The education students receive at law school isn't so focused that becoming an attorney is the only career option. In fact, 12 percent of Maryland law school graduates hold executive positions at leading and multinational corporations. For the following 10 alumni, a common thread unites their diverse professions: they do not practice law. From a commercial airline pilot to advertising media supervisor to legal suspense novelist—they all found a way to build their dreams through law school.
DENNIS DUBOIS

When Dennis DuBois left the University of Massachusetts for the School of Law, he didn’t intend to practice law. He didn’t intend to become executive vice president and managing director for the Southwest region for Prentiss Properties Trust, a Dallas-based real estate development and management firm with more than $1.2 billion dollars in assets. But law school and legal practice led DuBois to the high-stakes business of real estate investment. “When I started law school, I told people that I’d never practice law,” says DuBois, with a slight New England accent. For him, law school would teach him to think and act like a lawyer. “I wanted the discipline and training that law school could give me.” It was DuBois’ internship at Weinberg and Green and clerkship for chief Maryland federal Judge Edward Northrup that made him realize practicing law wouldn’t be so bad. Upon graduating from Maryland in 1971, DuBois threw himself into practice at Weinberg and Green as an associate, working in real estate development. He left Weinberg and Green 10 years later, having become a partner and worked on major real estate developments in downtown Baltimore, such as the C&P Building and the Equitable Bank Center.

DuBois was lured to Dallas to work as general counsel for the firm managing the U.S. holdings of Cadillac Fairview, one of the world’s largest real estate developers. Six years later, DuBois was part of a group that bought the U.S. holdings of Cadillac Fairview. In 1996, that group created the Prentiss Properties Trust, a real estate investment trust traded on the New York Stock Exchange. DuBois not only structured real estate transactions, but took the time to learn the business. “I still use my abilities and talents as a lawyer, but I don’t have to stay up all night drafting the words. It’s the best of both worlds.” Today DuBois buys, builds, leases and operates office and industrial space in Texas, Colorado and throughout the Southwestern United States.

ANDREA ROSE MOLETTE

Making presentations before corporations such as Dewars Scotch, Fruit of the Loom, and Service

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Merchandise can be a little like presenting an argument in moot court, says Andrea Rose Molette, a 1995 graduate who is media supervisor for Leo Burnett, U.S.A., one of the world’s major advertising companies. Molette advises companies on how and where to spend their advertising dollars. Just like moot court judges, the companies ask pointed questions on how the media buyer reaches her conclusions. “I remember getting up to speak in moot court. That takes the edge off presenting today. It’s not as hostile as moot court and that’s a good thing.” Molette came to Maryland with a bachelor’s degree in political science and a minor in philosophy from Spelman College in Atlanta. She decided to go to law school for the valuable training she thought it would provide, though she never had a driving passion to practice law. In the summer of her second year of law school, Molette worked for a small advertising agency and gained experience in public relations. The following year, discovering she could take nine non-legal graduate credits toward her law degree, Molette took three classes in the University of Baltimore’s advertising program. The classes confirmed Molette’s desire to find work in advertising. “The advertising industry is not as conservative as most law firms and I wanted to be in an atmosphere of creativity.”

HANAN SIBEL

Hanan Sibel is a natural salesman. To make his way through college, he sold everything from Fuller Brushes to insecticides. After graduating from the University of Maryland, College Park with a degree in English, Sibel served in the U.S. Army during the Korean War. When he was discharged, he took advantage of the G.I. Bill and enrolled in law school. “I thought it would be great training. It taught me to think logically and to reason through issues,” says Sibel, now chief executive officer of MAI Chaimson, a major Baltimore food brokerage that represents national companies by selling, servicing and marketing their products. After graduating from law school in 1958, Sibel’s father-in-law offered him a sales position in the firm; since then, he has risen through the ranks to become the CEO, seeing the firm grow from 10 employees to 200 over the years and picking up some $800 million in annual sales. Though he hasn’t practiced law, Sibel says he uses those skills every day in certain aspects of his business.

LAURA BLACK

When Laura Black accepted her first legal job as an associate at Whiteford, Taylor & Preston, she never intended to leave. “I loved the law. I loved law school.” As notes and comments editor of the Maryland Law Review and Order of the Coif graduate, Black worked hard to make a legal career. Once practicing, however, she became disenchanted with the time demands. “Deadlines are set outside yourself. Everything is controlled by the system and an associate has little control,” Black says. Thirty-five years old at the time, Black says she was not motivated to climb the legal career ladder. “Legal practice did not challenge all of my skills, and the carrot—partnership—was not sufficient to keep me tied in.” Black left the larger traditional law firm track, not knowing what she would do next. “That’s when I had the idea of hiring myself out as a contract lawyer. I found myself very busy,” she says. Law school friend and Maryland Law Review colleague Mark Neumann discovered that Black was a contract attorney and also left a prestigious law firm to join her. They thought about opening an office together by hiring themselves out as contract attorneys, but “laziness got the better of us. We thought ‘maybe we can get other lawyers to do the work.’ We named our new company Attorneys Per Diem.” They haven’t looked back. In 1995, they sold the growing business to a national staffing firm, AccuStaff. Black was hired by AccuStaff to grow the legal staffing company, now called Special Counsel, nationally. As CEO of Special Counsel, Black oversees a national firm with 23 offices and revenues approaching $100 million. Special
Counsel is now the leading legal staffing firm in the United States. "I never missed the practice of law, not for one second. Our motivation from the beginning was, 'If this doesn't work, we'll have to practice law.'"

**DAVID B. MITCHELL**

Maryland State Police Superintendent Col. David B. Mitchell’s law enforcement career spans 26 years, rising from patrolman to leader of the state’s elite law enforcement agency. When he started law school in 1989, Mitchell already had accomplished much professionally and academically. Working shifts as a policeman, Mitchell spent 10 years completing an associate’s degree at Prince George’s Community College. He proceeded to earn a bachelor of science degree (summa cum laude) in Management and Technology and a master’s degree in Public Policy from the University of Maryland. He is a graduate of the Federal Bureau of Investigation National Academy and the FBI National Executive Institute. One semester into law school, Mitchell was tapped as the Prince George’s County Chief of Police; he took a leave of absence and later returned to the law school to begin a juggling act that would have him leaving class at a moments’ notice to attend to critical department business. “I’d get paged in class and have to go to a press conference to announce an important arrest or an officer injury. I did the best I could.” Now a lawyer licensed to practice in Maryland and the District of Columbia, Mitchell says law school has added immensely to his career. “My legal training has a tremendous positive influence on how I view problems. I see more solutions to old problems in law enforcement, such as alternatives to dispute resolution and neighborhood courts.” Law school provided for Mitchell another perspective when he considers law enforcement and social issues: Mitchell has taken his vast professional and academic experience and turned them into innovative programs that have been recognized nationally.

**STEVEN M. BERGER**

For Steven M. Berger, a 1990 graduate of the School of Law, law school gave him an emergency parachute that he hasn’t needed. A commercial pilot for U.S. Airways, Berger decided he wanted an intellectual challenge and a way to bolster his career options. “I guess it was more of a career-broadening idea. And kind of an insurance policy. Not everyone can continue to fly,” Berger says. The Air Force Academy graduate says he didn’t enter law school expecting to become a practicing attorney. “I guess it was something different than I was doing. It was interesting to get back into school. Law school was more of a mental challenge than working as a pilot. You use a different part of the brain when you fly.” While he hasn’t practiced law, Berger says he was selected for an important corporate committee because of his law degree.

**A. GALLATIN WARFIELD**

He’s not as well known as John Grisham, but 1973 Maryland grad A. Gallatin Warfield has built quite a successful career as legal suspense novelist and screenwriter. He’s published three novels in the past five years: State v. Justice, Silent Son, and Raising Cane. His first novel has been optioned for a television movie, which Warfield will write. Now living in California, he is making a career for himself as screenwriter. Former coworkers thought Warfield’s decision to leave the Howard County State’s Attorney’s Office after 13 years—eight years as the chief of the Felony Division—was a foolish dream. But eighteen months later, his novel had been written and sold to Warner Books. Before working in Howard County, Warfield spent three years working in the Appellate Division of the Maryland Attorney General’s Office and defending corrections and police officers in federal civil rights actions. After graduating from Princeton University, Warfield was a pilot in the Air Force

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After spending 13 years as a top antitrust litigator for the Federal Trade Commission and a few years as chief of staff and legal counsel for a major investment firm, what do you do if a major human resources consulting firm asks you to head up its marketing efforts in New York? Not having marketing experience, Edward Manno Shumsky hesitated for several months. Then he joined Watson Wyatt Worldwide, one of the world’s leading human resources management consulting firms, as the director of marketing. No experience? Not a problem for an experienced litigator. “While I didn’t have traditional marketing experience, my legal training was good. I used my gut instincts. As a trial lawyer, you learn to sell your ideas, get buy-in from people, be persuasive; it’s those skills that help you deal with clients.” Shumsky has been successful. In eight years at Watson Wyatt, his career has grown. Shumsky is the managing consultant of the firm’s Miami office.

Richard Alter has certainly left his mark on the Maryland landscape. The 1970 Maryland law graduate is president and chief executive officer of Manekin Corporation, a Maryland real estate development firm responsible for building Baltimore’s Rotunda, Charles Center South and the Crestar Bank building. The company also does extensive development work in Columbia and Frederick. “I went to law school not knowing what career lay ahead,” says Alter, a political science undergraduate of Brown University. “I came out of college not feeling totally educated for the rest of my life. Law school was a useful tool.” After attended school during the day while working as a case worker for a local social services department. Attending law school turned out to be great training for Alter’s present career: he says he honed some of his sales and negotiation skills there. “I spend a lot of time with legal documents in my career,” he says. Alter started as a salesman at Manekin Corp. not long after finishing law school. For the last seven years, he has been president and CEO.

Quincey Johnson '93 is a frequent contributor to JD and practices law in Baltimore.