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ESSAY COMPILATION BOOK HELPS LAW SCHOOL GRADS CONQUER INFAMOUS BAR EXAM

Houston, TX -- At this time of year, thousands of law students around the country are getting ready to graduate from law school with their prestigious and hard-earned Doctor of Jurisprudence (J.D.) degrees. Although this is a time of great celebration marking the end of three to four grueling years of difficult study, it will be short-lived because for those who plan to practice law, they will have to sit for the infamous bar examination at the end of July and begin bar review preparation classes soon. The bar exam is a standardized test, administered by each state's board of law examiners, which will determine whether or not a law school graduate has demonstrated the minimum competence to become a practicing lawyer and full member of the legal profession. It is notorious in that law grads generally have only a few months of all-consuming, intensive studying in which to master a mountain of detailed and comprehensive material before they face this one and a half to three day exam – considered by many as a required “rite of passage” into the fraternity of lawyers.

It can be safely assumed that almost anyone who can successfully complete the tough law school curriculum at an American Bar Association-approved law school has the basic legal foundation, analytical and critical thinking skills, writing ability, and work ethic necessary to pass a bar exam. However, every year thousands of law school graduates will fail the bar exam. Based on published bar admission statistics released by the National Conference of Bar Examiners since 1995, between 30% to 40% of all bar takers failed the bar on their first try. Statistics indicate that chances of passing decrease in subsequent attempts with between 57% to 67% of repeaters failing. There are many common reasons given as to why bar takers don't pass including inadequate preparation and practice on actual test questions, working during the study period, and not having taken enough of the courses that will appear on a particular state's bar exam during their law school years. For many first-generation and minority law school graduates, a part of the problem is a societal and self-imposed psychological disadvantage. Many face this exam with a strong fear of failure, a lack of a true understanding that the bar exam is different from law school exams and of the excessive amount of sacrifice and sweat required to endure this mental marathon, as well as a weakening of their confidence somewhere during the course, all which serve to undermine their efforts. These factors, outside of focused academic preparation, may be

responsible for some not racking up enough points needed to succeed on an exam that they are otherwise capable of passing.

Although there are many substantive bar exam preparation courses and materials widely available, Evangeline M. Mitchell, editor of the new book *Conquering the Bar Exam: Personal Stories & Practical Advice for Overcoming the Final Hurdle to Becoming a Full-Fledged Licensed Lawyer (Insight for First-Generation and Minority Law Students and Graduates)*, felt there was a need for a different type of book beyond those that provide the black letter law and examples of how to attack certain types of questions. She felt there needed to be a book with contributions from real people with a deeper human element. *Conquering the Bar Exam*, intended to be read before grads embark upon their bar exam preparation, contains essays written by practicing lawyers, judges, deans, law professors, and law school administrators throughout the country, who share their personal stories and candid advice as to what they did and what needs to be done to victoriously get through the rigorous bar exam study period and the tremendously stress-filled days of actually taking the exam.

Mitchell states, “There are lots of wonderful and useful resources out there. Yet I couldn’t find books which offer the needed encouragement and proper perspective many need to succeed. Many first-generation and/or minority law students may not have friends or family members who’ve gone through anything like this before, so they may not fully understand what it takes or receive the very necessary support during the critical preparation and test-taking periods that will put them over the top. Additionally, they may be stifled by the negative statistics floating around and fearful that they too will become another statistic.”

“This essay compilation shows them that there are many people, who have been successful on the bar exam and are leading fulfilling careers, who were once where they are and felt what they are feeling. Some have had to overcome failure to then come back to retake the exam with the right attitude and approach - and then succeed. A common thread in almost all of the essays featured are that the authors stress the great importance of believing in oneself, possessing a positive mindset, and especially knowing oneself. It is crucial for anyone taking on the bar exam to take the initiative to follow not only proven methods and strategies as to what works, but to also figure out what will work for them on an individual level. You can’t necessarily follow what everyone else is doing and think that a cookie cutter approach is the recipe for success. You may have to do much more than others or do things a bit differently. Ultimately, that individual is responsible for his or her own success on the bar exam.”

“This type of valuable insight can make a huge difference and be the confidence booster many need to evaluate what they must do personally, to help keep them going during the race, and to lead them to conquering this very challenging and overwhelming, yet doable exam. I hope these essays resonate with readers because every lawyer who wrote a piece that appears in the book wants future bar takers to know that if they did it, then it can definitely be done.”

Conquering the Bar Exam features essays from over 30 diverse lawyers across the United States representing 18 different jurisdictions where the bar exam was taken. As bar exam passage will continue to be the difference between one’s ability to practice and not practice law even after earning his or her law degree, a book like this serves a special inspirational and practical purpose for those with dreams of becoming attorneys who may feel the odds are stacked against them.

If you know a law student, a recent law graduate, or someone struggling to pass the bar, their reading the lessons learned and sage advice included in this volume could help them jump this last taxing, yet significant hurdle to becoming a licensed attorney. For more information, please visit www.hopespromisepublishing.org.

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