

INTRODUCTION

GALLIGAN'S PHILOSOPHY OF KEEPING IT SIMPLE

When I was first asked to give this little talk, the topic was: “how to survive the first year of law school.” Then on Monday I was walking through the lobby, and I saw a sign that said I was speaking on how to conquer the first year. When I commented to Sam Mokeba that the title had been changed and I wasn’t sure I could satisfy the new bill, he told me that he and his colleagues had changed the title to be more positive. He said they decided “conquering” sounded a lot more positive than merely surviving. While I agree, I want to disclaim, but I assure you that while I make no warranties, I’ll do my darndest.

One thing that occurred to me is the old saw that the best thing to do is to divide and conquer. And that makes more than just a little bit of sense. Divide how? Break things down. Take law school one course at a time. I don’t want to say take it one hour at a time because this venture does take a little bit of planning, but plan on breaking it all down into workable units. If you look at it all at once, it will overwhelm you. All at once, the first year of law school, law school, your career, life, is a tsunami—a tidal wave. It’s too much to take on as one big lump. Take it as a whole bunch of little pieces. Look at it as a bunch of trees that you’ll cut down one at a time. Don’t look at it as one huge forest. That said, let’s go after it one topic at a time.

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