



## President's Perspective

# I'M SORRY, DAVE. I'M AFRAID I CAN'T DO THAT.

By Amy Noe Dudas

### PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

**A**s promised, I've spent a lot of time since October digging deep into the question of not what is it lawyers do but *who we are* that makes us uniquely qualified to practice law.

The LSAT is designed to ensure law school admittees have baseline skills in reading comprehension, reasoning, and writing. Law school directly targets research skills, critical thinking, ethics, issue spotting, and an understanding of the basic foundation of the American legal system.

But most of you agree there are a variety of *qualities* that are common among really good lawyers that aren't so directly tested or taught pre-admission or in law school.

Good lawyers demonstrate a high level of emotional intelligence. They're able to manage their emotions and can read and even positively affect those of other people. They're satisfied with the win, and they take the loss without pouting or stomping. They take nasty colleagues in stride and calmly assure an unruly client that their behavior won't land well when it matters.

Good lawyers are genuinely curious. They love learning new things, which makes them good at digging deep into a case without needing to be told to do so. People fascinate them, and they're interested in how things work.



Humility is another important and common trait among great lawyers. How easy would it be to walk around all puffed up, knowing the product you're "selling" is basically your own brainpower? Good lawyers are self-aware, recognizing the power they could wield, the advantage they could take, but they aren't even tempted. Rather, the goal is equity and justice, even if that means the client doesn't get everything they want.

There is nothing more powerful than effective communication. To be frank, by the time we get to law school, we should already be skilled writers. (Law school is actually where all the creativity and nuance is drained out of your superior writing skills.) We should have learned decent writing techniques in high school and honed them while completing our undergraduate studies. But law school cultivates our persuasive writing skills, organizational abilities, and then gives us opportunities to become effective orators and debaters. This is not what I mean when I speak about communication skills.

I'm talking about the ability to communicate at different levels. Really good lawyers can help someone without much education understand why the complex hearsay rules won't allow them to say certain things on the witness stand, and they can also explain highly technical contract small print to

sophisticated business executives. They can tactfully redirect a client whose goals are unrealistic. Their emotional intelligence means they can *read people*; they sense how best to communicate with any particular individual and can effectively translate information into that person's language.

Good lawyers can put nearly anyone at ease. For me, I feel like I'm successful when a client gets up to leave my office saying, "I feel so much better now."

Most of you agree with me that these shared qualities aren't taught in law school. It was a group of bright IU Maurer law students who pushed back a bit. They mused that while law school doesn't obviously teach these qualities, having them or not having them is one indicator of ultimate success. To continue to make your way through law school without losing your mind, you develop these qualities out of necessity. (But you already had to inherently understand them.)

After all, a lack of emotional intelligence makes you unlikely

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to survive that brutal Socratic interrogation in Contracts. Show off your so-called "brainpower" in Torts and you're likely to get shown up in a way you'll never forget. And you'd better learn quickly to persuasively argue your perspective on that final exam based on everything you've learned about what Professor CivPro finds important, or you'll not make it past 1L.

Fostering these qualities really is part of the law school experience, then, because if you don't have them, you're unlikely to finish. And even if you manage to graduate and pass the bar without an understanding that these qualities are crucial to great lawyering, you'll not likely find yourself regarded as a well-respected member of the bar.

Here's where I'm going with this (*finally*, you say): **artificial intelligence is not going to replace lawyers.**

Good lawyers, being flexible and eager to learn new things, will embrace AI as a *tool* to help them be more *efficient*. Good lawyers will pay attention to how other industries are using AI, research the pros and cons of ongoing development, and advise legislatures and policy makers about best practices for leveraging this technology without allowing it to turn into HAL (if you don't know what I'm talking about—which means you're still puzzled over the title of this piece—put this down *right now* and go watch "2001: A Space Odyssey"). We also will find a way to use AI to give more people more access to more legal resources,



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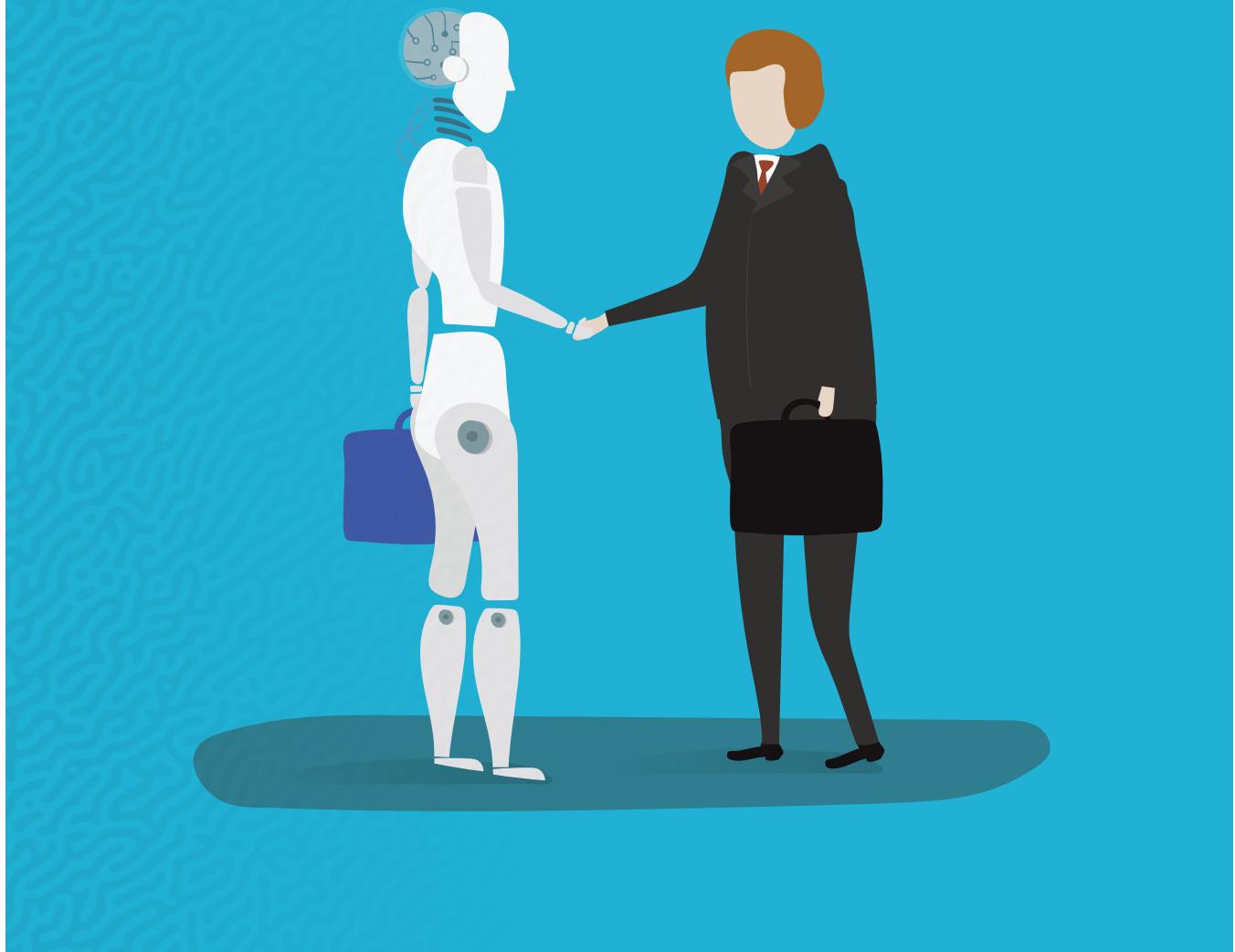
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especially those who have been left out of the American justice system for far too long.

Dear ChatGPT: Write 100 words explaining why AI won't replace lawyers.

AI is undoubtedly transforming various industries, but it is unlikely to replace lawyers entirely. While AI can assist in

tasks such as legal research, document analysis, and contract review, it lacks the nuanced understanding of complex legal concepts, ethics, and human judgment that lawyers possess. Legal matters often involve intricate interpretations of laws, negotiation skills, and strategic decision-making, which require human expertise. Additionally,

the legal profession demands empathy, client counseling, and the ability to navigate the emotional and personal aspects of legal cases, which AI currently cannot replicate. Ultimately, AI can enhance legal processes, but the multifaceted nature of law necessitates the continued presence of human lawyers.

Now turn that into a haiku:

AI aids the law,  
Nuances only humans,  
Lawyers still prevail.

See? We've got nothing to fear.  
After all, HAL said so. ☺