



HIGH SCORER ON THE JULY 2012 BAR EXAMINATION

Pictured, left to right, are Texas Supreme Court Chief Justice Wallace Jefferson; high scorer Jeremy M. Reichman; Board of Law Examiners Executive Director Julia Vaughan; and Board of Law Examiners Board Member Teresa Ereon Giltner. Reichman is a graduate of the University of Texas School of Law.

Think Like a Lawyer

BY JEREMY M. REICHMAN

THANK YOU MR. CHIEF JUSTICE JEFFERSON, PRESIDING JUDGE KELLER, JUSTICES AND JUDGES, MEMBERS OF THE BAR, FAMILY AND FRIENDS. May it please the courts. I'm truly humble to be standing up here today before such a dignified audience.

I'll tell you that it was rather odd to me when I received a voice mail from the Chief Justice's chambers shortly after the bar results were posted. Granted I have only been a lawyer for a few days, but my experience leads me to believe that when you have a voicemail from the Chief Justice's chambers, you've either done something really great, or really bad. The voice mail itself was harmless enough. It asked me to please call his chambers back as soon as possible — oh and “nothing is wrong, don't worry.”

I can promise you, I did not heed that instruction. When the Chief Justice of the Texas Supreme Court calls a young law school graduate, there are many initial reactions. Not worrying will never be one of those initial reactions. I was fully convinced I was being called to be told that my name was placed on the passing list by mistake — please disregard considering yourself a lawyer at your earliest convenience. Thankfully, that was obviously not the case, and thus, here I stand today with the opportunity to address you all.

But I alone am not responsible for my good fortune. I'm pretty sure I wouldn't have a safe trip home if I didn't thank a few very important people in the audience today.

First and foremost, I have to thank my wife who was actually one of the last to hear about my score on the bar exam. There was simply too much of a chance that she would kill me when she found out. This is because there's a possibility that while lounging on the beach in June on our honeymoon, I may also have been leisurely flipping through bar review materials. I had the excellent justification that if I did not, I would surely fail. The good news is that I passed; the bad news is that I know I have now lost all credibility with my wife. But Becky, thank you for being the best motivation in my life and always being there to keep me sane and grounded. Thank you for all those days in June and July when I always had a home cooked meal, a sympathetic ear to listen to me rant, and most importantly, somebody to say to me, "No I don't know about the Rule Against Perpetuities, and no I don't want to discuss it over dinner." I know for sure I could never have survived law school, bar review, or life without you.

Equally as important, though, I want to thank my entire family — especially my mother and father who are here today — for their never-ending support, their advice to always work hard, and their willingness to be a constant role model to me about how to live my life.

And I know I speak for all of us here today, when I say thank you to all our friends and family that are either here today or have somehow influenced our ability to make it here today.

I'd also like to take just a brief minute to address all of the new lawyers being sworn in today. I'm not sure what makes someone believe that scoring the top score on the bar exam means you can deliver a good speech, or much less have something profound to say to a group of people that are already so dignified and proven. I do know enough, however, to say congratulations to all of you. Congratulations on making it this far, congratulations on proving yourself time and time again, and congratulations on entering a profession that will hopefully lead to a long and meaningful career.

JULY 2012 BAR EXAM PASS RATE INFORMATION

The table below shows the number of graduates from each Texas law school who took the bar exam for the first time in July, the number that passed the exam, and the percentage that passed.

LAW SCHOOL	TESTED	PASSED	PASS RATE
Baylor	99	93	94%
St. Mary's	182	152	84%
South Texas	276	237	86%
SMU	229	203	89%
Texas Tech	177	148	84%
Texas Southern	142	92	65%
Texas Wesleyan	151	136	90%
U. of Houston	228	202	89%
U. of Texas	278	261	94%
TOTAL	2,601	2,180	84%

It wasn't that long ago that law schools across the country began orientation by telling us that they were going to teach us to "think like lawyers." I don't know about you, but my response to them was I've made it through lots of school just fine. I'm pretty sure I know how to think. Thinking like a lawyer sounds like it's going to make people not like me. And so we ignore it — continue to think the way we always do.

But one day, after talking to your friends and pushing back on every word, finding every angle in which to attack a viewpoint, and without request, pointing out every possible thing that could possibly go wrong with your friend's choice of where to eat lunch today...you get that blank stare, followed by: "Who are you?!"

And then you know it's too late — you now "think like a lawyer." And while you may annoy your friends with it, all jokes aside, I believe it can also be a powerful tool that we are now equipped with. Like anything, this tool can be used or abused. Thus, if there's anything that I can say to this esteemed group, it is that I hope we all embark on our careers with the sincere desire to use this tool wisely in whatever career path we so choose, and not to be resistant to "thinking like a lawyer," for it is not a tool that we all have. But for your friends and family's sake, also remember to "think like a normal person" sometimes, too.

Thank you, and congratulations to you all. **TBJ**