

# BECOMING A LAWYER

BY LUKAS M. HOROWITZ



**LUKAS M. HOROWITZ**, Albany Law School Class of 2019, graduated from Hobart William Smith in 2014 with a B.A. in history and a minor in political science and Russian area studies. Following graduation, he worked for two years as a legal assistant at Gibson, McAskill & Crosby, LLP, in Buffalo, New York, and with the New York Academy of Trial Lawyers hosting CLE programs. Lukas can be reached at [Lukas.horowitz@gmail.com](mailto:Lukas.horowitz@gmail.com).

## Halfway Home

What did I just write? What language were those questions written in? Did I just black out? Where am I? These are the natural questions that go through a law school student's head after every exam, myself included. Fortunately, I have figured out that I am sitting at my dining room table, looking at my computer. How exactly did I wind up here? Well, I am not quite sure about that. Another 16 credits toward the degree are on the books.

My last exam is done. I am exhausted and slightly delirious, yet the

NYSBA *Journal* deadline looms. So this month I offer just a few, scattered thoughts on law school life, with the promise of full details, and greater reflection, in February's column.

The bad news is that time flies. The good news is that I'm the pilot. Handing in my last final exam today marked a successful landing for the first half of law school. Three semesters up, three semesters down.

As sick and twisted as this may sound, I am already looking forward to the start of next semester. I have been

offered (and accepted) a field placement for the spring semester at the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, working in the Office of Hearings and Mediation Services. More on this in the months to come.

So, as luck would have it, I am still flying. I've got enough gas to make it another three semesters, and in the event I have miscalculated, I can always make an emergency landing and pursue my career as an expressive dancer. ■

THE LEGAL WRITER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 59

### Answers: Apostrophes

1. Only one plaintiff sued. The witness belongs to the plaintiff. An apostrophe and an *s* ('*s*') should be placed to show possession. *Corrected Version*: The plaintiff's witness testified for three hours.
2. The attorney belongs to Charles. An apostrophe and an *s* ('*s*') should be placed to show possession, even though Charles ends in *s*. It's common to use an apostrophe alone with a singular word ending in *s* to show possession (Justice Thomas' opinion). But the *Legal Writer* suggests using an apostrophe and *s* after singular words that end in *s*. Doing so is always correct. *Corrected Version*: Charles's attorney was late for the trial.
3. The interns belong to the judge. Possession needs to be evident in this sentence. *Corrected Version*:

The judges' interns were at the trial.

4. If a plural word doesn't end in *s*, add an apostrophe and an *s* ('*s*') to show possession. *Corrected Version*: The men's suits were all black.
5. An apostrophe and an *s* ('*s*') are added to all singular nouns to show possession, even if the nouns end in *s*. *Corrected Version*: Judge Rodriguez's ruling remained unquestioned.
6. Apostrophes are used to omit a letter or letters in a contraction. But contractions are rarely used in legal writing; although perfect in emails and *Legal Writer* columns, they're considered too informal in most other forms of legal writing. *Corrected Version*: The court officer should not allow the attorneys near the bench.
7. *It's* means *it is* or *it has*. To show possession, meaning belonging

to *it*, use *its*. *Corrected Version*: The law firm held its annual company meeting last week.

8. Contractions are used to write *it is* or *it has*. *Corrected Version*: It's the first day of trial.
9. Don't use an apostrophe in words that are plural but not possessive. *Corrected Version*: The defendant was born in the 1960s.
10. Don't use an apostrophe and an *s* ('*s*') to make a regular noun plural. Just add an *s*. *Corrected Version*: Apostrophes are confusing. ■

**GERALD LEBOVITS** ([GLEbovits@aol.com](mailto:GLEbovits@aol.com)), an acting Supreme Court justice in New York County, is an adjunct at Columbia, Fordham, and NYU law schools. He thanks judicial interns Alexandra Dardac (Fordham University) and Rosemarie Ferraro (University of Richmond) for their research.