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"In a profession particularly subject to the vice of narrowness, Sherman combines remarkable intellectual acuity, a real sense of the practical, and a deep ethical interest. In a rare and intense way he brings his whole mind to bear on what he thinks about. He is widely and deeply read, and accordingly has a vision of legal education not as merely technical training, but as a true education of mind and character, for himself and for his students. In addition — and it seems almost unfair that there should be anything more — he is a gifted and articulate speaker, able to bring his ideas and understandings into public form, and a master of tact to boot. As one of my colleagues said to me, 'Whenever I hear Sherman speak, on any occasion, it makes me proud that I teach at this Law School.'"

**Having completed my first year of teaching,** I am, if possible, more enthusiastic about the Michigan Law School than I was a year ago when I arrived. My colleagues on the faculty, the administration, and the alumni have welcomed me with open arms and have made me feel completely at home. I reserve the largest measure of my enthusiasm, however, for the students of this law school. They are as interesting and intelligent a group of individuals as one could ever hope to meet. Moreover, they are on the whole a tremendous group of human beings.

I have had the opportunity to teach in a variety of circumstances: a first year section of torts, a large section on political philosophy. In each arena, I found my students to be receptive, energetic and extraordinarily capable. Teaching for the first time can be an intimidating experience, but is also exhilarating. I found that my students welcomed my energy, and more than rewarded my preparation. Along with the substantive material, I feel (at least I hope) that I was able to communicate some sense of my excitement about the study of law.

One thing does concern me, however. I truly enjoyed law school as a student, and I love working in this environment, but many students do not share my enthusiasm about the process. Too many students find law school to be stressful and an inevitable effect of setting out upon a new and challenging task. The study of law is not only difficult; it is difficult in ways for which students are not always prepared. But I am not prepared to throw up my hands. I am convinced that we can do more to reach out to our students — to help them get the most out of what should be a satisfying and engaging experience.

I have come to believe that perhaps the single biggest cause of confusion and disorientation among law students is that they often do not see what we as teachers are trying to accomplish. What are we looking for? Why are we "hiding the ball"? We are quite good at telling students what law school is not, as in "law school is not about memorizing cases and statutes." Unfortunately, we are less adept at telling them, and others, what law school is or ought to be. I believe that students will get more out of the law school experience to the extent that we as teachers of law continue to strive to articulate to them a compelling and coherent vision of legal education. Why do we teach the things we teach in the way we teach them? What do we offer our students?

No doubt, much of the stress experienced by students is the inevitable effect of setting out upon a new and challenging task. The study of law is not only difficult; it is difficult in ways for which students are not always prepared. But I am not prepared to throw up my hands. I am convinced that we can do more to reach out to our students — to help them get the most out of what should be a satisfying and engaging experience.

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Along with several more focused projects, my ongoing intellectual goal is to articulate and bring to life such a vision. I am convinced that the key — the thing we should seek above all else to teach — is the habit of mind which Dean Lehman describes as sympathetic engagement. It is the moral and intellectual act of fully and truly understanding the person whom you are trying to come to terms with, whether that be a judge in a particular case, an adversary in negotiation, or a colleague in deliberation. This is my grail. Through my writing, as in my classroom teaching, I hope most of all to make the power of sympathetic engagement real to my students. What is it, precisely? How is it done? Must it be so unsettling? And, most critically, what makes this particular skill so central to the successful student and practice of law? My aim as a teacher is to share with my students the ways in which legal education, by fostering this habit of mind, can not only prepare one for the practice of law, but can make as well for a richer civic and intellectual life.