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Comprehensive Analysis of the Different Fields of Law

Kaitlyn Lee

Western Michigan University

June 28, 2024

Abstract

Since American law developed in the early 1700s, lawyers have played a crucial role in society, advocating for justice and upholding the rule of law. Over the years the legal profession has evolved immensely and now offers many different fields for individuals to practice. People are often curious about the work that lawyers do and the education that is required to become an attorney. This thesis aims to satisfy the curiosity of those individuals by exploring many facets of the different areas of law. It will examine the unique and shared aspects of the various legal fields, detailing the specific work that each area requires. Each area of law will be explored in terms of daily tasks, employment opportunities, salary expectations, working hours, career satisfaction, Masters of Law (LL.M.) programs, core courses, and leading institutions for aspiring lawyers. This thesis will allow individuals to compare the different areas of law and gain a greater understanding of each one discretely. Additionally, the section on criminal law will highlight the Innocence Project and the impact that it continues to make, and the opportunities that are available. By providing a comprehensive overview of the current legal profession, this thesis seeks to inform and guide individuals who are interested in a career within the field of law.

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Introduction

The field of law is vast and complex, encompassing a wide variety of specialized paths that cater to the different aspects of the government. It is important for aspiring lawyers to understand the characteristics and significance of the different legal fields. This thesis provides a comprehensive analysis of six critical areas of law including civil law, corporate law, health law, intellectual property law, criminal law, and real estate property law. This study aims to fulfill the curiosities about the work that lawyers do and the education that is required of each attorney.

By examining these six critical areas of law, individuals will develop an understanding of the responsibilities and educational requirements that are mandatory for every lawyer. Insight will be provided into the daily routines that each lawyer completes and the career opportunities associated with each field. The analysis will offer valuable insight into the dynamic world of law and aim to answer questions about the intricacies within each sub-field in the legal system.

Fundamental Requirements for Aspiring Lawyers

The path to becoming a lawyer in Michigan closely mirrors the process in other districts across the United States. Before embarking on the journey to law school, every aspiring lawyer must first earn a bachelor's degree. The next step to becoming a lawyer, which can be undertaken while earning your bachelor's degree, is preparing for and completing the Law School Admission Test (LSAT). This is a standardized test that is administered by the Law School Admission Council (LSAC) and is a crucial part of the law school application (Become a Lawyer in Michigan, 2020). To even be considered as a candidate for law school you must earn at least one hundred and forty points out of the one hundred and eighty points available on the LSAT to be accepted and admitted into law school (Lora, F., 2024).

Upon acceptance into a law school, aspiring lawyers embark on a three-year journey if they are full-time students or no fewer than eighty-three credit hours (How Long is Law School?, 2022). The following courses are tested for the Michigan bar and all Michigan law schools have them in their curriculum: Wills/Trust, Real/Personal Property, Constitutional Law, Contracts, Criminal Law and Procedure, Partnerships/Corporations/Agency, Creditors Rights, Evidence, Practice and Procedure Equity, Torts, Uniform Commercial Code, Michigan Rules of Professional Conduct, Conflicts of Laws, Workers Compensation, and Domestic Relations (Become a Lawyer in Michigan, 2020).

The first year of law school does not allow students as much freedom when choosing courses. According to Michigan Law School, year-one law school students must complete courses in Civil Procedure, Constitutional Law, Contracts, Criminal Law, Torts, and Legal Practice (Degree Requirement, n.d.). At the University of Michigan, it is also required for students to complete the following: (1) take at least one course of two or more credits with a rigorous writing component; (2) one international or comparative law course of two credits or more; (3) one statutory or regulatory course of three credits or more; (4) one course of two credits or more in professional responsibility; and (5) at least two credit hours of experiential learning (Degree Requirements, n.d.). These requirements are fairly similar within most law schools, and those that differ will have their own set of criteria. These standards ensure that students receive all of the essential information during their first year of law school to increase the likelihood of success throughout their legal careers.

After completing three years of law school as a full-time student, the next step is to take the bar exam. Before sitting for the bar exam an individual must pass the Multistate Professional Responsibility Exam (MPRE) with a score of eighty-five or higher (Become a Lawyer in

Michigan, 2020). The Michigan bar exam is a two-day assessment. The first day is dedicated to fifteen state-specific essay questions and the second day will feature the Multistate Bar Exam (MBE), which is a standardized multiple-choice test (Become a Lawyer in Michigan, 2020). After completing the bar exam, candidates typically receive their results within eight weeks. Successful examinees will find their names listed in the Board of Law Examiners section of the Michigan Courts website. The final steps include making an oath to the court, submitting an application for membership in the State Bar of Michigan, and then officially an individual who completes these steps will earn a license to practice law in the state of Michigan (Become a Lawyer in Michigan, 2020).

Master of Laws (LL.M.)

A Master of Law (LL.M.) is a graduate qualification in the field of law. The purpose of an LL.M. is to help lawyers further their knowledge in a specialized area and gain international qualifications, particularly if their law degree was obtained outside of the United States or Canada (LLM Degree Programs, 2024). To pursue an LL.M. in any field of law it is required that a student already has a Juris Doctor (J.D.) degree. Obtaining an LL.M. can potentially expand job opportunities for lawyers by enhancing their education and allowing them to list a second, potentially higher-ranked law school on their resume. It is important to note that not all law schools offer LL.M. programs, and some schools only provide a limited selection of them (LL.M. Degree Programs, 2024). This thesis will explore each field of law and include recommendations for the highest-ranking law schools with the top LL.M. programs for each specified field.

Civil Law

Daily Legal Tasks and Employment

When describing the work done by a lawyer, it is difficult to describe a single daily routine because the scope of responsibilities is so broad. Their work can range from client consultations to courtroom appearances, and various other duties in between. Civil attorneys handle a diverse array of tasks, including various amounts of telephone calls with potential clients and cases. Incoming calls might concern a car wreck, poor surgery outcomes, the abuse of a loved one in a nursing home, and a variety of other situations (A Typical Day for a Civil Litigation Attorney, 2021). Lawyers spend considerable time taking these phone calls related to various cases, talking to insurance adjusters, and consulting with defense attorney's experts (A Typical Day for a Civil Litigation Attorney, 2021). Weekly meetings with new or current clients and other attorneys are the most common interactions for a civil lawyer (A Typical Day for a Civil Litigation Attorney, 2021).

As cases advance through the litigation process, civil lawyers will attend inspections, depositions, hearings, and mediations. Inspections are typically at the beginning of the case process and are in cases where injury has occurred. Depositions are the process in which an attorney will prepare to question the defendant and witnesses regarding subjects related to the case. Depositions are commonly done through videoconference now and can sometimes take up the entirety of the attorney's day because it is a long process (A Typical Day for a Civil Litigation Attorney, 2021). Hearings are the portion of the case that are held by the court and where issues between both parties are addressed (A Typical Day for a Civil Litigation Attorney, 2021). The mediation in a case typically happens at the end of the discovery period, but before

trial, and it offers the parties a chance to resolve the case through settlement (A Typical Day for a Civil Litigation Attorney, 2021).

According to “Bordas and Bordas Law Blog”, another significant part of an attorney’s work consists of responding to emails, reviewing discovery materials, evidence, transcripts from depositions and hearings, reports from experts, and reviewing motions and briefs filed with the court (A Typical Day for a Civil Litigation Attorney, 2021). The final element of a case includes a trial if an agreement cannot be made throughout the mediation. This is not typically a part of a ‘normal’ day for most civil lawyers, as most cases are resolved through settlements and not in trial (A Typical Day for a Civil Litigation Attorney, 2021). Although the majority of cases in civil law do not transition into a trial, lawyers still must be prepared for the possibility of one.

Salary and Hours

As of 2024, civil litigation lawyers in Michigan earn an average salary of \$170,312 or usually between a range of \$148,355 and \$191,685 (Salary.com, n.d.-a). Trial lawyers are considered one of the highest-paid types of attorneys throughout Michigan. In civil cases involving high-profile and high-value litigation, attorneys in Michigan can earn significant incomes (Mixon, B., 2024). As for any profession, salaries vary based on geographic location, the size and reputation of the firm, and their work experience. Attorneys who practice in metropolitan areas tend to have higher salaries. In Michigan metropolitan cities such as Detroit, Grand Rapids, and Ann Arbor usually will offer higher salaries, but the cost of living is typically higher in these areas (Mixon, B., 2024).

Attorneys spend their hours working billable hours and non-billable hours. Billable hours are those that are spent working on a client’s project, and non-billable hours are spent working on administrative tasks like meetings and the completion of training (Billable vs. Non-Billable

Hours..., 2024). Civil lawyers at a medium-sized firm tend to work forty-two to fifty-four hours per week which is about eight to eleven hours per day (Sanders, K., 2023). It is fairly common for attorneys to work on the weekends and after work during the weekdays. The number of hours lawyers work each week depends highly on their caseloads and the firm at which they work.

Civil lawsuits have a wide range of how long they can take to complete a case. Usually, the time length depends on the complexities of each case. In civil cases involving multiple parties, the volume of evidence typically increases, directly influencing the duration of litigation. The amount of evidence that needs to be presented will impact the time it takes for a civil lawsuit in Michigan to be completed (How Long Civil Lawsuits Take to Settle in Michigan, 2024). The statute of limitations for civil litigation is three to ten years depending on the complexity and severity of each case (How Long Civil Lawsuits Take to Settle in Michigan, 2024).

Career Satisfaction

How a civil lawyer feels about their career can be impacted by various factors such as place of work, salary, passions, hours, work-life balance, and various others. According to Rafael Alves, mental health issues in civil litigation have increasingly worsened since COVID-19 (Alves, R., 2021). Law firms in Brazil expect excessive workloads such as two hundred and fifty billable hours per month, and three thousand billable hours per year, which is equivalent to an average yearly amount of over ten billable hours per working day (Alves, R., 2021). These excessive work hours negatively impact the mental and physical health of each civil lawyer. Working conditions such as these are not only in Brazil but also in the United States. Some lawyers practicing in the United States also occasionally work eighty hours per week (Sanders, K., 2023).

Serving as a civil lawyer provides the opportunity to assist individuals in resolving legal disputes that could have been significant life events for clients (Hargrave, E., 2022). Many civil lawyers work with people who have been in car accidents, ranging from minor incidents to traumatic events. They assist individuals in finalizing a divorce, handling occupational injuries, and various other impactful events (Hargrave, E., 2022). Civil attorneys can find a feeling of satisfaction from helping their clients navigate and successfully resolve a wide array of legal disputes, each having unique challenges and experiences.

Advanced Legal Education: LL.M. Programs, Core Courses, and Top Law Schools

The top ten law schools to attend for civil law include Stetson University, Baylor University, Temple University Beasley School of Law, Loyola Marymount University, American University, Chicago Kent College of Law, University of Denver Sturm College of Law, University of the Pacific McGeorge School of Law, Fordham University School of Law, and South Texas College of Law Houston (Top 10 Law Schools: Trial Advocacy, 2024). There is a common misconception that a very high-grade point average (GPA) is needed to get into a law school with a highly respected program. However, the Stenson's University class of 2022 had a median ungraduated GPA of 3.3 and a median LSAT score of 155 (Top 10 Law Schools: Trial Advocacy, 2024). So, if an individual's GPA is not at the top of their class, they should not be discouraged because there are still plenty of excellent opportunities.

The LL.M. guide currently does not have a top ten list for LL.M. programs in civil litigation. Some LL.M programs, such as Cooley Law School have programs that are just in general studies and it allows students to have a wide variety of legal subjects to focus on (Western Michigan University, Cooley Law School LL.M. in General Studies, n.d.). According to "LLMSTUDY.com", the top ten LL.M. programs in American law in the United States include

Yale University Law School, Stanford University Law School, Harvard University Law School, Columbia University Law School, University of Chicago Law School, New York University School of Law, the University of Pennsylvania Penn Carey Law, University of Virginia School of Law, University of California Berkeley Law, and Duke University School of Law (King, C., n.d.-c). Although these law schools are for American law and not civil law, they can still be beneficial to an attorney practicing civil law or aspiring to teach law (King., C, n.d.-c). An LL.M. in American law will provide lawyers with a broader understanding of the legal system in the United States.

Civil lawyers take a wide variety of classes in law school to build a strong education in law and legalese. Essential courses for civil lawyers include trial advocacy classes, moot court, civil procedure evidence, clinics, and alternative dispute resolution classes (Advising, J. D., 2016). Law students who participate in moot court will participate in mock legal trials and proceedings. The hands-on experience in this realm provides an excellent opportunity for law students to argue hypothetical cases and enhance their legal skills.

Corporate Law

Daily Legal Tasks and Employment

Corporate lawyers assist clients with their business affairs to ensure that their company is running efficiently and in compliance with legal standards. A corporate lawyer's responsibilities span from preparing a business's initial article of incorporation to handling a corporate reorganization under the stipulations of federal bankruptcy law (Fields of Law, n.d.). The work that corporate lawyers do daily will vary depending on the corporation that an individual is

representing. The workload of a corporate lawyer in a big law firm will almost always be larger than a lawyer who is working within a smaller law firm.

The majority of corporate lawyers deal with contracts that aid their clients during the decision-making process, and then write, review, and negotiate the contract for the entity (What Do Corporate Lawyers Do?, 2024). These lawyers make decisions that revolve around the formation and governance under which the company operates and the financial well-being of the corporation. They may oversee mergers and acquisitions; the process of merging or when one company purchases another. Corporate lawyers help businesses that struggle with finances and venture capital, which may look like assisting with licensing or creating articles of incorporation. Security is a very important part of a business, so corporate lawyers help to ensure that there is no market manipulation or fraud within the business. They also assist their clients in the registration process with the federal government and prepare reports on stocks and disclosures (What Do Corporate Lawyers Do?, 2024).

According to “Zippia.com”, the projected job growth rate for a corporate lawyer will be ten percent from 2018 to 2028 and about eighty thousand new jobs are projected over the next decade. The most common states throughout the U.S. in which a corporate lawyer might work include the District of Columbia, Washington, Massachusetts, Delaware, California, New York, and Illinois (Corporate Lawyer Trends, n.d.). Of course, this list is not limited, it is only a sample of the states with the highest demand for corporate lawyers. Typically, these attorneys work for a law firm, but employment can also be found at government agencies or as in-house counsel for companies (What Do Corporate Lawyers Do?, 2024). Companies that hire attorneys to provide in-house counsel utilize their services within an internal legal department. Lawyers serving in these roles are typically considered lower-level attorneys in a corporate legal department (In-

House Counsel, n.d.). On the upside, their hours tend to be more realistic, and they serve as a generalist so they can gain a wide range of experience within many fields of law.

Salary and Hours

As for any job, salaries vary based on each role and place of employment. Factors such as location, whether that be city or state, years of experience, education, and references can influence that number. As of 2024, a corporate attorney in Michigan has an average salary of \$107,771, or usually between \$92,532 and \$124,780 (Salary.com, n.d.-b). Corporate attorneys tend to be among the highest-paid lawyers, but this often comes with heavier workloads and longer hours.

According to Joel Fetzer, a distinguished professor of political science at Pepperdine University, individuals should attend a tier-one law school such as an Ivy League Institution. Fetzer says that some associates at top Wall Street law firms can start their legal career as corporate attorneys earning over \$200,000 per year (Corporate Lawyers Trends, 2024). It is generally understood that individuals who attend a more credible law school will have increased chances to earn greater amounts of money and encounter more job opportunities. Of course, that is not to say that a lawyer who attends a lower-tier law school cannot lead a very successful career, both financially and professionally esteemed.

Corporate law is in high demand, and it is known to be a very pressurized field of law. Considering those factors, hours can be long and brutal, which goes for a majority of lawyers in general, depending on their workload and the size of their law firm. It is very common for corporate lawyers to work over their regular business hours and work grueling hours out of the office to meet their client's needs (Do Corporate Lawyers Work Long Hours?..., n.d.) Those who work for a large firm can be expected to work as much as eighty hours a week, which means

dedicating a lot of free time and weekends to clients. It is also common for individuals who work in a smaller legal practice to work well over their standard hours, which can negatively interfere with their personal lives (Do Corporate Lawyers Work Long Hours?..., n.d.).

Career Satisfaction

Corporate law demands profound dedication and commitment to client service, which translates to a significant investment of personal time to ensure their client's needs are fully met. Working such a substantial number of hours can negatively impact one's personal life and well-being (Do Corporate Lawyers Work Long Hours?..., n.d.). Junior lawyers and trainees, in general, can have a hard time adjusting to this workload and find it extra challenging to maintain a work-life balance while adapting to the high demands of practicing corporate law (Do Corporate Lawyers Work Long Hours?..., n.d.).

The high pressure of meeting billable hours and the necessity to work outside of the office often will lead to stress, burnout, and sometimes physical and mental problems (Do Corporate Lawyers Work Long Hours?..., n.d.). Especially for corporate lawyers who are averaging eighty hours per week, it is very important to find a balance of prioritizing personal time outside of work. These factors influence the rates of career satisfaction for each lawyer, and the grueling hours sometimes cause a high turnover rate, especially with many young lawyers.

Advanced Legal Education: LL.M. Programs, Core Courses, and Top Law Schools

According to the LL.M guide, the top ten LL.M. programs for corporate law throughout the world are found at Columbia Law School, Harvard Law School, Stanford Law School, New York University School of Law, University of Cambridge- Faculty of Law, Edinburgh Law School, Singapore Management University, Duke Law School, Fordham University School of Law, and King's College London (Top 10 LL.M. in Corporate Law, n.d.). The demand for

LL.M. programs in corporate law has been higher than usual since the COVID-19 pandemic that started in 2020. Many LL.M. programs adopt an interdisciplinary approach by leveraging expertise from business schools and economic departments (Top 10 LL.Ms in Corporate Law, 2024).

The top ten law schools for corporate lawyers include Sandford University, Columbia University, Harvard University, New York University, University of Chicago University of Pennsylvania, University of California, University of Michigan, University of Virginia, and Yale University (The Best Business/Corporate Law Schools in America, Ranked, 2024). Many of these are highly accredited law schools, so the list of top law schools to attend for any certain kind of lawyer will be similar to those listed above. Attending these prestigious law schools not only provides a top-tier legal education but also enhances opportunities for career prospects.

Corporate law is a complex field requiring a specific skill set and knowledge, so law schools must prepare a prospective attorney with comprehensive training. Detroit Mercy Law School offers the following classes for those aspiring to practice corporate law: Business Organizations, Private Sector Labor Law, Construction Law, Sales, Secured Transactions, Introduction to Corporate and Partnership Tax, Chapter Eleven Bankruptcy and Other Business Restricting Alternatives, Insurance law, International Business Transactions, and Commercial Real Estate (Detroit Mercy Law, 2024). No matter which law school an individual attends to pursue a career in corporate law, there will be a similar list of available courses. The names of the courses may be different, but the content will be very similar. Law schools will vary with many components in their study, and discrepancies exist depending on the institution attended. The material provided at every law school will help educate students with critical information in order to practice law.

Health Law

Daily Legal Tasks and Employment

Health law encompasses a multifaceted array of regulations, statutes, and legal principles that greatly influence the healthcare industry by shaping its practices, standards, and the rights of patients seeking medical care (Fields of Law, n.d.). Healthcare lawyers play many different significant roles throughout the industry to ensure that patients receive the best possible care (What Does a Medical Lawyer Do?, 2024). The primary duties of a medical lawyer revolve around representing their clients and striving to provide the best possible defense in court, particularly in the case of a lawsuit because of a malpractice injury (What Does a Medical Lawyer Do?, 2024). Healthcare lawyers are also responsible for handling lawsuits and claims pertaining to health law, including cases involving regulatory violations, unethical behavior, misdiagnosis, and other acts of negligence or misconduct (What Does a Medical Lawyer Do?, 2024).

The daily work of a health lawyer consists of a wide variety of components and varies depending on the case on which the lawyer is working on. Some standard responsibilities of a medical lawyer include conducting research, collecting evidence, representing and advising clients in court, advising companies and healthcare practitioners, working in government healthcare programs, preserving evidence, and developing policies (What Does a Medical Lawyer Do?, 2024). The primary priority of a health attorney is to guide clients through the complexities of health law and to ensure they are in compliance. Entities in healthcare are subject to many compliance obligations, including those related to telehealth, telemedicine, licensing, healthcare marketing, and many more (Oberheiden, N., 2022).

The primary setting for a healthcare lawyer's practice is typically within a law firm with expertise focusing on health law. However, work opportunities can also be found within a government agency or as in-house counsel for healthcare organizations (Navigating Health Law Careers, n.d.). According to Professor Jacob T. Elberg from Seton Hall Law School, many attorneys have found success working at a wide range of government agencies including the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), the Office of Inspector General (OIG), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and the Attorney General's Office which includes the professional Board Prosecutions Section.

Salary and Hours

According to "The Colleges of Law," healthcare lawyers are not among the top five highest-paid types of attorneys. Although healthcare law is still a crucial field, other legal specializations such as corporate law tend to have higher salaries due to the complexity and demand of the field (The Colleges of Law, 2024). Healthcare attorneys in Michigan make an average salary of \$100,101 or typically a range between \$85,993 and \$115,965 (Salary.com, n.d.-d). The salary normally increases after an individual acquires several years of experience in the legal profession, particularly for those who remain at their positions with a law firm or organization for a longer period.

It is uncommon for full-time lawyers to work the typical forty-hour work week due to the demanding nature of the profession and the unpredictable demands of work regarding clients and caseloads. On average lawyers employed by large firms will work an average of sixty-six hours per week, whereas attorneys who work in small to medium-sized firms will work on average forty-two to fifty-four hours weekly (Sanders, K., 2023). If an individual is employed by a

government agency, they can generally expect to work the standard forty hours per week (Sanders, K., 2023).

Career Satisfaction

The satisfaction of lawyers can be a difficult subject to touch on because it varies from each individual and their passions. In general, for any profession, the more income an individual makes, the more content they are with their life. According to a survey referred to as “The Killingsworth Study,” Professor Killingsworth found that larger incomes were largely correlated with both greater happiness and greater life satisfaction (Jennings, J., 2024). This is a significant assertion, as some people earn barely a livable salary and are still content with their lives. Therefore, this assertion is a simply hypothetical example of a single study that was conducted.

Emily Cook, a health lawyer who was interviewed by “of counsel”, stated that she was satisfied with her field of work. Cook said the following in the interview,

one of the aspects of my job that I really enjoy is the opportunity to work with our clients on solving problems to allow them to carry out their mission in providing health care services. What I find most rewarding is working with providers who have an idea or have a problem they need to solve in order to provide care to their communities, to their patient population (Health Law Pro Builds Upon McDermott’s Strong Track Record in a Dynamic Practice Area., 2021).

This is just one example of a healthcare lawyer who loves her work and all of the rewarding aspects that come along with it.

According to “Juris Education”, lawyers who work in service-oriented practices report a higher sense of well-being. These practice areas include in-house counsel for nonprofit organizations, defending indigent populations, public defense, criminal prosecution, government

agencies, and public policy law (Juris Education, 2023a). The sum of this list shows that those lawyers who feel that they are making a positive impact on people's lives are generally happier.

Advanced Legal Education: LL.M. Programs, Core Courses, and Top Law Schools

Just as for any LL.M. program, the health law LL.M. program helps to train lawyers to apply their specialized legal expertise to improve their skills as health lawyers (National and Global Health Law LL.M., n.d.). The objective of an LL.M. is to refresh and further develop the skills needed to serve in the desired field of law. The goal of helping lawyers improve their skills in a specialized field is mostly constant throughout all of the different law schools, but the way the programs are set up can vary by school.

Georgetown's Health Law LL.M. program is just one of many across the world that specialize in this area of law. Georgetown's Health Law LL.M. program explores the intersections of health and law, such as global health governance, health and human rights, food and drug law, access to health care, and legal interventions to prevent and control infectious and non-communicable diseases (National and Global Health Law LL.M., n.d.). The majority of LL.M. programs require twenty-four credits. Georgetown and other schools offer programs that can be completed by either full or part-time study.

Typically, LL.M programs can be completed in one year for a full-time student and about two years for a part-time student. The requirements to obtain an LL.M. in Health Law at Georgetown Law School are similar to many other schools across the country. They require twenty-four credits with sixteen of them being a specialization credit, the two-credit Global Health Law Course, and a minimum grade point average of a "B" in the sixteen credits that are counted toward the LL.M. specialization requirements (National and Global Health Law LL.M., n.d.).

The top ten LL.M programs in healthcare law in the United States include St. Louis University, Harvard Law School, Georgia State University, Loyola University Chicago, Boston University, University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law, Georgetown University Northeastern University, University of Houston, and Yale Law School (King, C., n.d.-a).

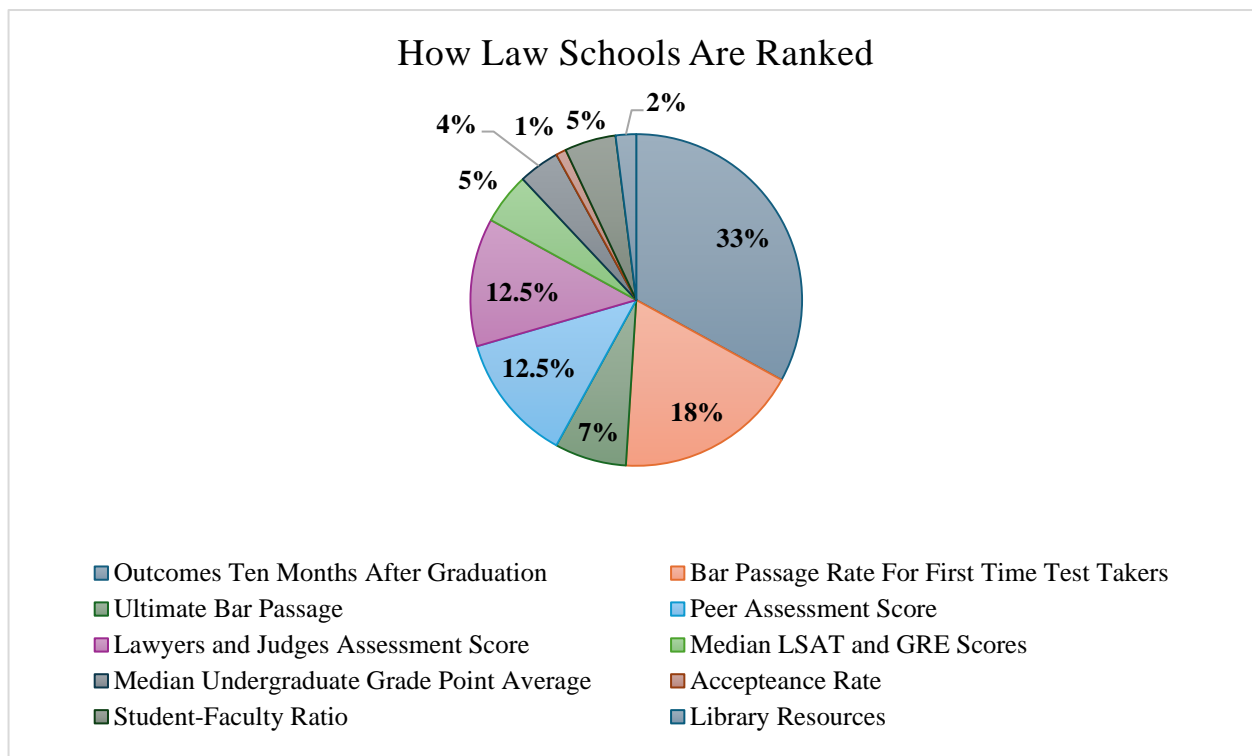
Obtaining an LL.M. at one of these law schools will not only help further an individual's education and knowledge in this specialized field but could also potentially help make finding a job easier. Individuals who have one of the listed schools on their resume can potentially boost their job opportunities, especially for those who attended a lower-ranked law school for their J.D.

The top ten law schools to attend for health law include Georgia State University, Saint Louis University, Boston University, Loyola University Chicago, University of Maryland, Georgetown University, Harvard University, Northeastern University, University of Houston Law Center, and Seton Hall University (Best Health Care Law Programs, 2024). This list is ranked by nine essential pieces with some being more important than others. The ranking standards for all law schools include, by

- outcomes ten months after graduation (33%),
- bar passage rate for first-time test takers (18%),
- ultimate bar passage (7%),
- peer assessment score (12.5%),
- lawyers and judges assessment score (12.5%),
- median LSAT and GRE scores (5%),
- median undergraduate grade point average (4%),
- acceptance rate (1%),
- student-faculty ratio (5%),

- and library resources (2%) (Morse, R, 2024).

Figure 1



Note. The ten key factors that determine law school rankings.

Intellectual Property Law

Daily Legal Tasks and Employment

Intellectual property law is comprised of three main branches including copyright, trademark, and patent law. Copyright law is intended to protect original creations including written work, recordings, and visual artwork. Trademark law safeguards brand names and logos for a company. Patent law is designed to protect inventions and processes (A Day in The Life of an IP Lawyer Forum..., 2006).

Common work for an intellectual property lawyer includes preparing necessary documents for patents or trademarks and collaborating with patent, trademark, and copyright

offices worldwide to obtain the required protections. Intellectual property lawyers may represent a client or organization in cases of intellectual property misuse. This representation can range from sending formal letters asserting ownership of intellectual property and publicly posting that it may not be used without permission to filing lawsuits and potentially going to court if a settlement is not reached (New England Law Boston, 2024).

Intellectual Property (IP) lawyers can find employment in both private and public sectors. An attorney in the private sector would work in a law firm or corporation. In the public sector, an intellectual property lawyer may work for the government and be employed at agencies such as the United States Patent and Trademark Office, the Federal Communication Commission, judicial internships, and clerkships. Additionally, careers in this field of law can be found at colleges and universities, non-profit organizations, and international IP practices (A Guide to Careers in Intellectual Property Law, 2014).

Salary and Hours

Intellectual property attorneys in Michigan make an average salary of \$166,765 and their earnings range between \$151,327 and \$179,477 (Intellectual Property Attorney, 2024). Salaries vary widely due to several factors including, city, educational background (such as the law school attended), years of experience, and professional credentials (LL.M.) (Intellectual Property Attorney, 2024). Intellectual property lawyers are usually among the highest-paid types of lawyers, specifically, patent attorneys having the highest salary (Juris Education, 2024).

Intellectual property lawyers hold their place of being among the highest-paid types of lawyers because they need to acquire very specific knowledge to practice this kind of law (Juris Education, 2023a). They are required to stay up to date on the current state of the music,

entertainment, technology, and science industry. They are constantly required to expand their knowledge to prevent intellectual theft and improve their arguments (Juris Education, 2023a).

Similar to almost all of the different types of lawyers, intellectual property attorneys also normally work longer than the standard forty-hour work week. Over thirty-five percent of intellectual property lawyers who are employed on a salary work for more than fifty hours a week (Intellectual Property Lawyer Job Description, Career as a Intellectual Property Lawyer, Salary...,n.d.). Certain law firms have a minimum billable hour requirement for their lawyers to spend working for their clients. In addition to dedicating the majority of these hours working on their client cases, lawyers must also perform nonbillable work such as traveling, conducting research, and other administrative tasks (Guide to a Lawyer's Average Hours, 2023).

Career Satisfaction

There is often a misconception that practicing intellectual property law will consist of discussing what is copyrightable and what constitutes an inventive step in a patent claim, as these conversations are commonly covered in law school (Mukherjee, R., 2020). Although this is not the case, intellectual property law is still an intriguing field and is more enjoyable when approached with the right expectations (Mukherjee, R., 2020). Many people aspire to practice intellectual property law due to the opportunity to work with stars, icons, and brands. Certainly, this is true as intellectual property lawyers often do work with leading creators and icons who require legal assistance to enforce their branding rights and protect their content (Mukherjee, R., 2020).

Creatively inclined individuals often find an abundance of satisfaction as an intellectual property attorney because of the opportunity to work with art, innovation, and literature. Some lawyers in this field can have the opportunity to watch movies or stand-up comedy to determine

whether the work is original or if a copyright claim can be brought forth (Mukherjee, R., 2020). The intellectual property field gives attorneys a lot of opportunities to work with creative works and individuals.

According to Paul Esatto, a senior partner, he finds satisfaction as an intellectual property attorney because as he says,

it's the best of both worlds, we get to be lawyers, we get to go to court, we get to argue our case, we get to have that competitiveness, yet we get to deal with cutting-edge technologies dealing with companies that are coming up with new drugs and pharmaceuticals and new computers and software so it's a great business to be in (Do You Have Job Satisfaction in IP Law?, 2017).

There is a common trend of attorneys finding high satisfaction in practicing intellectual property law because of the opportunity to collaborate within an innovative field.

Advanced Legal Education: LL.M. Programs, Core Courses, and Top Law Schools

The top ten law schools for an intellectual property lawyer include the University of California- Berkely School of Law, Stanford University, New York University, Santa Clara University, George Washington University, Texas A&M University, University of Houston Law Center, American University, University of New Hampshire, and Yeshiva University (Juris Education, 2023b). To give an idea of the cost of attendance at highly established law schools, the University of California, Berkley, has tuition of \$59,306 a year for residents and \$67,816 a year for non-residents (Juris Education, 2023b). Typically, students who attend a top-ranking intellectual property law school have obtained a GPA between the range of 3.18 and 3.91 throughout the university. For intellectual property law, many universities allow individuals to

concentrate on intellectual property while earning a J.D. and earn a certificate in this type of law, or completing an LL.M. in intellectual property law.

According to the LL.M. guide, the top ten law schools to attend throughout the world for an LL.M. in intellectual property law include Turin School of Development in Italy, George Washington University, University of California Berkley, Stanford University, American University, Texas A&M University, University of Edinburgh, Osgood Professional Development Canada, Santa Clara University, and University of South Africa (Top LL.M. Programs For Intellectual Property..., 2024). The list includes LL.M. programs in the United States and other countries around the world, highlighting the abundance of opportunities in the field of law. Individuals are not only limited to schools in the United States, even if that is where one attends law school.

Criminal Law

Daily Legal Tasks and Employment

According to Anastasia Kranias, a criminal defense attorney at Greenspun Shapiro, she typically begins her day with the court (Kranias, A. T., n.d.). Kranias says,

the fun ends, so to speak, when I enter a small vestibule outside the courtroom and spend time negotiating with prosecutors, pulling cases, statutes, pictures, evaluations, and reports out of large brown folders. If a favorable plea agreement is reached, I go to my client, and watch them breathe a huge sigh of relief. If not, we process to trial that morning (Kranias, A. T., n.d.).

Criminal defense attorneys hope to find a plea agreement because it saves their clients from going to trial and sitting before a jury. After Kranias typically starts her day at court, she returns

to the office to work on other tasks. These include answering phone calls from potential clients, responding to emails, and consulting with her coworkers for advice on her cases (Karnias, 2024).

Kush Arora, who is a criminal defense attorney for Price Benowitz in Maryland says that “there is no such day as a typical day” (Typical Day on The Job, n.d.). According to Arora and his specific firm, Mondays are always very busy because of the number of clients that need help from something that occurred over the weekend. Common clients that they receive after the weekends include driving under the influence charges and other alcohol-related crimes (Typical Day on the Job, n.d.). Similar to Anastasia Kranias, Mr. Arora usually spends a portion of his day in a courtroom and the other part meeting with clients and completing research on legal issues (Typical Day on The Job, n.d.).

Criminal law is an interesting field of law because it encompasses two different roles: the prosecutor and the defense attorney. If an individual becomes a prosecutor, they will represent the people or a person at the local, state, or federal level that are pressing charges against other individuals or corporations (Ebadolahi, M., 2018). In contrast, an individual working as a defense attorney will defend individuals or corporations against criminal charges (Ebadolahi, M., 2018). On one side of the courtroom, the prosecutor argues that the accused is guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. On the other side, the defense attorney asserts that their client is innocent until proven guilty (Ebadolahi, M., 2018).

The type of criminal lawyer an individual decides to become will impact their place of employment. Defense attorneys can either work for a public defender’s office or they can work for a private law firm. Prosecutors will usually work in a local district attorney’s office or for the Federal Department of Justice (Criminal lawyers: About - Vault., n.d.). These kinds of lawyers

almost always will not work for the same law firm because they are going against one another in the courtroom and must keep client confidentiality.

Salary and Hours

Since criminal law has two different sides to it, the prosecuting, and the defense side, the salaries can vary significantly. A criminal lawyer in Michigan makes an average salary of \$102,135 or a range between \$87,990 and \$118,372 (Salary.com., n.d.-c). Whereas a prosecuting lawyer in Michigan makes an average salary of \$68,306 or a range between \$60,690 and \$77,324 (Salary.com, n.d.-f). Salaries for lawyers can vary by state, typically influenced by the costs of living and the demand for the specific type of lawyer in the area.

The biggest reason why defense attorneys make more than prosecuting attorneys is because typically jobs in the private sector will pay more than those in the public sector (Ebadolahi, M., 2018). Criminal lawyers who are working in the public sector are funded by the government, which is why their salaries tend to be quite a bit lower (Thompson, J., 2018). Criminal defense lawyers in a private law firm will typically earn around \$80,000 with five years of experience, while public prosecutors with the same level of experience will earn about \$57,000 (Thompson, J., 2018).

Both types of criminal lawyers, defense attorneys, and prosecutors have considerable workloads. The workload will vary for defense lawyers depending on whether they work for a public defender's office or private practice (Fiore, & Barber, L. L. C., 2023). It is very typical for all the different types of lawyers to work long extended hours and prosecutors are among the lawyers who work these long hours. The caseload and the complexity of their cases have a huge impact on the number of hours a prosecutor will work (The Average Working Hours of a Prosecuting Attorney, 2020). If it is during a time that a prosecutor has a trial upcoming, then

they will need to prepare for the trial which often adds to the normal number of hours that they work each week (The Average Working Hours of a Prosecuting Attorney, 2020).

Prosecutors deal with a wide range of cases, such as misdemeanors all the way to first-degree murders. For a homicide case specifically, prosecutors can expect to spend around one hundred hours preparing for trial, and for a misdemeanor, they will typically spend only two or three hours preparing for trial (The Average Working Hours of a Prosecuting Attorney, 2020). This is just an example of what a prosecuting lawyer can expect, but of course, it will vary from each case. Since prosecutors are employed by the state, local, or federal government, they are paid on an eight-hour workday. They will normally work about ten to thirty hours of overtime every week but will not receive overtime pay since they are employed by the government (The Average Working Hours of a Prosecuting Attorney, 2020).

Criminal defense attorneys can also expect to work long hours as sometimes certain attorneys will represent fifty or more clients at once (How Many Hours do Criminal Defence Lawyers Work on Average?, n.d.). Criminal defense lawyers can expect to work over the typical forty-hour work week, but hours will vary depending on their caseload and the specific cases that they are working on. Defense attorneys will meet with their clients multiple times to keep them informed, and they will be required to visit jails to meet with those who are detained there (How Many Hours do Criminal Defence Lawyers Work on Average?”, n.d.).

Career Satisfaction

Satisfaction varies among individuals based on their drives and devotion to their workplace. Anastasia Kranias says,

I enjoy the challenge of trying to win, the success in mitigating damage, and absolutely love watching the faces and hearing the gratitude of clients who end up in a better place

than when they first called. As a criminal defense attorney, I have the opportunity to help people every day, and I like it (Kranias, A. T., n.d.)

For criminal defense attorneys, the satisfaction they find in their jobs often stems from the joy of helping others.

According to a survey done in 2014 that was conducted across four states, the feeling of competence and connections to others is significantly more important for lawyer's happiness than their income (ABA Journal, 2014). This survey revealed that lawyers employed by private criminal defense firms reported the lowest levels of happiness. Interestingly, the survey found that lawyers in prestige jobs who had the highest incomes were not as satisfied as lawyers working for the public sector, despite earning a lower income (ABA Journal, 2014). Prestigious roles include those in large firms with over one hundred lawyers, specializing in areas such as corporate law, tax law, and securities law. Public service lawyers, on the other hand, include public defenders, prosecutors, government lawyers, and in-house lawyers for nonprofits (ABA Journal, 2014). Additionally, the survey found that judges experience the highest levels of happiness in their careers within the legal profession (ABA Journal, 2014).

Advanced Legal Education: LL.M. Programs, Core Courses, and Top Law Schools

The top ten law schools to attend for an individual aspiring to practice criminal law include Harvard Law School, Yale Law School, Stanford Law School, Columbia Law School, New York University School of Law, University of Virginia School of Law, Georgetown Law, Northwestern Pritzker School of Law, University of Michigan Law, and University of California Berkeley Law School (The Top 10 Law Schools for Criminal Law, 2024). Certain classes that Harvard Law School offers specific to criminal law, among many other schools that offer these courses include Capital Punishment in America, Criminal Procedure: Investigations,

Crimmigration: The Intersection of Criminal Law and Immigration Law, International Criminal Law, and Laying and the Law of Questioning (The Top 10 Law Schools for Criminal Law, 2024).

The top ten LL.M. programs specializing in criminal law closely mirror the top ten law schools for individuals interested in pursuing a career in criminal law. The top ten LL.Ms for criminal law include New York University, Stanford University, Harvard University, University of California Berkeley, Georgetown University, Columbia University, Duke University, Yale University, University of Pennsylvania, and the University of Virginia (King, C., n.d.-b). Each of the following schools offers a mix of shared and different modules in their LL.M. programs focusing on criminal law. For instance, Harvard University has modules on criminal law that include Corruption and Anticorruption, Criminal Justice: Defense and Practice, Crimmigration, and Racial Justice and the Law (King, C., n.d.-b).

Innocence Project

The Innocence Project was founded in 1992 by Carry C. Scheck and Peter J. Neufeld at the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law at Yeshiva University (Our Work, 2022). According to the Innocence Projects website, it is a project that “works to free the innocent, prevent wrongful convictions, and create fair, compassionate, and equitable systems of justice for everyone” (Our Work, 2022). The Innocence Project has a variety of departments including Communications, Data Science and Research, Development, Executive Finance, Human Resources, Information Technology, Intake, Network Support Unit, Policy, Post-conviction Litigation, Social Work, and Strategic Litigation (Our Work, 2022).

Currently, the Innocence Project only has two job listings available on its website. One of them is the Director of Post-Conviction Litigation and the qualifications for this specific job include the following:

- an attorney with active licenses,
- a minimum of fifteen years of trial and/or appellate experience in criminal law is required,
- at least five years of post-conviction and/or innocence litigation expertise,
- highly sophisticated understanding of the criminal legal system,
- skilled manager with at least five years of experience supervising lawyers and non-legal staff in a criminal defense practice and managing budgets,
- and must be legally authorized to work in the United States (Our Work, 2022).

The Innocence Project is an Equal Opportunity Employer, and they highly value the diversity of their workplace and find that it helps improve the success of their organization (Our Work, 2022).

The Innocence Project is located in an office in New York City so to work for them it is required to be local to the area. They also offer volunteer opportunities within their office in New York City and at organizations that are affiliated with the Innocence Project that are all over the world (Our Work, 2022). The places in Michigan that are affiliated with the Innocence Project include the Cooley Law School Innocence Project, the Michigan Innocence Clinic, and the Michigan State Appellate Defender Office (Innocence Network, n.d.). The Innocence Project website allows visitors to donate to support the organization and sign petitions aimed at freeing wrongly convicted individuals from incarceration or death row. Petitions are also advocating for

causes such as ending racial injustice and making police disciplinary records public in Oregon (Our Work, 2022).

The Innocence Project has helped free more than two hundred and forty innocent people from prison and is continuing its hard work and dedication to continue to free individuals who have been wrongly convicted (Our Work, 2022). They have discovered that cases reflect the disproportionate impact of wrongful convictions highly on Black people in the United States, with fifty-eight percent of wrongly convicted individuals being Black, thirty-three percent of individuals being white, and eight percent of individuals being Latinx (Our Work, 2022). Since 1973, one hundred ninety-nine former death row prisoners have been exonerated of all charges that had them on death row that they were wrongfully convicted of (Innocence, 2017). The Innocence Project offers a significant job or volunteer opportunity for individuals passionate about restoring the freedom of those unjustly incarcerated.

Real Estate Law

Daily Legal Tasks and Employment

Real estate lawyers help their clients throughout the process of buying, selling, and developing real property for productive use (Real Estate Law, n.d.-a). Real estate attorneys can expect to have the following duties daily,

- drafting legal papers for real estate transactions such as leases and mortgages,
- handling large-scale real-estate portfolios with all of the legal nuances that are different for each property,
- assessing legal risk in real estate documentation paperwork,
- perform litigation of any real property transactions,

- contract expertise in property management, purchases, and sales,
- monitor legal risk on behalf and for their clients,
- and interpreting real estate laws, rulings, and regulations (Real Estate Attorney, 2019).

Each day will not look the same for a real estate attorney and they will have to complete the different responsibilities depending on the specific case.

According to “Lawcrossing.com” a typical day for a real estate attorney will vary significantly but often it will consist of reviewing legal documents, attending meetings with clients, property research, and negotiating terms of transactions (Mundin, F., 2024). Real estate lawyers rarely appear in court because the majority of their work is transactional and it does not require courtroom involvement. The primary goal is to prevent legal issues that could potentially lead to litigation (Mundin, F., 2024).

Employment opportunities for real estate attorneys fluctuate with the state of the economy, but they remain in demand during both financial expansions and market downturns (Kowaraki, I., 2021). According to attorney Berkey, a partner with the Gallet Dreyer and Berkey law firm in New York, when people work in this profession they will be working in both good and bad economic times so it is a daily recession-proof job (Kowaraski, I., 2021). Real estate lawyers can specialize to mainly work either in residential or commercial real estate, but they also have the flexibility to serve a mix of clients (Kowarski, I., 2021). Individuals who specialize as real estate lawyers have the ability to become residential real estate lawyers, commercial real estate lawyers, land use and zoning lawyers, real estate litigation attorneys, or environmental law specialists (Mundin, F., 2024).

Salary and Hours

Real estate attorneys in Michigan typically make an average of \$162,658 or a range between \$141,845 and \$180,176 (Salary.com, n.d.-e). The average salary range for a real estate attorney depends on many factors such as location, the type of firm at which they are employed, and years of experience (Incredible Lawyer, 2024). Salaries typically correlate with the size of the law firm. Larger firms usually offer higher salaries for individuals, while smaller and mid-sized law firms tend to offer lower compensation (Incredible Lawyer, 2024).

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the median annual wage for all lawyers was \$126,930 as of May 2020 and the average salary of a real estate lawyer in Michigan is \$162,658 as of 2024 (Incredible Lawyer, 2024). Given these facts, real estate lawyers earned more than the average lawyer did in 2020. This may be attributed to the specific knowledge and expertise required for real estate attorneys (Incredible Lawyer, 2024).

According to Robert Diamond, a real estate attorney in McLean, Virginia, the question of “how many hours do real estate lawyers work each week?” is impossible to answer definitively. Diamond explains that while some lawyers choose to work the standard forty-hour work week, others will face higher pressure from the firm to extend their work into nights and weekends (How Many Hours Do Real Estate Lawyers Work Each Week? - Legal Answers, n.d.). Throughout his career as a real estate attorney, Diamond has experienced months of working forty-hour work weeks and others where he was averaging eighty hours a week (How Many Hours Do Real Estate Lawyers Work Each Week? - Legal Answers, n.d.). He also notes that real estate law is similar to other practice areas, and success will depend on what an individual is willing to put into it (How Many Hours Do Real Estate Lawyers Work Each Week? - Legal Answers, n.d.).

Career Satisfaction

Satisfaction for real estate attorneys can come from helping their clients through one of the most crucial transactions in their lives, tackling the cognitive challenges of complex legal problems, and potentially achieving a financially successful career (Mundin, F., 2024). Real estate law is one of the five legal paths that individuals choose to have a healthy sense of balance within their profession. This field of law, along with estate planning law and intellectual property rights, is known to be the least stressful (Juris Education, 2023b).

According to an article written by Paula Davis in “Forbes” magazine, there are three unexpected pathways that bring lawyers happiness. According to Davis, a lawyer’s happiness is correlated with their autonomy, mastery, and relatedness (Davis, P., 2017). Davis explains, “Lawyers are like everyone else in terms of what they need to feel satisfied and happy at work, but their training can interfere with their capacity to meet these needs of autonomy, connection, and mastery” (Davis, P., 2017). She notes that since lawyers often have to think through their cases and decisions as pessimistic it can be difficult to switch off that mindset, especially after an extra long workday (Davis, P., 2017).

Advanced Legal Education: LL.M. Programs, Core Courses, and Top Law Schools

The top ten law schools for a real estate lawyer include Fordham University School of Law, University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School, Columbia Law School, Stanford Law School, Harvard Law School, University of Chicago Law School, University of California, Los Angeles School of Law, Georgetown University Law Center, Northwestern Pritzker School of Law, and University of Michigan Law School (The Top 10 Law Schools for Real Estate Law, 2024). When choosing a law school some important factors to consider include specialization, faculty expertise, curriculum, experiential learning opportunities, networking opportunities,

reputation, alumni success, and location (The Top 10 Law Schools for Real Estate Law, 2024). It is important to consider location, especially for real estate law, because the real estate market and industry hubs vary by state. Choosing a law school in a state with a strong real estate market can be advantageous (The Top 10 Law Schools for Real Estate Law, 2024).

An LL.M. in real estate law is highly beneficial for lawyers, as the real estate market represents the largest asset class in the world (Top LL.M. Programs for Real Estate..., 2023). The top ten law schools with the best LL.M. programs for real estate law include the University of Miami School of Law, Emory University, University of Notre Dame Law School, University of Chicago John Marshall Law School, University of Southern California- USC Gould School of Law, University of York-York Law School, Chapman University-Fowler School of Law, University of Salford, Golden Gate University, and Fordham University School of Law (Top LL.M. Programs For Real Estate..., 2023). Choosing an LL.M. in real estate law will provide students with opportunities to find employment in key areas such as real estate development, finance, investment, transactions, and drafting and reforming the legal rules governing real estate markets (Top LL.M. Programs for Real Estate..., 2023).

Law schools offer an abundance of courses that will be beneficial to aspiring real estate lawyers. At the University of Wisconsin-Madison Law School, these include Real Estate Transactions, Taxation, Advanced Legal Writing, Business Organizations, Land Use, Secured Transactions, Negotiation/Mediation, and Selected Problems in Land Law (University of Wisconsin Law School, n.d.). To further their education after law school and expand their job opportunities, an individual might pursue an LL.M. in real estate law. The LL.M. program at Fordham University Law School requires a minimum of twenty-four credits, including twelve credits of Specialization Distribution Courses. Essential courses in this program include Real

Estate Finance and Real Estate Transactions (Real Estate Law, n.d.-b). Other law schools and LL.M. programs will have similar curricula but may also have differences. These specialized courses help further prepare students with key principles relating to real estate law.

Conclusion

Throughout this thesis, we have examined the intricate fields of law and the parallelism and discrepancies among six critical fields including civil law, corporate law, health law, intellectual property law, criminal law, and real estate law. This analysis provided insight into what each lawyer can expect for daily legal tasks, potential employment opportunities, expected salaries, typical hours working, career satisfaction, highest-ranked law schools, highest-ranked Master of Law programs, and core classes. This study has responded to curiosities about the work that lawyers do and the education that is required to become an attorney.

Choosing the right field of law and understanding the academic requirements can be intimidating for aspiring lawyers. Insight is provided for those who often wonder which field of law is the best fit for them and what academic materials will be required. Law schools will offer a comprehensive curriculum that incorporates both required classes and electives, allowing students to acquire a strong background in legal principles and analytical skills. While most full-time students will complete law school in three years, the American Bar Association mandates that all accredited law schools require students to complete a minimum of eighty-three credit hours for students to graduate.

The legal field has continuously evolved since its formation in the early 1700s, adapting to technological advancements and societal changes. This thesis not only explores the revolution of the legal profession but also provides insight into the more recently developed Innocence Project. Founded in 1992, the Innocence Project's mission is to reform the legal system by

exonerating individuals who have been wrongly incarcerated, including those placed on death row. The Innocence Project highlights the efforts of society to implement critical changes in the criminal justice system and offers an excellent opportunity for aspiring lawyers to get involved.

This thesis exemplifies the role of law schools and focuses on the importance of choosing the correct law school for an individual's career passions and personal interests. It is important to weigh the options when deciding which law school is ideal for an individual, as this could potentially impact available career opportunities. While the curriculum at the majority of law schools throughout the United States will have similar materials, the quality of education will vary between institutions. Therefore, prospective students must thoroughly research and consider all of their potential options before making a decision on the law school they attend.

Ultimately, those aspiring to become lawyers must prepare to dedicate themselves to lifelong learning and a devotion to the legal system. After completing law school, passing the bar exam, making an oath to the court, and submitting an application for membership in the State Bar of Michigan, newly qualified attorneys can officially begin their legal career in the state. As they embark on their professional careers, these attorneys will hold a crucial role in the legal profession and the responsibilities associated with the integrity and evolution of the legal system.

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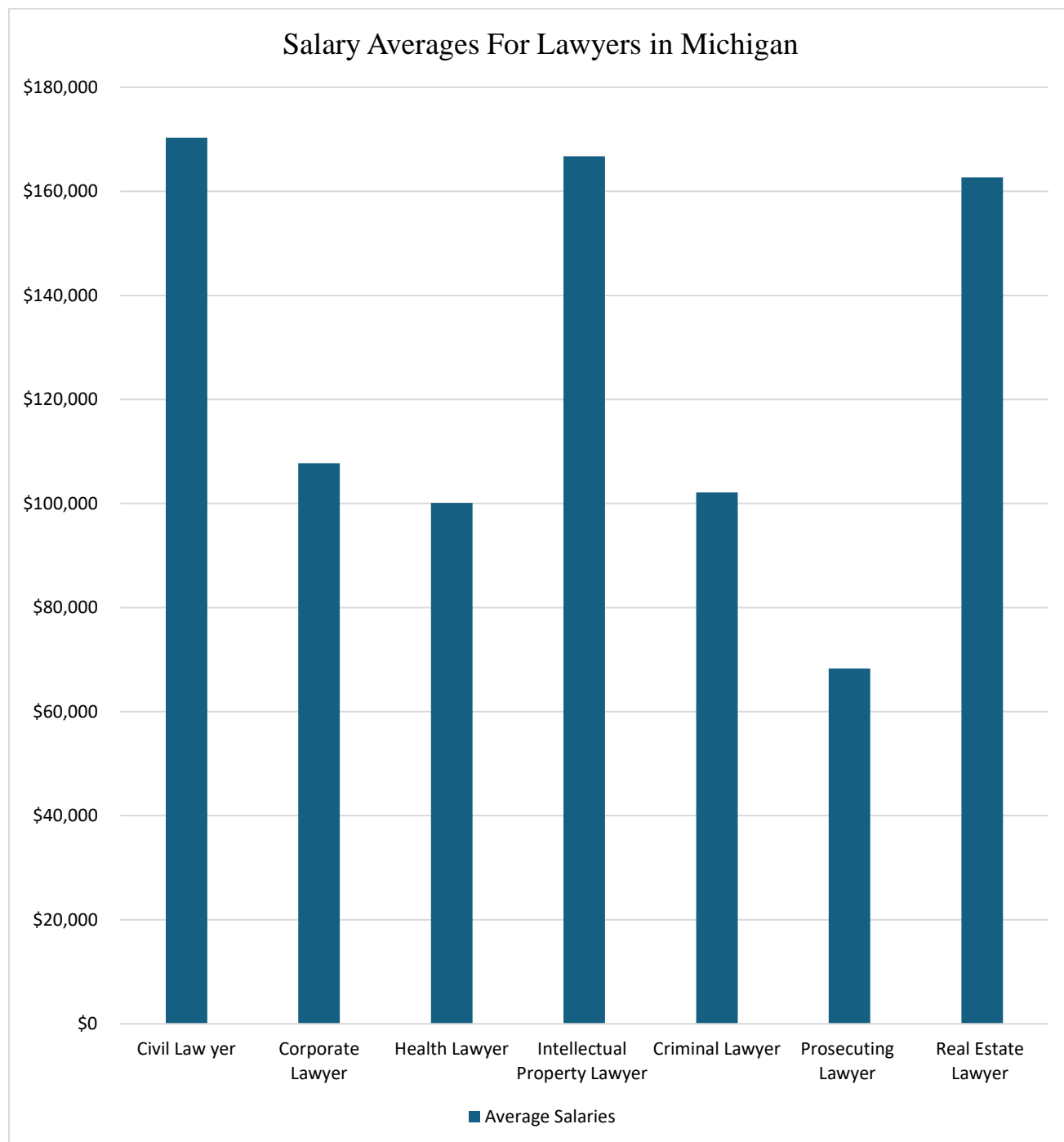
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Appendix

Figure 2



Note. Bar graph showing the average salary in Michigan for each field of law discussed (Salary.com, n.d).

Figure 3

Best Masters of Law Programs Ranked #1-10						
Rankings	American Law	Corporate Law	Health Law	Intellectual Property Law	Criminal Law	Real Estate Law
1	Yale University Law School	Columbia University	St. Louis University	Turin School of Development, Italy	New York University	University of Miami School of Law
2	Stanford University	Harvard University	Harvard University	George Washington University	Stanford University	University of Notre Dame Law School
3	Harvard University	Stanford University	Georgia State University	University of California-Berkeley	Harvard University	Emory University
4	Columbia University Law School	New York University	Loyola University Chicago	Stanford University	University of California Berkeley	University of Chicago John Marshall Law School
5	University of Chicago Law School	University of Cambridge	Boston University	American University	Georgetown University	University of Southern California-Gould School of Law
6	New York University School of Law	University of Edinburgh	University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law	Texas A&M University	Columbia University	University of York
7	University of Pennsylvania-Penn Carey Law	Singapore Management University	Georgetown University	University of Edinburgh	University of Pennsylvania	Chapman University-Fowler
8	University of Virginia School of Law	Duke University	Northeastern University	Osgoode Professional Development, Canada	University of Virginia	University of Salford
9	University of California Berkeley Law	Fordham University	University of Houston	Santa Clara University	Yale University	Fordham University
10	Duke University School of Law	King's College London	Yale Law School	University of South Africa	Duke University	Golden Gate University

Note. The table represents the top ten LL.M. programs for each field of law, ranked one through ten (Find Master of Laws, n.d.).