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Book Review of REA's Authoritative Guide to Law Schools

James S. Heller

William & Mary Law School, heller@wm.edu

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586. **REA's Authoritative Guide to Law Schools.** rev. ed. Piscataway, N.J., Research & Education Association, 1994. 416p. illus. \$18.95pa. ISBN 0-87891-920-1.

REA's Authoritative Guide to Law Schools adds to the ever-growing list of publications designed for those who plan to attend law school and have a choice as to which school they will attend. What this reviewer finds most surprising is that the Research and Education Association (REA) apparently has not recognized the recent drop in the number of law school applicants and the number of competing (and superior) publications.

Similar to other law school guides, *REA* includes a brief chapter on applying to law school that answers such questions as "Why do I want to go to law school?," "What good is law school if being a lawyer is so unrewarding?" (REA answered an earlier question with many negative opinions about a career in law), and "What undergraduate classes will help me prepare for law school?" The authors also spend a few pages describing the law school application process, the LSAT, and financing a legal education.

Much of the guide includes profiles of the 177 or so American Bar Association (ABA)-accredited law schools, 27 non-ABA-accredited schools (most of which are in California), and 15 Canadian law schools. As in similar guides, each short profile offers a snapshot about the law school, the admissions process, costs and financial aid, minority programs, student organizations, the faculty, the curriculum, the library, law school publications, and the application procedures. These profiles offer basically the same information found in other guides, such as the number of applicants, how many the school accepted, and the number who enrolled; the mean grade point average (GPA) and LSAT score of the entering class; and the percentage of men, women, and minorities. However, the REA guide seems to have less current information than its competition.

So what is the competition? The current champion must be *The Official Guide to U.S. Law Schools* (Bantam Doubleday Dell, annual). Not only does the *Official Guide* have more information about a career in law, applying to and choosing a law school, and finding a job, but also their data are much more current. For example, the 1996 edition contains application data for the 1994-1995 academic year, more up-to-date than the REA publication. *Barron's Guide to Law Schools* (see entry 581) also proves superior to *REA*, with more extensive discussion on factors in choosing a law school and the application process, as well as the requisite profiles. Another, more selective guide is *The Princeton Review Student Access Guide to the Best Law Schools* (see entry 585), which profiles the top 170 ABA-accredited schools. In sum, the REA guide was not needed and does not compare to the *Official Guide* or to *Barron's*.—**James S. Heller**