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Letter From Dean J. Clay Smith, Jr., to the First Year Class: Examination Preparation

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October 21, 1987

Letter From Dean J. Clay Smith, Jr., to the
First Year Class: Examination Preparation

The other day some students came to talk with me about test-taking. The students asked basic but excellent questions about how to answer a question on an examination. I asked similar questions about this time of year when I was a student.

My answer to those students was this:

1. Every case that you read is an examination.
2. Every case briefed will assist you during the final examination.
3. Every case discussed in class by your instructors, or assigned to you to read, is an examination.
4. Every time you review your notes as it relates to a concept drawn from a case is an examination.
5. Every time you review your outline, this act provides you with an organizational base to study, to write, or otherwise answer an examination question.

Having said all of that, I would like to add that many of your instructors will gladly hand out old examinations for you to review or to work out on your own. In addition, some instructors regularly file their examinations in the library. I urge you to work out old examinations because when you do, you realize how much more studying is required prior to the real ones. You will also get a feel for the difference in measuring your time in multi-state type questions, as compared to essay.

A study group or you and your study buddy should set aside time to talk about the issues that you spotted or that you missed in the old examinations. You may even wish to consult second and third-year students for their advice on test-taking and ask them for their old examinations.

The key to success in test-taking is test-preparation. By this time you should be feeling anxious about what you are comprehending in your classes. However, don't let any of this affect you to the extent that

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you cannot think about why you are at Howard Law School. You are here to learn, to succeed, and to move on as thousands of others before you have done.

So, hang in there!

J. Clay Smith, Jr.

J. Clay Smith, Jr.
Dean

JCSjr:mt