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Message to Young Lawyers
by **Tod Aronovitz**

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How fitting it is that I am writing this message on the day that bar exam results came out. I received e-mails expressing excitement, enthusiasm, and relief from two recent law grads after getting the “good news.” I have known these young lions since they were in grade school. They were bursting with pride and enthusiasm. You see, I am devoting this President’s Page to our young lawyers—the lawyers to be, the recent grads, and the young professionals of less than 10 years’ experience.

As Bar president, I have the opportunity to travel the state speaking to young lawyers one on one, to small groups, and to large audiences. One of my greatest responsibilities as president is to offer guidance to the young of our valued profession. My speeches to law students, graduation ceremonies, and new inductee ceremonies are carefully crafted to focus on the history of our profession, guidance for emerging careers, and a strong dose of encouragement.

My advice to young lawyers today is offered from the perspective of a 28-year veteran trial lawyer who recognizes that you will be molded by your life’s experiences as well as the hard knocks that you will encounter as your careers unfold. Words from the past are informative. In 1959, Florida Supreme Court Justice Campbell Thornal commented at the Supreme Court induction ceremony for new admittees:

If you have the notion that from the moment you leave this building your pathway will be paved with gold; if to you the practice of law is simply a process of money-gathering, then I suggest that you quietly take your leave and devote your energies to some other pursuit more nearly consistent with your requirements.

For those engulfed in a current job search, in the post-World War II era our state universities offered special “catch up” courses for veterans and the GI Bill was a great boost to funding education. In 1946, Associate Supreme Court Justice Armstead Brown addressed recent law grads on “Some Unfinished Business”:

In this thrilling period of the history of the world and of our own country, there are many subjects which we might talk about and think about today, but we, as lawyers and judges here in Florida, must not be diverted from our duties here at home for the advancement and improvement of our profession and of the statutes and rules governing the practice and procedure in our courts of justice. In this we can count upon those splendid young lawyers who have gloriously served our country during this second and we hope the last world war, and now are rapidly returning to the ranks of our profession. There is always a period of some difficulty and confusion that follows in the wake of a great war, and we shall need the courage and vision of these fine young men, whom, with thankfulness in our hearts, we welcome back with so much pride to help us in solving post-war problems.

These young men of America, of all classes and creeds, who bore the brunt in this great struggle, have set a glorious example of patriotism, courage, and fortitude.

Yes, "courage" and "vision" are great attributes as you commence your career. You are also welcomed to your Florida legal career by Juliet Roulhac, the dynamic president of the Young Lawyers Division of The Florida Bar. She and her Board of Governors focus their energy on you, your start as a Florida lawyer, and programs and services that assist you. The YLD addresses important young lawyer issues like quality of life issues; unreasonable hourly billing requirements; professionalism; and how to bridge the gap from law student to new lawyer. Juliet and her board lead by example. They balance family life, careers, social consciousness, and a healthy dose of enjoyment of life. A visit to www.flayld.org is vital to a Florida young lawyer's starting out process. My colleagues of 25-plus years' experience and I offer a good road map to the young of our profession. My message to you is clear: "THE PRACTICE OF LAW IS WHAT YOU MAKE OF IT!" Go for it! Set your standards high! Really high! On a personal note, 10-20-30 years from now, don't ever say "I should have done this!" Yes, set your goals. Always maintain a balance of striving for achievement and achieving your own personal satisfaction. Maintaining that balance is vitally important. As I observe my lifelong lawyer friends, some have grown dissatisfied with their careers, some are rejuvenated by new mid-life goals, and some have achieved wealth and national reputations at the expense of a meaningful family life. Many have maintained that balance and are enthused by new challenges and changes in the law.

To you, I comment that there are few other professions that offer as much opportunity for a personally rewarding career and an opportunity to impact the lives of others.

Remember: "The practice of law is what you make of it!"

I responded to the e-mails of my young friends by saying: "Great news! You earned the right to be called 'lawyer.' I wish you a long, fruitful, and successful legal career. You have all the tools to succeed. Now, go knock 'em dead."