, California. I made \$12,000 a year and substituted in the off-season as well.

Later on, I became the head coach for a semi-pro team in Pori, Finland, where our expenses were paid, but I did not really make a salary. After that, I became the offensive coordinator at Iowa Wesleyan, a National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) school in Mt. Pleasant, Iowa. My first year there I made \$10,000, moving up to \$28,000 during my third and last year. Next, I was the offensive coordinator at Valdosta State University, a Division II school in Valdosta, Georgia. There I made between \$33,000 and \$45,000.

Eventually, bills started piling up and creditors were after me. Fortunately, with my wife and I both working full-time, we got by. During this time, student loans were due; to solve this dilemma, I went to school part-time to defer my loans until I could afford to pay them. In total, I remained at Valdosta State University for five years.

It was not until I became the offensive coordinator at the University of Kentucky when I finally decided that coaching football was what I was going to do with my life. One thing that gave me strength and confidence throughout these difficult times was the fact that I had already been through something that was equally demanding—law school. Law school hardens you for demanding tasks. You quickly learn that in life there will be few things you are presented with that present the kind of challenge you face while in law school. Knowing this provided me a certain amount of fortification during hard times.

The teams I have coached in the last couple of years have had three main goals. First, we have to be a team, which I think is most important. Regardless of the field you work in, it is important to utilize all the resources you have and work together with the people around you to accomplish as much as possible. Second, we have to be the most excited team to play. I do not think anyone is truly effective unless they are excited about what they are doing. Third, we have to be the best at doing our job. In a team setting all jobs are important. I have asked my teams in the past to tell me what is the most important part of a car. Some players say the engine, some say the steering wheel, and others say the carburetor. Then I ask them if they would be able to drive a car without the lug nuts. Items that are easily overlooked to a lawyer or a football team can prove to be extremely important. In law, it can be a case, a record of something, or a law clerk. In the case of football, it can be a scout player, a manager, or an assistant strength coach.

As far as teams that I have coached, the best ones are those with focused players. It is easy to get distracted and try to worry about too many things. I try to keep my team focused on the three goals, because if they are

focused, our chance of success is at its best. I have a sign above my office door that reads: "You are either coaching it or allowing it to happen." It is important, no matter what you do, for you take personal accountability for the results of your team, because that puts you in the best position to achieve your goals.

V. CONCLUSION

At our first-year law school orientation, I remember the Dean addressing the class, "You are the elite and will go on to do great things. Look around. It is hard to see now, but people here will go on to do great things. They will be the leaders of our society and perhaps our country." When I look back at everything I have done in my life, earning my law degree remains one of my proudest accomplishments. The best description of a law degree is that it is a degree in problem solving. There are a lot of problems in the world right now. Find the problems you are passionate about and go solve them.