

# A Recent Alumni Story...

**C**ongratulations on your recent acceptance to ONU. I was recently in your shoes, and was faced with the decision of attending ONU. I am a non-traditional student who attended ONU with my wife and one year old son. I had not seen the inside of a classroom for nearly four years. Thus, upon my acceptance at ONU, I was riddled with which law school to attend as well as deciding whether I could even handle abandoning my career and uprooting my family to pursue law school.



However, upon visiting ONU's beautiful campus and friendly staff, my fears were quickly silenced when several of the deans assured me that ONU's pursuit of diversity included non-traditional students in similar situations. Their advice was spot on as my wife and I made several friends in the same, or similar situations, quickly forming life-long friendships with other students. I quickly learned the strength and comradery in the ONU alumni community as well as the broad location of our alumni. In fact, I currently reside in Huntington, West Virginia, where multiple alumni are in private practice, and three of the five prosecutors in a nearby town are ONU law graduates.

ONU is located in the small community of Ada, Ohio, which can be the cause of hesitation for many who consider attending ONU, especially if they are from a large metropolitan area. However, my experience provided an excellent atmosphere for learning the practice of law, and many of my classmates from large metropolitan areas appreciated their decisions to attend ONU. The faculty are helpful and very accessible in the event you have questions or need guidance in your quest to conquer the law. The facilities contain one of the largest legal libraries in the area with an excellent library and IT staff.

The Office of Career Services is very involved with the placement of its students. In fact, I am embarrassed to admit that I forgot to submit my resume and application for an upcoming on-campus interview regarding an internship position in my hometown. At a large school I could have easily slipped through the cracks, but the career services staff at ONU tracked me down and reminded me of the deadline. I am very grateful because I actually ended up being hired for the position.

ONU continues its dedication to the success of its students beyond graduation. The Director of Academic Support runs excellent bar preparation courses and provides the academic and emotional support necessary to succeed on the bar exam. In fact, one year after successfully passing the West Virginia Bar, my firm urged me to take the Ohio Bar Exam. Even though I had been graduated for a year, the staff provided excellent assistance in preparing me for my second bar exam, which I successfully completed.

I was provided with so much more at ONU than just an understanding of the black letter law necessary to complete the bar exam. I was provided the tools necessary to "think like a lawyer," which as I understand is becoming an extinct skill, but a much appreciated one in the legal community. In fact, I have received compliments in my short practice from several colleagues, and clients, impressed with my knowledge and efficiency in the law after only having practiced two years.

I am currently licensed in West Virginia and Ohio and practice at the law firm of Huddleston Bolen LLP in the area of estate planning, taxation, creditor's rights and business litigation. I believe we all strive to make our own destinies, but ONU provided me the tools necessary to strive towards mine. I am glad I made the decision to attend ONU law. Good luck in your decision.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthew L. Ward". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Matthew L. Ward, JD 2012  
Associate - Huddleston Bolen -  
Huntington, West Virginia