

Women from Top Law Schools Likely to Drop out of BigLaw, Study Says



Summary: A report states that women from elite schools are more likely to quit BigLaw than the female graduates from lower-ranking law schools.

BigLaw firms have [made efforts](#) to close the gender gap amongst their associates, but a new study from ALM Intelligence said that may not matter. BigLaw firms notoriously hire the best of the best--that means people from top tier schools with the best grades--and research has shown that women who graduate with that pedigree are likely to quit after three to five years. Meanwhile, women from lower-ranked law schools actually *increase* their numbers in the BigLaw world over time.

Daniella Isaacson, a senior analyst at ALM Intelligence, said that female graduates from U.S. News & World Report's Top 10 law schools leave BigLaw three to five years after getting hired. These top ten schools are [Yale University](#) (No. 1), [Harvard University](#) (No. 2), [Stanford University](#) (No. 2), [Columbia University](#) (No. 4), [University of Chicago](#) (No. 4), [New York University](#) (No. 6), [University of Pennsylvania](#) (No. 7), [University of California Berkeley](#) (No. 8), [Michigan](#) (No. 8), and [University of Virginia](#) (No. 8).

According to the research, men from top schools do not experience the same drop.

The research from ALM did not conclude *why* these women left. However, it does not appear that Top 10 female graduates leave due to their salaries. While [older women in law](#) quit due to gender pay disparity, this reason does not work for elite women new in the field because salaries for new associates tend to be similar, no matter the gender.

Law.com said that one explanation for the prestige female exodus was because they had "the luxury of choice." Joni Hersch, a professor at Vanderbilt University, said that women from wealthier families tended to dominate the elite schools, and because of their family money, these women didn't really have to work, the way the lower-tier graduates do. This lack of hunger in the wealthy women allegedly result in them giving up on stressful careers. Additionally, Hersch said that these women marry wealthy men, who further enable them to not work.

Hersch's research covered women who went into all lines of employment, but she focused on women graduates of elite colleges. Her study found that of elite group only 68% of married moms work, and that women graduates from elite colleges were 30% less likely than their less privileged counterparts to hold full-time jobs.

Source: Law.com

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Why do you think women from Top 10 schools opt out of Biglaw after a few years? Let us know in the comments below.