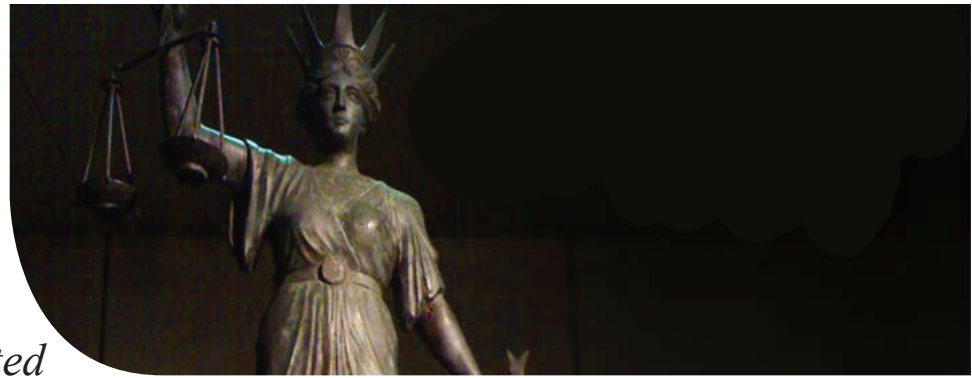# Career Spotlight

Attorney

Attorneys act as both advocates and advisors in our society. As advocates, they represent one of the parties in criminal and civil trials by presenting evidence and arguing in court to support their client. As advisors, attorneys counsel their clients about their legal rights and obligations and suggest particular courses of action in business and personal matters. They research, interpret, and apply local, state, and federal laws. A background in mathematics will help a student get admitted to law school and assist in the understanding of complicated theoretical legal concepts.

EDUCATION

Formal requirements to become an attorney usually include a 4-year college degree in a field such as mathematics, business, etc., three years of law school, and passing a written bar examination. Competition for admission to most law schools is intense. Math and Physics majors outscore all other majors on the LSAT (Law School Admission Test). (Michael Nieswiadomy, "LSAT Scores of Economics Majors: The 2003-2004 Class Update", Journal of Economic Education, pp. 244-247)

"Professional graduate schools in business, law, and medicine think mathematics is a great major because it develops analytical skills and the ability to work in a problem solving environment. And results on admission tests for graduate and professional schools show that students majoring in mathematics receive substantially higher scores than most other majors."
William Allard & Clark Bray
Duke University, Mathematics Department

MATH REQUIRED

• College Algebra
• Trigonometry
• Geometry
• Calculus I and II
• Finite Mathematics
• Statistics

Low-end Salary: $55,870/yr
Median Salary: $115,820/yr
High-end Salary: $187,200/yr

WHEN MATH IS USED

Attorneys use mathematical skills such as problem solving and logic in their everyday business activities. Much like a math problem, attorneys in court need to illustrate step-by-step their knowledge of the case.

POTENTIAL EMPLOYERS

Approximately 27% of attorneys are self-employed, practicing either as partners in law firms or in solo practices. They may also hold positions in government, in law firms or other corporations, or in nonprofit organizations. Most government-employed attorneys worked at the local level.

FACTS

There are many different types of attorneys, such as private attorneys, trial attorneys, corporate attorneys, intellectual property attorneys, patents attorneys, insurance attorneys, environmental attorneys, and government attorneys.

CITATIONS

http://www.math.ucdavis.edu/~kouba/MathJobs.html
http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes231011.htm
http://money.usnews.com/careers/best-jobs/lawyer
http://careerplanning.about.com/od/occupations/p/attorney.htm