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## Dickinson Law: From LLB to JD

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## Dickinson Law: From LLB to JD

NOVEMBER 8, 2018 BY [PAMELA G SMITH](#)

**185**  
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In Judge John Reed's proposal to Dickinson College for the formation of his law school, he requested that Dickinson College confer the Bachelor of Laws (LLB) degree upon any graduates of his school. Dickinson College agreed, and on July 15, 1836, Judge Reed requested that the President of Dickinson

College award the LLB degree upon four students: H. Nelson McAllister, William P. Orbison, J.H. Carter and Hyatt P. Hepburn. In 1837, he requested that the degree be awarded to R.A. McMurrie, Alfred Nevin and Andrew Curtin. Alfred Nevin had been the first to enroll in the Law School, and [Andrew Curtin](#) would go on to become Pennsylvania's Civil War Governor.

The LLB was originally awarded during a time when possessing a bachelor's degree was not necessarily a requirement for attending law school. Over time, this of course changed, and law schools began gravitating towards the award of a juris doctor (JD) degree instead. In 1964, the [American Bar Association \(ABA\)](#) noted that there was a lack of uniformity and confusion over the name of the degree being awarded by law schools, with some schools continuing to award LLB degrees while others were awarding JD degrees. However, by that time, both degrees had evolved to signify the same thing, *i.e.*, that a student had successfully completed a professional program in the law above and beyond that of a bachelor's degree. Therefore, the ABA passed a [resolution](#), recommending that all ABA-approved law schools award JD degrees.

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Dickinson Law began awarding the JD degree to law graduates in 1966, and in 1968, decided to award the degree retroactively to graduates who desired to make the switch. Burton R. Laub, *The Dickinson School of Law: Proud and Independent* (1983).

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