

*At the end of last year, I interviewed recently graduated (or so I thought) outgoing LAWSOC President Jack Holloway. That interview appeared in Issue Three 2022, wherein the Pigeon Bay's finest was inducted into the Law Schools' finest as Obiter's latest Law School Legend.*

*Law School Legends was first introduced to Obiter in 2002 likely before most of you reading were even born, myself included. In the final issue that year Ben Fitchett interviewed Gerald Orchard. I caught up with Ben over summer who had the following to say, "those who knew him will agree that there are very few, if any, who were ever as affectionately revered as he. Prof Orchard always had time for his students and was known for making the 9am starts eminently more bearable. He was truly a Law School Legend in every sense of the word."*

*The newest Law School Legends interview appears here, in which I sit down with a man who is held in similar repute, and certainly made my Monday morning tutorials worth attending. I am of course talking about Simon Dorset, Obiter's newest Law School Legend.*

I: So Simon, I'm sure our readership knows exactly who you are. For those of you who do, congratulations on being normal. But for those of you who don't, and have clearly been living under a rock, could you please tell us about what you do at the Faculty?

S: I basically have two main jobs in the Faculty. The first is teaching – I coordinate LAWS101 and I tutor in Public. The second is administration – I'm the Assistant Dean (Students) which involves assisting the Dean with student-related academic matters including excess workloads, backdated discontinuations, waiver of prerequisites, complex degree completion plans, limitation of entry, etc.

I: And how long have you been here in the Law School?

S: Some might say too long! I remember when Noah parked the ark. After graduating, I was a part-time tutor during the 1990s while I was a practising lawyer here in Christchurch but really started working at the Law School from 2005.

I: Some might also say there are others who stake a better claim than yourself at having been here too long! What is it you like so much that has kept you here so long?

S: What I like most is UC's combination of people and place – I think we have great students and staff and we have a really accessible and welcoming campus. Why so long, you ask. Certainly not for the pay! Christchurch is home – I have worked in many foreign places over the years – Australia, Papua New Guinea, Timor Leste – and yet I am always drawn back home.

I: You're the LAWS101 coordinator. What do you remember, if you can remember, your first year being like? And what advice would you tell your first year self, or any plucky fresher reading this now, for how to approach Law School?

S: I was pretty lazy in first year – coming from a highly structured and organised high school to a place where it was all too easy to spend time in the cafes, wasting hours with friends and basically just losing lots of time. And then having to catch up for the big exams. That was a poor strategy. So – the advice is treat your studies as a full time job and keep up rather than rely on the 'trusty' last minute cram.

I: My last interview was with former LAWSOC President Jack Holloway. You were actually LAWSOC President back in 1990, weren't you Simon?

S: Yes, I was President in 1990 but more by default than any great election campaign on my part. The 1988 and 1989 Presidents (Mike Woodbury and John Sullivan respectively) had been very active and successful but by 1990 there was not a lot of interest to take on the presidency. Our first AGM didn't even get a quorum, only at the second attempt did we manage to hold a valid election. Still the excellent executive team in my year delivered all the LAWSOC standards such as the PFO Evening, Law Ball, Leavers' Dinner, etc, etc.

I: How does LAWSOC compare now to back in your day?

S: Interest in LAWSOC is much higher today and I encourage any current student to get involved in LAWSOC or any of the other law student clubs – they are a great way to meet people, develop some skills in organising events, manage the responsibilities of a portfolio and do something a bit altruistic for fellow students. A big change is the number of diverse law-related clubs – we have seven now, whereas in my day – LAWSOC was basically it





I: Yeap, times definitely have changed. In fact, I was in the library the other day, in the restricted section (level 8 where they keep the old Obiters), and "I read something rather odd about a bit of rare magic." It's called, as I understand it... Constitutional and Administrative Law in New Zealand by PA. Joseph. Rumour has it that there was no Public textbook when you were a student?

S: Was that an attempt at humour? Perhaps "the great tome" as some might call it. Yes – that's right we had to make do with textbooks from England basically – there was no Joseph, no Todd, and the Contract book was, if I remember correctly, an English text with some NZ content added by Prof Northey from Auckland. A far cry from the rich collection of core texts produced by Canterbury academics today.

I: You're actually the tutor for Public now, aren't you Simon?

S: Yes, I do my teaching at second-year by tutoring in Public. May I just make a plug for tutorials and encourage students to attend them – they really are the best way of gaining insights into how to deal with typical test and exam questions in each subject; they are small groups where you can ask questions in an environment less intimidating than in lectures. Also, many tutors offer tips and hints on how to approach exams generally and they explain complex aspects of lecture content that may not have been clear the first time you encountered them. And as an added bonus – you meet fellow law students!

I: You actually called my tutorial group "the A team" last year. Didn't you Simon?

S: Did I? Well don't read too much into that – I was probably trying to be amusing – I suspect it was because that was your timetable designation on the attendance list I had.

I: Switching gears now. What is your own intrinsic red flag?

S: I plead my section 25(d) NZBORA right!

I: Who would play you in a film made about your life?

S: Who would want to?

I: Joseph's textbook or Todd's textbook?

S: Easy! – Joseph – Prof Joseph kindly gives me a free copy of each edition because I tutor the course, whereas Prof Todd expects me to buy a copy of his! If he threw in one of his CDs, then I might be more inclined to buy!

I: Who is your favourite lecturer?

S: I am not going to single anyone out – playing favourites is so un...couth...dignified...wise...

I: Which lecturer would you choose to be your partner in a game of beer pong?

S: Hmm... I don't think anyone could bear to play with me.

I: You are allegedly known to indulge in a glass of wine, or ten. Can you disclose to our readership, I'm sure they'd love to know, what is your favourite beverage?

S: If I'm splashing out it's a Penfolds Bin 389 (South Australian Shiraz) for red and a Pegasus Bay Sauvignon Semillon for white and if I'm on a budget (which is usually the case) then it would be any Hawkes Bay Cab/Merlot for red and a Marlborough Sav Blanc for white.

I: And have you ever done a shoeey?

S: It may have happened in the dim dark past, solely to say I'd done it – but the memory didn't last.

I: And my final question: in 600 words or less, what is Law?

S: If you don't know that by your third year, Isaiah, I'm worried we might need to review your LAWS110 results...

I: Well, Simon, that's all we've got time for – thank you for speaking with Obiter.

S: Thank you, Isaiah – it's been an honour and a pleasure.

### By Isaiah Ong – The Ongbudsman

