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### Law School Without The Paper Chase

Lawyers who forego the traditional university route still find their ways to the Courtroom

by **Robert Celaschi**



Michael Clancey, Dean of Northwestern California University School of Law, said the Internet has improved online classes by adding a social element for students.

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It's hard to attend law school while you're touring with a rock band.

That was Barry Melton's dilemma. Instead of choosing one, he did both, taking a law correspondence course. He passed the bar exam, and today serves as Yolo County's Public Defender.

Attorney Gary Blasi didn't go to law school at all. He acquired his legal chops the old fashioned way, under the tutelage of a law office. He too passed the bar. Today he's finally in law school -- teaching at the University of California Los Angeles.

While every would-be attorney must pass the bar exam in order to practice in California, there's no degree requirement, let alone a demand for one from a traditional, accredited law school. That's not some New Age, Californian innovation either. Several chief justices of the United States "read" the law instead of earning a degree. Others who became attorneys without law school include Abraham Lincoln, Daniel Webster and, slightly more recently, Sen. Strom Thurmond. Even as recently as the 1950s, the American Bar Association had a president with no law degree, Robert Storey. ... [Read more](#)