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Lawdragon: Celebrating Ten Years Of Captivating Legal Journalism

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For ten years, legal media company Lawdragon has been telling great stories about the law and lawyering.

Lawdragon embraced the power of the internet early on, creating content open to all who were interested in stories about the law. Lawdragon has shown their commitment to high-quality legal journalism by crafting feature stories, a popular Question and Answer series, and an annual Lawdragon 500 Leading Lawyers in America devoted to attorneys, what they do, and what is possible with a law degree.

Lawdragon was founded by Katrina Dewey as a platform to tell stories about lawyers and lawyering. Dewey began her career as a lawyer, but in her words, "I quickly discovered that I wanted to write about lawyers instead of practicing the law myself." She left her law firm associate job and "I did what I could to get hired as the lowliest journalist at the Daily Journal in California." The "lowly" journalist position became Editor in 1996, a move that Dewey describes as "a huge and lucky break." In 2005, with a desire to work more in the emerging online journalism market, Dewey founded Lawdragon. Daily Journal reporter John Ryan joined her and continues to serve as the company's editor-in-chief.

Looking back at the first issue, Dewey describes the publication process as like "giving birth." They wanted to kick off the magazine in an edgy, interesting way, and one of the first stories was on the idea of term limits for Supreme Court justices. Dewey remembers, "the week after we shipped our first issue, Justice Rehnquist passed away." Another memory of the beginning was Hurricane Katrina. That disaster hit the same weekend the first publication went out, and it lingered as a sort of ghost each time Lawdragon has published an article that showcased the aftermath of the storm and the various legal issues that followed afterwards. Looking back, Dewey describes the early days by saying, "we saw ourselves as an intrepid band of journalists, taking on larger lawyer outlets that were a little slow on the digital uptake." And that has been part of Lawdragon's success.

Dewey saw the writing on the wall about how the media landscape was changing--and she wanted to create a place for features and profiles of lawyers with a company that had "digital in its DNA." After ten years, the company has grown into a marketing and branding platform packed with fascinating tales of the law, using the power of the internet to allow anyone who is interested access to their stories. In fact, the content had become so popular among firms and lawyers that Lawdragon created a new "Lawdragon Press" division that provides paid content, marketing and branding services for firms.

Along those lines, when asked to describe Lawdragon's audience, Dewey says, "We write for everyone who can read and has an interest in the law." The goal is to create intelligent, wide-ranging, eclectic content that shows what an attorney can do with a law degree. Dewey says, "The goal is to write stories that everyone can access, but are still interesting enough to appeal to attorneys."

And true to the mission, reading Lawdragon provides perspective on just how far-reaching a law degree can be. With features on everyone from David Tolbert, President of the International Center



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for Transitional Justice, Adam Streisand of Sheppard Mullin, who litigated the trial that paved the way for the sale of the LA Clippers to Jodi Westbrook Flowers at Motley Rice, who has worked for over a decade for the victims of the September 11 attacks against the financiers and supporters of Al Qaeda, the subject matter is an abject lesson on just what the law can accomplish.

"We've tried to cast a wide net on our coverage of interesting lawyers and legal matters, which is why we've done original reporting on justice issues in places like South Africa, former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, The Hague and most recently Guantanamo Bay," Ryan said.

One essential element of Lawdragon's philosophy is an unwavering optimism about high-quality articles and reporting. Dewey says, "We are optimists about good content; we believe there is a place for good content in the world." With an intrinsic belief that the law has the power to change people's lives, right wrongs, and inspire as well as an understanding that lawyers who practice law have compelling reasons to do so, over the ten years of its existence Lawdragon has demonstrated a commitment to showcasing those stories. Dewey says, "We are about the power of story, generally. We want to show the individual stories of these attorneys who are advocates of the law, who all have their own perspective and ways of contributing to justice. "

A natural outgrowth of that philosophy is the Lawdragon 500 Leading Lawyers. This feature highlights some of the most captivating attorneys and the work they do across the nation. While the Lawdragon 500 is probably the best known element of the publication, it is not a ranking system. Through a careful process balancing editorial research by Lawdragon staff, law firm submissions, and an open online nominations form, the 500 are carefully curated, but not ranked. Instead, the guide is a way for Lawdragon to showcase attorneys and their perspectives, how they contribute to justice, and how they use the law as a tool to advocate.

As a result of the commitment to quality content and great stories, Lawdragon articles have strong SEO content and can be a great platform for the attorneys who are featured. One thing Lawdragon provides for the attorneys that are featured is objective, third party, independent recognition of their skills and reputation. Additionally, Lawdragon publishes an annual print publication, giving attorneys and their clients something to hold, beautiful pictures to see, and amazing articles to read. As Carlton Dyce of Lawdragon points out, "Our print publication is great for attorneys to have in their offices, handy for their clients to read while they are waiting. It's a great way to showcase the attorney they are about to see."

The tenth edition of the Lawdragon 500 will be released soon, an exciting milestone for the company. Over the years and after many compelling stories, Lawdragon remains excited about its core mission-telling stories of lawyers and lawyering. With millions of lawyers doing captivating work in many fields there is no shortage of stories, and Lawdragon remains committed to telling them.

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