Reflections on Law School

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In the spring of 1988, I was assumingly grabbed my mail on my way in from work. There was a letter from Rutgers Law School. I went up to my apartment and greeted my sheepdog. Sequestering her on the back porch where she would be safe from violent reactions, I settled onto my couch with this suddenly important envelope. Taking a deep breath as I opened it, I was delighted to find the word “accepted.” Did you save your letter?

In September, we convened at the S.I. Newhouse Center for Law & Justice for orientation. We circulated around meeting some folks, scooping, eating mediocre bagels, and waiting for the program to formally begin. Lew Kerman began by informing us that during the next three years we would not see a movie although we would almost certainly see a psychiatrist. Also, we should remember to eat. So it began.

A few days later, we were learning about the “hairy hand,” and before long we were reading the product of a Learn- ed Hand. This is law school? The semester went slowly, but eventually we were enjoying our first law school holiday: New Year’s Eve and the specter of final exams simply do not mix. This is law school! My experience of the first semester culminated in a property exam. It was a snowy January Friday; my first two calls to the school’s close-line got busy signals, the third was less satisfying. It was, to me, the exam from hell (and our property class didn’t even cover the rule against perpetuities). I looked at the clock with 15 minutes left in the exam and one of three questions completely unanswered.

Well, there were two more New Year’s Eves about like 1988’s. There were plenty more sinking feelings around exams, more often, when looking at the grade postings on the 5th floor. There was even a Saturday tax exam that overlapped with the AFC championship game. And of course there were comings and goings: Justices Rehnquist and O’Connor, Ramsey Clark, Derrick Bell, Joey Johnson, Peter Podino, and a bevy of lovely mirrors came to our school; Vicki Been, Pat Laughlin, the classes of ’89 and ’90, some asbestos, Erin Nardone’s front tooth (during legal writing class), and a large number of student bars all disappeared from the school. New Jersey and Law School: Perfect together!

Like you, I made it. And despite Dean Kerman’s admonitions, I’ve seen quite a few movies and I’ve put on fifteen pounds; I have, however, consumed more than my share of psychological services. But hey, we are law school graduates (that and $1.15 will get you . . . j Just because we’re graduating doesn’t mean our ties to Rutgers Law School are severed. The Alumni Association wants to keep in touch. More importantly, the administration, ever vigilant, will continue to be responsive to our needs; for example, should you become ill during a trial or deposition, call Linda Garbacio at 648-5365. Other ties will endure. Along the way, we’ve each developed some special bonds, with faculty and friends, mentors and drinking buddies. Certainly, when we run into one another in courthouses and professional meetings, we’ll feel something good inside as we silently acknowledge: “Hey, I went to school with you.”