

# Popular Threads on Solosez

## Lawyerly Attire

I am looking forward to joining the ranks of lawyers around the country. However, I need to build the basics of my wardrobe up. I am wanting to get some good quality dress shirts. I am kind of a clothing nut so I am pretty well versed, but I was wondering what your department store of choice is.

Justin Eisele

-----

I buy at Jos A. Banks.

Shell Bleiweiss, Chicago

-----

What's wrong with Target?

Richard O'Connor

-----

Brooks Brothers Nordstrom Robert B. Walker, Herndon, Virginia

-----

Go where they have the best tailoring. It's not the suit as much as it is how well it fits you.

Bruce Dorner, Londonderry, NH

-----

I will tell you what is wrong with Target. I sew, so I am very aware of how clothes are made. When someone walks into a courtroom with ill-fitting suits, or poorly constructed seams, scuffed shoes, etc., it is noticeable.

When building the basics of a business wardrobe, it is better to buy a few classic pieces and gradually build on those. You don't have to start at Joseph Banks. Here Filene's Basement and Lord & Taylor have excellent prices and quality; especially on sale.

Target is great for trendy accessories that won't last or super casual versions of the latest fashion. If you are a new lawyer, you have enough to worry about without being concerned about whether you are presentable. If I notice these things, I imagine that judges and clients do as well.

Andrea Goldman, Newton, MA



## Subscribe to Solosez

First Name

Last Name

E-mail Address

Submit (input element)



## Unsubscribe from Solosez

E-mail Address

Submit (input element)



## Books

Click on the book for more info



-----  
Bruce makes another great point. Investing some money in making sure that clothes fit you well is quite worthwhile. A tailor can be your best friend. I was at a trial a few years ago where "Mr. Armani" was on one side, and the scruffy looking guy I was working for was on the other.

Guess who won.

Andrea Goldman, Newton, MA

-----  
Amen on that.

Also, check out some of the high end stores when they have sales. Neiman Marcus has first call and last call sales. You can get top of the line suits for regular prices.

Saks Fifth Avenue has a similar sale, though I forget the name of it. Anyway, it's not unusual to find a thousand dollar suit marked down 60-75% They'll stick you on the tailoring, but it's usually worth it. You can get it tailored elsewhere, if you want to save even more. Just make sure your tailor is good, as that will make or break even the nicest suit.

Finally, Bachrach has really good off season sales. I don't find their suits to be as durable, but they are a really good deal, and a great way to get a basic wardrobe started.

David L. Leon. Dallas, Texas

-----  
Yes, fit is most important that's why quality store counts.

Andrea makes another good point though - shoes, not only appropriate style but esp. their condition.

Robert B. Walker, Herndon, Virginia

-----  
Another way to find the "right store," depends upon your relationship with the local police --- especially in suburban locations. Talk to the detectives. When they get promoted they have to buy "street suits." They all seem to go to one place. They have to have a good tailor to make adjustments in suit coats for sidearms and related accessories. Sometimes if you mention that you were sent by Lt. so-and-so, you'll get a discount as they want your repeat business ---- and lawyers tend to buy more suits than cops.

Bruce Dorner, Londonerri, NH

-----  
Not so sure I'd go for the Columbo look.

Craig McLaughlin

-----  
Justin -- I don't remember where you live, but go to Nordstrom if you have one within driving distance. Their private label suits are very well made and reasonably priced.

Sasha Golden, Needham, MA

-----  
You could try Nordstrom or Neiman Marcus. Quality, but may be more pricey than you want. You could try outlets such as Geoffrey Beene too.

One favorite of mine for basic, but high quality shirts is Lands End via catalog (I know that Sears now carries Lands End, but I have never bought them there). For about 30-40 bucks each, I suggest trying a couple. Not particularly trendy, but their cotton pinpoint and broadcloth shirts are a great staple. For style, get non-button downs and French cuffs. On another note, I have always been told that button down collars are not to be used with double breasted jackets.

Craig McLaughlin

-----  
Hong Kong, or nearly any third-world country, provided you find a tailor patronized by ministers and kings. And take a vacation while you're there; you deserve it after finishing law school.

Failing that, here's my advice, but first an important caveat: I'm a t-shirt and flip flops kind of guy from way back (it's a cultural thing -- I'm from a beach town in California and even though I've relocated to the northwest I'm frequently in denial when the weather is cold), so much to the chagrin of my more conservative office mates, I place a high value on comfort whenever I can. That said, I do respect my colleagues' needs to maintain appearances, so if I'm looking particularly shabby and we have "guests" in the office for a conference or a deposition or whatever, I slink around the shadows and try to look like a computer guy or a bewildered client, or otherwise lay low.

Sometimes you will need or want to scrub up and dress well, and in spite of my often Philistine proclivities, I do love nice and expensive clothes -- but never as much as I like a good bargain. So when I'm in the market for a new shirt, tie, suit or sport coat or whatever, I start watching the racks at places like Nordstrom's Rack or Macy's Clearance, which usually sell relatively nice attire for sometimes as little as 1/8th the original price (Hickey Freeman, Hart Schaffner Marx, Brooks Bros, Pierre Cardin, YSL, Polo, etc. -- fairly respectable stuff) and I always check out the better "op shops" like Value Village or the Salvation Army, or the local church bazaar. I don't often buy anything formal from the second hand places, but usually not long after Christmas you'll find an influx of new (unworn) clothes, and downright cheap too. So far over the years I've scored one great suit, a couple shirts, three sports coats, and two trench coats (never a

tie, don't even look at the ties or you'll run away screaming). Any one of these I would happily have bought new at the original source, and two or three of which most likely never left the clothes closet -- the coat pockets were still sewn shut. One of the sport coats, a virtually new Hart Schaffner Marx blazer, would have cost around \$450 at Nordstroms, and I picked it up for \$6 on some blow out sale. I had to have my tailor take it in just a bit, but still, for something like \$50 total, I've got a great utilitarian article of clothing AND my middle class values are intact.

Michael Brannan, Seattle

-----

If the "scruffy looking guy" had better facts, had done a better job preparing the case, had the law on his side, connected better with the judge or jury, and in general made points more clearly, I suspect he did. If the guy in the Armani had those going for him and the "scruffy looking guy" stumbled thru his presentation, was inarticulate, did not connect with anyone, and had the facts and the law against him, I would guess he lost.

It IS important to remember the effect one's appearance has on those we are presenting to, but generally those who present well win and then can afford to dress well. Dressing well does NOT make you win. Not in Chattanooga, Tennessee, not in Newton, Massachusetts, not in New York City, not in the smallest burg you will find with a courthouse and not in Little Egypt.

Jes Beard, Chattanooga, Tennessee

-----

I second Nordstrom. I wear a difficult to find size and my "shopper" is always looking out for new things that she thinks I may like. She had a suit, shirt and tie for me last time I went in and it is perfect.

Note: My recommendation of Nordstrom is not a shot at any other store, seller, or other entity or person who may recommend or sell clothes.

Jonathan G. Stein, Elk Grove, CA

-----

To follow-up on Jes' comment, I think at a certain point, for certain types of cases, dressing TOO expensive, in front of a jury, can actually hurt your case. For example, if you're representing a corporate defendant charged with trampling the rights of the common man, an Armani suit is not likely to endear you to a group of twelve average folks who are already inclined to identify with the plaintiff. Or, likewise, if you're representing an individual plaintiff who's seeking hundreds of thousands in damages against a big business, the jury questions the lawyer's motivation, and the legitimacy of the damages, if you're wearing a 10K suit. Look good, but not flashy. For that reason, that's why you'll never see anyone in court with a fine handcrafted pen--even the guys from Skadden pull out the common man's ballpoints and put away the rolex when the jury is around.

David J. Galalis

-----

OK, war story time... A few years ago a good attorney in my area was representing a small contractor who had not performed well in a house construction case. The contractor was a little guy who had heard this attorney was good and paid him to defend the claim. The attorney had a "bit of an ego." He wore the fancy suits, he had the nice jewelry, he had the big gold watch. The jury was transported to the house for a view. The attorney arrived a minute late and everyone saw him pull up in his nice Jag. Fast forward to the jury room. Summary: "if the contractor could afford that kind of an attorney, he could afford to pay the full damages suffered by the home owner!"

Bruce Dorner, Londonderry, NH

-----

I like Jos. A. Bank. I they have a line that has 4 different prints in four different colors. The jackets are separate from the pants. This gets around the broad shoulders, short legs and moderate waist. If I buy the suit as a pre-fab set, when they take in the waist, I become a walking crotch. Also, I wear my suit pants like jeans; at the waist, not the belly button. I catch schlock for it every now and then, but fudge 'em. I know how I wear the pants.

Tangentially, when I go to buy a suit, I bring a pair of my dress shoes and the thin socks.

Michael J. Sweeney, Madison, CT

=====

IMHO, the best is Jos A Banks, but only when there is a sale, and never from the store (always from the internet sales).

You can get a well-made suit for \$200, and right now they have a suit with 2 different pairs of pants for \$188.00.

You can get great shirt for about \$25.00 on sale at Jos A Banks. Nordstrom and Brooks Brothers are also great on sale. Paul Frederick is great for white shirts on sale, always marked down from \$40 to \$20.

My dress is very conservative, so I still have a few well made shirts that are 5-10 years old that I still wear and still look new. Conservative Banks, Brooks Brothers, and Nordstrom never go out of style. And you can't have enough white shirts. Buy quality, but don't over do it.

Anthony Alpert, Weaverville, CA

-----

It was a wild case where both sides were lying, and both attorneys were quite experienced. I'm just saying that other things being equal, it is better

to be appropriately dressed and not have anyone thinking that you should be paying more attention to your appearance.

Andrea Goldman, Newton, MA

-----

Lands End

Randy Birch, Heber City, UT

-----

I shopping all over for the best quality dress shirts, and finding very good ones at Nordstrom's and Dillard's, I took a flyer on Land's End. I am sold. I will never go back to department stores. Lands End will custom fit your shirts. You can order the collar you want. The quality is fabulous. They hold up at the cleaners great. They are 1/2 the price I was paying at the stores. Only thing missing is the variety of colors. However, when I really looked at what I wear to court, it is almost always a white, blue or lightly striped shirt. That is what Land's End sells.

Robert W. "Robby" Hughes, Jr., Stone Mountain, GA

-----

I really think ties make the man. Do not scrimp on ties. Buy the best. They may cost +\$80 each, but are well worth the price.

Robert W. "Robby" Hughes, Jr., Stone Mountain, GA

-----

I wear Nordstrom dress shirts almost exclusively, I find they 1) fit well, and more importantly they hold up better and longer than cheaper department store brands.

As for ties, I agree, go expensive. Check [Bluefly.com](http://Bluefly.com), they have plenty of Zegna and Robert Talbott ties deeply discounted. This is another area where ebay comes in as there are plenty of liquidators out there selling brand new neckwear.

I can not stress the importance of fine dress shoes. This should be your most expensive purchase. Try Alden or Allen Edmonds for fine shoes in the 2 to 300 dollar range. They are worth it, as they are the most comfortable dress shoes you will ever own, they will last forever, and they can be resoled and made-over for years upon years. If the \$285 for a pair of captoes is steep, check on e-bay. I've found brand new pairs of AE shoes for \$120. They're usually overstocks or returns with little to no wear. I bought a pair of Allen Edmonds Byron dress shoes in the chili color for 110, and bought a fine belt from AE to match the shoes on ebay for another 50. Retail value? \$285 for the shoes, \$95 for the belt. All brand new.

Shane Jimison, Richmond, Virginia

-----  
I second the Robert Talbot ties.

Robert W. "Robby" Hughes, Jr., Stone Mountain, GA

-----

Ditto on the shoes and ties. Talbott ties are great, and so are Brooks Brothers. Check both on ebay. For shoes, I like E.T. Wright. They are mail order, and less expensive than Allen Edmonds.

Anthony Alpert

-----

Ok, so you all throw around the fancy store names but I am known in the uncomplimentary view "cheap" and when complimented on it as "frugal" or "very good with his money". I have found great suits, some very expensive suits, at Salvation Army, Goodwill, and other Thrift Stores. I usually have to have them tailored. All were in brand new condition and I have received compliments on them. So for \$10 to \$20 and then \$25.00 for tailoring I have done well to build a collection of seven different suits including two beautiful three piece suits that I save for important court cases (really just to remind me of the gravity of representing this client who needs a lawyer who looks like he's serious about the outcome). I have gotten virtually all of my ties from the Goodwill or Salvation Army and you would be shocked what they give away for a buck (\$1.00). I have a Christmas tie collection, pure silk ties, all the good brand name ties, a tie with the scales of Justice on, patriotic ties, you name it, got about sixty of them all for stopping in Salvation Army or Goodwill and picking them up; where I have also acquired some nice office furniture and other bits and pieces for our office (got a nice, yes it works great, white four banger toaster for our office and now we have hot bagels for breakfast here!) So, if I've spoiled any notion of me as a rich lawyer so be it and if some will look down on me for shopping in such low places well...I've got friends there. I hope this bit of self-disclosure and rambling is useful to someone.

John R. Green, Panama City, FL

-----

I bet you can find some nice suits at thrift shops. For me it comes down to being comfortable with what i am wearing. If I feel good i perform well. I know that a lot of the transaction lawyers i have met wear really casual clothing. Personally, I always grew up thinking i would be a " dress nice" lawyer. I hope to get to dress up and kick tail soon.

Justin Eisele

-----

The man who started the Sports Pro Agency, name escapes me at the moment, have the book at home: "What They Don't Teach You in Harvard Business School" said that after he got his agency going and getting very

big he noticed the agents that represented athletes were starting to dress like the athletes they represented. Tennis agents wearing Tennis gear, football player agents wearing jerseys, etc. and he thought about and decided that agents are hired because they are agents, not friends, colleagues, etc. so put out the edict to go back to looking like business people. I, too, feel (especially after 22 years of military, I suppose) that you are who you look like. I am just as smart in jeans and a t shirt and since I am in the office I am wearing just that...but...there is a dress shirt, tie, trousers and even a dress suit in my office closet and if someone called and wanted to come and see me I would change into "combat gear" because that pumps up my professionalism and hopefully conveys to my clients that I care enough to dress the part. My kids know I'm going to work (and not just to the office because I am wearing my uniform, shirt, tie, etc. and know I'm going to court when they see the 3 piece come out) and I am in Florida where I could get away with a lot less but I have looked at who around here for attorneys are considered successful and professional and the old fashioned conservative dress is still the accepted norm. I am going home to count my ties and relish in my new found wealth, I went out to a couple of websites that were recommended here and I'll compare my collection of ties to anyone's and apparently the ties I have collected at \$1.00 a piece compare very favorably to what I just saw at \$60.00 and \$70.00 on sale! In fact, just to be cheap and smug, many of mine are better! The other joy is I bring him four or five of them; see what goes with what and give the others back as a donation! John R. Green, Panama City, FL

=====

As others have pointed out, in some settings the "appropriate dress" is far closer to "scruffy" than it is to Armani suits. It is just as bad as it is to have a jury thinking you should pay more attention to your appearance as it is to have them thinking you may be paying TOO MUCH attention to your appearance. Appearance is part of communication. It is a factor which needs to be considered. But what to wear it is NOT a question answered simply by wearing Armani.

Jes Beard, Chattanooga, TN

-----

Check out Land's end. I live in a small town and don't have any retail options so I started to buy stuff from them and have been pleased. Good quality and decent price. If cash wasn't a factor I'd go to Brooks Brothers. I was visiting my brother and sister in DC at Christmas and shopped there. With the holiday sales their prices were somewhat reasonable and the quality is good. Agree with what others have said about a good tailor. A good fit makes clothes look better. At Land's end you can order custom made clothing. I have a pair of gabs that fit great.

Brian Schowalter, Durango, CO

-----

Good ties are what it's all about. Robert Talbot is my favorite.



Brian Schowalter

-----

Gotta agree on shoes. I've got Some Allen Edmonds wing tips. I have kind of strange size: 9E. But when I find a pair of shoes in that size, as I did with the Edmonds, they just fit right off the bat. I have a pair of Red Wing Boots like that too. Sadly, they've discontinued the Red Wing 972, which is criminal. But man it makes a difference. And at least imho nice shoes can actually make a mediocre suit look better.

Jake London

-----

You can order AE shoes from their outlets. On sale, its \$145, and its returnable.

Meyer Silber, NYC

-----

I have not been following this thread with great detail, so I am not sure if this company was already mentioned.

Was contacted by someone from The Tom James Company.  
<http://www.tomjamesco.com/> Although it seemed like an interesting concept, I ultimately did not purchase from them.

Michael D. Day, Meriden, CT

-----

Michael, I've heard of them, what were their prices like?

Shane L. Jimison, Richmond, VA

-----

As I recall (perhaps the website has more info.) you need to buy packages. The clothing is good quality, and you pay for that. I believe their suits start at about several hundred. You can get custom made suits. A typical package may include several suits, shirts, socks, belts, etc. The custom made suits that they offer can be very expensive. The ideas is that the professional is very busy and does no have time to be out shopping at stores. So, they come to you. The do all of the measuring in your office and return with the finished product. They take it back if any additional alternations need to be made.

Michael D. Day, Meriden, CT

-----

I have bought two suits from these folks and they are very good. You can get just about any price suit form them based upon the fabric that you use.

Robert "Robby" W. Hughes, Jr., Stone Mountain, GA

-----  
We were in Vietnam in November. One of the places we visited was Hoi An (sic) a world heritage site. It is an old trading city. One of the primary businesses is the clothing and fabric trade. We went to a shop at about 3:00 p.m. We picked out the style of suit we wanted from a catalog. We then picked the fabric from a room full of choices. My wife and I were measured. They measured us ways I did not know existed. At 10:00 am the next morning they called our guide on his cell phone and wanted to fit us. I did not work out till later in the afternoon to complete the fitting.

Changes were made. All three men's suits, six shirts, three women's pant suits, three capes, and four blouses were done. They made the changes and asked to check out a final fitting at our hotel that evening. We asked could they ship the clothing? Yes. Did we want to ship anything else?

Yes. We had some souvenirs that were heavy. No problem. The suits almost reached my office before I did. The total cost of all clothing was \$340.00. The shipping was \$400. Still a bargain.

John Daly, Wyoming

-----  
That's really cool....I always wanted a cape; that could be really impressive to a jury!

John R. Green

-----  
I've used Tom James for the last 7 years or so and have been very satisfied with their service and suits. The price doesn't work out to be any more expensive than what you would pay to have similar quality suits at a store.

They come to you, measure you, then bring it to you when done, and after a final fitting at your office have it altered to fit just right.

I am 6'4" with broad shoulders and long arms, but the rest of me is not that broad, so it works out well to have the individual fitting since I don't easily fit into what is mass manufactured.

David Leffler, New York, NY

-----  
Nothing signals success like a professionally ironed, starched shirt. If you ever get to meet Dwight Smith, the Tulsa solo who is chair-elect of the ABA General Practice, Solo and Small Firm Section, ask him about his shirts. Sure, professional ironing costs, but it's money well spent. Sure, you could iron them yourself, but it's a whale of a lot of work. Don't even think about asking a significant other to iron them unless you're prepared to pay some major alimony.

jennifer j. rose, Morelia, Michoacán, Mexico

-----  
Agreed, but not that alone. Shirt, quality necktie, shoes and haircut.

I know many solos will have different opinions, but if you are going for a good return on your investment in graduate education, CLE, hard-won experience, etc., this is the way. Check Malloy's Dress For Success, which has been in print for quite a few years now and is based on real research. Visual impression is important.

Steve Jobs can wear a black T-shirt and Levis and Brad Pitt or Gwyneth Paltrow can wear whatever they want, but most of us are not them -- by a long shot.

Norman Solberg, Osaka, Japan

-----  
I highly recommend Brooks Brothers wrinkle-free shirts. I got tired of buying a dress shirt that I would wear for 2 hours and it would look like I slept in it. I wash these shirts at home and they come out looking great. Just my 2 cents worth.

James Short

-----  
I give high marks to them, they truly are wrinkle free. For the ladies, Nordstrom carries a shirt called Foxcroft?--they are truly wrinkle free as well and come out of the dryer in beautiful shape.

Joan M. Swartz, St. Louis, MO

-----  
Anthony wrote: For shoes, I like E.T. Wright.

I have a pair of standard issue storm trooper black wing tips that I have been getting re-soled for the past 6 years. They are *\*very\** comfortable and shine up very well. Michael J. Sweeney

-----  
Lots has been written about suits for women, but what about dresses? I love to wear them as there's no maintenance, no blouse to tuck in, or multiple pieces except maybe a matching jacket. They have gotten all but impossible to find - after you subtract the mother of the bride and Baptist Sunday school teacher ones (which of course are lovely and have their place but it isn't my closet). Then try to find petite sizes that don't have tiny prints or little ruffles and it is a real challenge. Is anyone having luck finding suitable dresses? Khaki's, a white T-shirt and turquoise sweater with my mother's turquoise bracelet and my great aunt's turquoise earrings on this holiday

Deborah Matthews, Alexandria, Virginia

-----

One of the designers I buy, Jessica Howard, makes absolutely lovely dresses for taller/larger women, all of which have a coordinating jacket. They also seem to have nice petite wear as well. I buy at Carson Pirie Scott/Boston Store or Marshall Field's. I do know, however, that East Coast fashion sensibility is far more sophisticated than that of we Midwesterners, so your mileage may vary.

Donna Who today is wearing jeans, a Liz Claiborne cardigan, and turtleneck.

Donna Thompson-Schneider, Milwaukee

-----

What petite designers do you buy? I have found that Jones New York has very good petite suits and, when I get them at Loehmanns from the clearance rack, they're always under \$100, sometimes closer to \$50 (though I still may need tailoring to shorten the skirt and/or sleeves). Lisa Solomon

-----

In the interest of equity, let's address this for women lawyers as well.

For young new women lawyers out there, it is just as difficult to go from young, fun, feminine clothing to what can be seen as boring and conservative lawyer-wear.

What are the best places to find clothes that are conservative enough to be lawyerlike, yet are still feminine and ladylike?

Shanee

=====

Nordstroms, certainly, although their selection is best in standard misses' sizes.

Talbots is always a good bet -- and they have a wide range of sizes available on-line with a liberal return policy.

---- E. Alexandra Golden (Massachusetts)

=====

My recommendation is to find a designer or two that work for your body type and then buy that designer or two exclusively. For a woman, I'm pretty tall (almost 5' 9") and am a size 16-18, but have found two designers that work for me off the rack and buy them exclusively. I buy off season and get fabulous deals on court clothes.

Having said that, I spend most of my working life in a sweater and jeans. My clients simply don't care, and actually feel more comfortable with me

if I dress casually. I only dress up for court appearances or other "official" business like depositions or formal functions.

Donna Thompson-Schneider (Milwaukee)

=====

In the course of my years in practice (33) in Massachusetts, I encountered and or mentored many young women in the law and a number of my class in law school as well. The ones that had the most significant impact upon the court and fellow lawyers were those who seemed to eschew formal clothing such as is often shown on television law programs. Whatever they wore was immaculate, properly fitting, and had a flare all their own.

Two great women lawyers made a career in criminal law always wearing clothing with rich color and if in very formal situations, there was a blouse, or scarf or other arc of bright color which made them stand out giving them a distinct identity among court habitues. It was hard not to think of them first when cases of their specialty arrived which were not of our own. One is a judge today and the other a national media personality both of whom should be free of my intrusion and will not be identified.

Dick Howland (Massachusetts)

-----

Ann Taylor has great fitting and feminine clothing. Even the basic conservative suits have a different cut and fit better than most others I have tried. I have built up a nice courtroom wardrobe using items from the store- but also look on Ebay- I find it hard to pay retail when you can get new items for cheap, cheap cheap on Ebay! I even have bought a great looking, brand new J Crew suit- matching jacket, pants and skirt, for about 1/4 (\$400.00 retail) of what you would pay through the catalog.

Melissa A. Shomber (Edmond, Oklahoma)

=====

I once went to a CLE with the most well-known women lawyers in Massachusetts. One is now the TV lawyer and another is our Chief Justice of the Mass. Supreme Judicial Court. They discussed clothes, where they buy their shoes and who did their hair. It was hysterical.

I seem to buy most of my clothes and Lord and Taylor and Filene's Basement (the real one) these days. I get really good quality clothes at decent prices. Oh, and I made my Supreme Court admission suit and blouse myself.

Andrea Goldman (Newton, MA)

=====

The best fitting, long-lasting, most attractive suit I ever bought was from Brooks Brothers! The tailors are outstanding, and they apparently know how to fit women just as well as men.

Jo[anne] Fray

---

[ The relevance of this post to the reference line appears below, honest!]

In 1973, the year I decided, after 13 years of teaching, to become a lawyer, there was a great push to get women to go into law. At that time, women were about 3% of the people practicing law.

[Interestingly, that was an enormous drop from the number in the legal profession about 40 years before.]

Someone - I don't know who or what group - announced that there would be a mammoth conference of representatives from both the administrations and the students of all of the local law schools - Harvard, Boston University, Boston College, New England School of Law, Northeastern, and Suffolk (I think) - to talk about their schools. There would also be experienced female lawyers to talk about the practice of law for women. The event took place at Harvard Law School.

Until that time, I had not understood the notion of a "sisterhood," and I was somewhat skeptical that when women joined together they were somehow more inspirational than each woman facing and surmounting a challenge alone. My mind was changed by that conference! Hundreds of women attended, and the speakers were extraordinary.

The relevance to this topic: One of the speakers was a trial attorney - an older woman (probably about the age I am now). She said that people constantly asked her what she wore to court. She said when she is on trial, she is very careful to wear clothing that does NOT attract attention to herself. She wanted the jury to be focusing on her witness.

On an only -distantly-related-note: My mother was a lawyer. She passed the bar in about 1926. Her first trial was as lawyer for her younger brother who had been charged with criminally negligent driving. He had been backing up his car to get out of a parking space, and he had allegedly backed into a woman who was stepping off the curb.

The trial was reported in the three then-existing Boston newspapers. My mother was described as "petite," wearing high heels to offset her diminutive height, a sporty suit, and a jaunty hat. Yes, women wore hats all the time in those days. They also described her "rapid fire cross-examination" of the complainant. I don't know if it was the shoes, the suit or the hat, but the jury came back after 10 minutes with a not guilty verdict.

Jo Fray

---

I like Petite Sophisticate and Ann Taylor Loft Petites- I'm short (obviously). Also had pretty good luck with Kasper suits.

My husband and I attended the San Diego All Inns of Court meeting last week. He commented on the sea of black we found ourselves in. 90%

male and female were in black suits. I myself was wearing a black pantsuit. Weird.

Cindy Jones

---

I agree with a lot of what has been said, and will add my 2 cents worth. I dress well for court and other "formal" law-related appearances, mainly because I like how much better I feel, wearing well-fitted, stylish clothes. I then forget everything about appearance (knowing it is fine), and focus on my work. I also get a very good hair cut, and wear rather expensive eyeglasses that are very minimalist in appearance. Good, clean lines for everything. I would wear dresses and suits, before, but once I realized it was really okay here for women to wear dress pants in court, I switched and have never gone back -- good quality black dress pants, with a good jacket -- often Ann Taylor. My favorite designer, however, is Eileen Fischer -- more expensive than I choose to buy, but I find her things at times in the local (this is Santa Fe) thrift stores. My favorite accessories are striking scarves, including french Hermes silk ones (found, again, in the Santa Fe thrift stores). That said, I am starting to wear some skirts again, but they are long, not short, and worn with flats. I haven't worn them to court, but do to other law-related matters.

Gini Nelson

---

I've used Lands End for years.

Marion J. Browning-Baker (Stuttgart, Germany)

---

David Boies buys his shirts, suits and blue knit ties all from Lands' End too, so you are in pretty distinguished company.

One of the very best litigators in the US. Even the Justice Department hired him to try the Microsoft case, which is practically unheard of. His attire (the same look every day) is one of his eccentricities, but it is a tremendous time-saver, he says. Norman Solberg (Osaka, Japan)

[Back to Popular Threads](#)