“My decision to become a lawyer was irrevocably sealed when I realized my father hated the legal profession,” John Grisham is quoted as saying. Mission accomplished, he found his niche as an author, as did others trained in law, including Henry James, Scott Turow, Perri (Pamela) O’Shaughnessy – and a number of graduates of the Faculty of Law.

Andrew Pyper ('95), whose first novel Last Girls arrived on the market to great fanfare in 1996, says there were always literary minded people in law school “probably because writing and law are about playing with words.” He and the other four writers featured here – Jack Batten ('57), Naomi Duguid ('79), Guy Gavriel Kay ('78), and Judith McCormack (U of T’s DLS Director) – do not regret attending law school. They learned to work in a disciplined fashion, they made some good friends, they’re proud to be lawyers, and McCormack still practises. However, says Batten, “I didn’t learn to write in law school. Lawyers in my day wrote pretty terribly, with some notable exceptions like former Supreme Court of Canada Justices Bertha Wilson and Brian Dickson.”

Fiction writing is not the point of law school, of course. Students do learn a certain amount about technical legal writing, depending on the courses they take, says Dean Mayo Moran. She is quick to add, however, that the study of law itself is in many ways profoundly engaged in attentiveness to language and the implications of language. “It is a critical part of what we do,” says Moran. “What we teach in law school is how to deal with language in ways that are persuasive, attentive and subtle. It’s such a deep part of what we do as lawyers. All faculty members teach our students that, every day, in various ways.”

Dean Moran studied English and taught English and theatre to high school students in the 1980s before she entered law school. She’s an avid reader and so are most of her colleagues, she says. “Literature is full of insights for law. Many of us read widely because we love it but also because it helps us think about the kind of world that law shapes and the part that we play in it.”

The Faculty’s attention to language is evident. There’s the Law and Literature book club series for alumni; the intensive course, Law, Language, and Literature; and this year the launch of the graduate program, Law and Literature, offered jointly with the Department of English. Students are excited about the new program, and who knows how many of them will be inspired to give writing a serious try. As McCormack says, “It’s remarkable how many lawyers say they want to write.”
aw presented itself as "a reasonable option" to Andrew Pyper after he finished his master's degree in English at McGill University in 1992. His girlfriend at the time was a student at law and the two of them imagined sharing a practice and a life. Three months after he started his studies, the relationship ended and he was stuck, wondering if law school was the right place for him. However, a Presbyterian sense that you don't quit spurred him on, and in 1995 he graduated and earned a Legal Theory Award for good measure.

He was called to the bar in 1996, the same year he published his first book, a collection of short stories called *Kiss Me*. More than one of these stories started as sketches in the margins of his law school lecture notes, he recalls. "Taxation classes gave rise to some pretty good fiction." Indeed, his friends wondered how long the law would sustain his interest in class before he switched to creative writing. "Of course, I'd hit them up for notes after class," Pyper says. "Exam time was really tough but I'm a good panic learner."

Although he was proud to have earned his credentials as a lawyer, Pyper chose a different path, one that led him to Peterborough where another girl beckoned. The gothic feeling of the town inspired the mood of his first novel, *Lost Girls*, published in 1999 to rave reviews. "Andrew Pyper does for Northern Ontario what Charles Dickens did for the streets of London," said *Quill & Quire*. An article about the Pyper phenomenon in *The Scotsman* noted that "Andrew Pyper, 32 years old, has a huge new bestseller on his hands with his debut novel *Lost Girls* … There has been much excitement, big international publishing deals, film rights being auctioned."

Meanwhile, Pyper met and married Heidi Rittenhouse (now Heidi Pyper), a Toronto arts administrator, and this year they had their first child. Work is pouring in, and life is sweet. Little wonder that others dream of switching careers. "There are a lot of manuscripts in secret shoe boxes in lawyers' closets," he says. "However, fiction writing requires the kind of obsession that makes weekend-only writing impossible. It's either/or, I think. And if you're looking for any financial security, stick to your day job. When the bank asks me what my annual salary will be next year, I have no idea. There's zero security in writing."
University of Toronto Faculty of Law


“...so fascinating it renders one virtually speechless.”

*Quill and Quire*

Make one lawyer, give her a leave of absence, connect her with a young man riding his bicycle in Tibet, add generous helpings of curiosity and imagination, and you’ve got the foundation for an amazing series of books on culinary cultural journeys.

Naomi Duguid and Jeffrey Alford were described as “Canada’s top travel cookbook writers” by BookTelevision last year. After 20 years of traveling, separately and together, with their two sons, they’ve produced a series of books that offer painless recipes with friendly prose and vibrant photos that weave customs, geography, and history into engaging armchair travels.

Home is a row house just south of U of T, a place full of mementos from their travels with a herb garden that comes in handy when recipes are tested. Other ingredients they purchase in places like Chinatown and Indiatown. “Living in downtown Toronto is a continuum of our travels,” says Duguid.

After completing an undergraduate degree in geography at Queen’s, Duguid took up law studies at U of T. She was called to the bar in 1981 and worked as a labour lawyer in Toronto for four and a half years. Then she took a leave of absence to travel and realized she wanted to be “out in the world asking questions.” Alford, whom she met in Lhasa in 1985, was of the same persuasion. They first wrote pieces for bicycle magazines and food magazines before finding their niche in exploring food as culture.

“I didn’t hate law,” Duguid says. “If I had three lives, I’d spend one practicing law, but with only one, I chose to be out in the world with more time and less money.”

When she first started working on freelance articles her writing was “functional and distorted by lawyering,” she says. “The ability to achieve ‘lightness on my feet’ on the page was an issue of confidence: the more you do it, the better you get at it. I think we all have creativity that we haven’t been given permission to explore. And it is painful being a beginner. While everyone else has a trajectory, you have no status.”

In 2004 she was asked to speak to members of her class who assembled for their 25th anniversary dinner. “Afterwards some people told me they wanted to quit but didn’t know how... Everyone is so hard on themselves, juggling jobs and expectations. My advice is, lower your costs, and take a break. It’s much easier to live with grace when you don’t have feelings of anxiety.”

For more about Duguid’s recipes for life and food, see www.hotsoursaltysweet.com.
Guy Gavriel Kay is usually found under “Fantasy” in bookstores and libraries. He has published *The Fionavar Tapestry*, a trilogy that includes *The Summer Tree* (1984), *The Wandering Fire* (1986), and *The Darkest Road* (1986). *Tigana* is from 1990, followed by *A Song for Arbonne* (1992), *The Lions of Al-Rassan* (1995), and the two-volume Sarantine Mosaic, consisting of *Sailing to Sarantium* (1999) and *Lord of Emperors* (2002). *Beyond This Dark House* (2003) is the only collection of poetry he has published. *The Last Light of the Sun* is from 2004, and his most recent novel, *Ysabel*, was published in January 2007. He also writes essays, book reviews, speeches, commentaries, and scripts for television and film. Currently, he is adapting *The Last Light of the Sun* for Robert Chartoff Productions in Hollywood.

A lawyer’s closing address to the jury is similar to a writer’s completed book manuscript, says Guy Gavriel Kay, an internationally acclaimed author and poet. Both legal and literary professionals must be proficient in topics they’ve never thought about before, he explains over a cup of cappuccino at Tik Talk Café on Harbord Street. Lawyers need to learn quickly what’s essential so they can cross-examine the real experts and draw some authoritative conclusions, and writers want to ensure that their stories make sense.

In his 25 years as an author, Kay has had to figure out what’s essential about things like Byzantine mosaic, chariot racing in the sixth century, troubadours, and Viking ships. His readers around the world welcome his knowledge without question; had he stayed in law and appeared before a jury, the jurors would probably be equally persuaded by his expertise.

Kay had three distinct career aspirations as a child: to play right wing for the Toronto Maple Leafs hockey team, to become a lawyer, and to become an author. The hockey player took a back seat, and the author in him saw he had to do some living before he became a writer. Criminal law interested him, so he enrolled at U of T’s Faculty of Law for the first and the third years, and spent second year at the University of Manitoba, in order to take the sophisticated litigation course created by Professor Gordon Dilts, and won the mock trial championships in Vancouver that year.

He graduated in 1978. At the gentle prompting of his father, he made one application for an articling position before he flew off to a Greek island to spend a year with his typewriter. “Much to my surprise my application landed me a position in Edward Greenspan’s firm,” he remembers. After completing his manuscript for a novel about Canadians backpacking in Europe (never published), he returned to do his articles. The dynamic lawyer and the aspiring writer discovered they had much in common, and both were actively involved in the award-winning series, *Scales of Justice*, produced by George Jonas, first for radio then for television.

Most of Kay’s books were written in France but then his two children had to go to school, and the annual trips stopped. Last year the family returned to France for *Ysabel*. Kay and his wife, Laura Beth Cohen, would have stayed but the children, then 14 and 8, “threatened to row home,” he grinned. Accordingly, his travels are limited to book tours and readings these days. His website at www.brightweavings.com includes announcements on *Ysabel* which is being published in January 2007.

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“Historical fantasy of the highest order, the work of the man who may well be the reigning master of the form.”

*The Washington Post*
Jack Batten has written 34 books, hundreds of magazine and newspaper articles, and he was a movie reviewer for CBC Radio's Toronto morning show for 25 years. Four of his books are crime novels, among them Straight No Chaser (1989).

Tie Breaker (1983) is a young adult novel. Five books deal with the legal profession: Lawyers (1980), In Court (1982), Robinette (1984), a biography of John Robinette, Judges (1986), and On Trial (1988). His sports books include The Leafs (1993; reprinted in 1999 and 2004); Nancy Greene's autobiography (1968), the first book he wrote; and The Man Who Ran Faster Than Everyone, a biography of Tom Longboat, which won the 2002 Norma Fleck Award for best children's nonfiction.

Canada Moves Westward (1978) is a social history of Canada in the 1880s, one in a series of books about Canada in each of the decades. The Annex - The Story of a Toronto Neighbourhood was published in 2004. He is currently writing a book about the British nurse, Edith Cavell, a World War One heroine. It will be published in the fall.
J

ack Batten makes people smile. Remember “Back to the Future” in Nexus in 2002, the piece in which he chronicled his return to law school for one day? “It is 3:40 on a recent autumn afternoon, and I’m sitting in Ernie Weinrib’s first-year Torts lecture. I begin to feel a small ache in the centre of my forehead…” His style is clear and droll, and in person, he’s no different. Let the good stories roll.

Batten went to law school because he was told to, and much to his amazement he made it and was called to the bar in 1959. But his heart wasn’t in law.

“I knew I wanted to be a writer at the age of 13. In first year of high school at UTS we were asked to write an essay about an occupation we admired. I wrote about being a journalist. The vocation guide took our essays, gave us some tests, and to me he said, ‘Batten, it’s clear to me – this is scientific – that you’re cut out to be a photo engraver.’ Funny enough, my father owned a photo engraving business, but my parents wanted me to be a lawyer.”

While practising, he started to write articles for jazz magazines that paid nothing but published all. His big break came when he was introduced to Robert Fulford, then editor of the Saturday Star book page. Fulford asked him to do a book review, and he laboured over it for three weeks, producing an 800-word piece that Fulford received with the comment: “You’re a writer.” More articles followed, and Batten stole time for his writing assignments when he should have been researching law texts at the library. “I didn’t feel guilty for a second,” he laughs.

In 1963 he was offered a job at Maclean’s magazine and spent all of 10 minutes considering and accepting a new career. For the next five years he bounced from one magazine to another and then took another leap - he became a freelance writer and has worked in his home office ever since, just up the stairs from the office of his wife, Marjorie Harris, another well-known Toronto writer.

Law school was not a complete waste of time. First off, it taught him discipline. Second, it gave him valuable insight when he wrote his books about lawyers and judges. “Also, it impresses the hell out of people when they know I’m a lawyer,” he says. “I wrote about the musician Ronnie Hawkins three or four times, and he never referred to me as the writer, he always introduced me as ‘the lawyer.’ People seem to have a higher impression of lawyers than of journalists.” Above all, law school was the start of a couple of treasured friendships that Batten wouldn’t exchange for anything.
If you dream of spending some time on your writing, far away from it all, there are lots of options. You could rent a house in rural Spain, switch homes with a family from another country, or take a “seabattical” as did Jeananne Kathol Kirwin. A graduate of the Faculty of Law (’83) and a practising Edmonton lawyer, Kathol Kirwin, her husband Patrick (’82) and their four children spent a year sailing the Eastern seaboard and the Caribbean in 2000-01 aboard their catamaran Cool Breezes. A writer at heart, Kathol Kirwin thought she would complete the great Canadian novel while aboard, but it was her weekly e-mails home that ended up as *Greetings from Cool Breezes: A Family’s Year Aboard*, published in 2005. A link on her website www.jeanannekatholkirwin.ca shows how you, too, can experience the live-aboard life – for a week or for a year.

Judith McCormack had social justice on the brain from an early age. She worked as a legal secretary for Paul Copeland, and he encouraged her to go to law school which she did at Osgoode Hall at the age of 19. She also wanted to write but wasn’t ready. After working in labour and human rights law in private practice and as in-house counsel for the Ontario Nurses’ Association, she joined the Ontario Labour Relations Board as a vice-chair and became head of the board in 1992. She returned to private practice as a partner at Sack Goldblatt Mitchell, and is now Executive Director and an adjunct professor at Downtown Legal Services, operated by the U of T Faculty of Law on Spadina Avenue.

She finally turned to writing in her late thirties. She was still a practising lawyer and had two small children, “so I only had time for short stories,” she recalled during a conversation at her office. “I woke up at 5 am to write, and I was exhausted all the time. I must have been desperate!”

She found a better balance at the clinic where she spends two-thirds of her working hours teaching students and helping low-income people who have been treated badly by life. The rest of the time she writes, but she leaves her idealism at the clinic. “I don’t write with an agenda; I hate polemic. My concerns are literary: Are the characters authentic, is the writing true, do I provide illumination in terms of human nature, does the rhythm work? The stories tend to develop on their own, and I go along with them. I hope they’re as satisfying as some of the books I’ve read, books that send shivers down your back when you hit a moment of wisdom or truth.”

Compared with the drafting of legal documents, fiction writing is “like dessert” she says. “Legal language can be sonorous or elegant but it must follow the etiquette. Fiction is delightful because you can use such a broader range of words and structures. At the same time it’s a challenge. Sometimes the words, sentences or paragraphs are a tangle, other times it’s clear sailing. Writing is difficult, and you have to be fiercely dedicated.”

Two years ago, McCormack took time off to work on the structure of her first novel. She gave the plot and the characters her undivided attention, and after building the framework she was ready to return to work while adding layers, texture and nuances to the story in her spare hours. The book will be published in 2007.