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### Law School Applications Rise

June Lyle

*Indiana Daily Student*

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INDIANA UNIVERSITY  
Maurer School of Law  
Bloomington

# Law School applications rise

By June Lyle

Indiana Daily Student

Gaining acceptance to the IU School of Law continues to get tougher each year, reflecting a national trend of increased law school applications.

At IU, applications have been increasing steadily since 1986, said Karen Cutright, assistant dean of law. And last year's record of 1,775 applications was topped by more than 2,100 applications for the 1990-91 school year.

The increase in applications at IU is significantly higher than the national increase, Cutright said. While law school applications were up 6.6 percent nationwide this year, IU boasted a 20 percent increase.

Arthur Lotz, assistant dean of law, said IU's attractiveness might be because of reasonable tuition for out-of-state students, as well as a growing national reputation.

"The increase has changed the ball game in terms of law school admissions," said Terry Bethel, interim dean of the law school. "Many people we graduated several years ago who have done

quite well in the law profession couldn't have gotten in under today's standards."

This increased selectivity results from IU accepting only 200 students each year, despite the skyrocketing admissions.

Lotz said this allows the school to be more selective and choose students with higher credentials.

The increased national interest in earning a law degree could be because of any of several popular theories, Bethel said.

Some attribute the surge in applications to would-be investment bankers who changed career goals when the stock market crashed in 1987.

"But we began to experience an increase before 1987, so I don't know if that theory applies to IU," Cutright said.

Another theory maintains that recent increases are the result of recruiting efforts that were stepped up in the early 1980s to combat falling applications.

"The increase might also be due to students simply feeling the need for another credential," Cutright said. "Having a law degree doesn't mean you have to practice law, and it can help in a lot of

## LAW SCHOOL APPLICANTS

Applications to IU School of Law increase since 1980

1980-81	1,164
1981-82	1,278
1982-83	1,438
1983-84	1,483
1984-85	1,128
1985-86	1,086
1986-87	1,047
1987-88	1,223
1988-89	1,358
1989-90	1,775
1990-91	2,101

Source: IU School of Law

MALINDA ASTON/Daily Student

areas such as politics and business."

The most common theory, Bethel said, attributes law school's popularity to the glamorization the law profession receives through the TV program "L.A.

See LAW, Back page

August, 1, 1990  
IDS

# Law

From Page 1

Law.”

He said while the program does deal with real legal issues, he is hesitant about prospective students who are drawn by the lifestyle the program portrays.

“We’re not terribly interested in recruiting students who are attracted by the lifestyle shown on the program,” Bethel said. “But I don’t object to people watching the program and thinking that sounds like an interesting profession.”

Bethel said law school students have become more conservative, and increasing numbers are hired by large corporate law firms.

But the pendulum shows signs of swinging back the other way.

“As you read applications, you find more students who have done some kind of public service work than a few years ago,” Cutright said.

She added that IU law students have started a Public Interest Law Foundation to increase student interest in pro bono work — legal services given to needy parties at no charge.