

“I spend much of my day  
**researching** legal issues, **reading**  
agreements, **writing**, and **editing**.”

*Lawton Way '05*

## The VMI Pre-Law Society

Want to learn more about law school?  
Join the VMI Pre-Law Society. Contact  
adviser MAJ Mary Stewart Atwell at  
atwellms@vmi.edu.



MAJ Mary Stewart Atwell and members of the  
VMI Pre-Law Society visit the Supreme Court.

### Lawyers and law students must be able to

handle a high volume of writing  
and reading  
read closely for detail  
read deeply for comprehension  
analyze situations and texts  
reason with logic and accuracy  
argue effectively  
write with precision  
write with power

**As a VMI English major, you'll  
develop these skills throughout  
your degree.**

# So you want to be a lawyer?

Preparing for a  
legal career  
with the VMI English major





**Aaron Campbell '03**

*Campbell is a former defense attorney and veteran prosecutor. He is lead enforcement counsel and oversees litigation for the Utilities Section at the Virginia State Corporation Commission.*

“The English faculty at VMI demanded good writing, which prepared me well for law school and life as an attorney. As an English major, I sculpted my writing and learned to **distill large amounts of information in concise language**, a skill I use every day. The techniques I exercised in interpreting literature transfer well when I have to decipher legal opinions and other complicated texts.”

“If you are a trial lawyer, **your powers of persuasion and your ability to connect** with a judge and jury are extremely important. My coursework in the English department developed that skill set. Understanding Blanche DuBois' struggle in *A Streetcar Named Desire* and analyzing Iago's motives in Shakespeare's *Othello* are examples of how I became proficient in **empathizing with clients, understanding the grey areas in life, and arguing a position.**”

**Matthew Mikula '05**

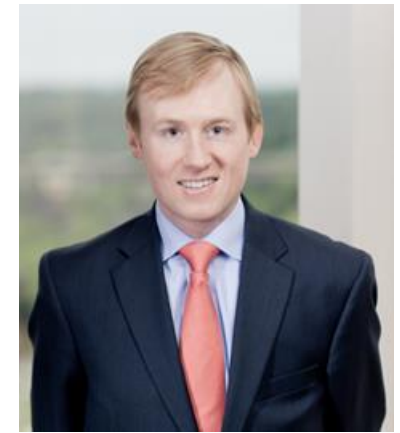
*Mikula is partner at Gilliam and Mikula, PLLC. He specializes in criminal law, personal injury, and civil litigation, among other areas.*

“I chose the English major to prepare me for law school. I knew English involved **reading, writing, and critical thinking**, which are the foundations of law school. **I credit my success** in the academic rigors of law school to the solid foundation I got in my VMI English major.”



**Russell McGuire '96**

*Lt. Col. McGuire is a former infantry officer and the commonwealth attorney in Louisa County, VA.*



**Lawton Way '05**

*Way is a partner at Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP in Richmond, VA, where he specializes in securities law and corporate finance.*

## What does a lawyer do?

“On the research side, I need to **comprehend and break down** complex legal issues and then **summarize** those issues into **concise explanations** for my clients.

When drafting or editing agreements, I must **accurately reflect the views and agreements** of the different parties in a transaction. These things are usually complicated and multifaceted.

Where possible, I **craft** an agreement so that the **language benefits my clients**—their perspectives and interests.”

