

# BINARY SOLUTION IN LAW SCHOOLS

20 June 2000

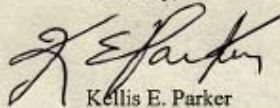
## Letter of Reference for The Binary Solution

In an era when retrenchment in admissions of minority students is fast becoming not only the policy but also the law of the land, Eva Lana's Binary Solution has offered a tried and true response. By preparing students to perform at the top of their abilities, Binary Solution has become an effective remedy. I can speak for the success of this program because I have witnessed numerous students pass from the law school application phase into the student body at Columbia Law with the aid of Binary Solution. Many of these students had already taken the LSAT and had recorded a score too low to be admitted. Binary Solution transformed them into persons who attained the scores necessary to merit admission.

Eva Lana founded Binary Solution for the purpose of assisting all candidates for law school and not simply for minorities. She is so effective, however, that her classes attract students from a variety of ethnic and class backgrounds. Her success is due in large measure to her strategy of immersing students in the process. She molds her course around the needs of the students and inspires them to believe that they can and will obtain high marks.

I support her program enthusiastically and can vouch for its high level of performance in the pursuit of its historic mission.

Sincerely,



Kellis E. Parker  
Sulzbacher Professor of Law

## *Excerpted from the CUNY Law School Contract (2006- 2010)*

Proposed text for sole source:

Scope of Work: To be taken directly from the letter agreement

Justification for sole source: Eva Lana, the principal of Binary Solution Test Preparation, Inc. is the only person who can deliver the services and materials described above. Although there are many other commercial LSAT preparation courses, the course and course materials described above are the only ones that fit the philosophy and delivery requirements of CUNY School of Law's Pipeline to Justice Course for the following reasons:

It is the only course that was designed to use the LSAT preparation process as a foundation for legal reasoning and analysis skills.

It is the only course that uses a single Casebook (patterned on law school casebooks) as its material.

It is the only course that mimics law school pedagogy in its content and delivery.

It is the only course in which all the materials, including those annotated and developed in the classroom, are available digitally to the students.

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# COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY News

Oct 13, 2000

## Kellis E. Parker, First Black Columbia Law Professor, Dies at 58

Kellis E. Parker, a noted legal scholar and civil rights activist who embraced jazz as a framework for understanding the law and, in 1972, became the first full-time black law professor at Columbia University, died on October 10 at St. Luke's Hospital in New York. The cause of death was acute respiratory distress syndrome, which struck him suddenly at the end of September, said Kimberly Parker, his daughter. He was 58.

"Professor Parker's classes in contract law and seminars on the music industry, remedies and the roots of African-American law educated and edified many generations of students," said Law Dean David Leebron. "We will deeply miss the optimism, enthusiasm and generosity he brought to every endeavor."

Parker grew up in Kinston, NC, where his parents owned and operated the first black dry cleaning establishment in town. Their struggles were recorded in Professor Parker's book, *The East End Dry Cleaners Hello Blues*. Music was what the family used to keep their spirits high and to augment the family income. Professor Parker's instrument was the trombone, his brother Maceo's was the saxophone and his brother Melvin played the drums. Both Maceo and Melvin became professional musicians.

Parker was one of five black students who integrated the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1960, where he worked with Rep. Allard Lowenstein to challenge segregation. At Howard University Law School he graduated at the top of his class and was editor-in-chief of the *Howard Law Journal*. Upon graduation he clerked for Spottswood W. Robinson III in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit. Planning to return to North Carolina to practice law, Parker instead took Judge Robinson's suggestion to try teaching. He secured a position at the University of California at Davis Law School, earning tenure after three years, and moved to Columbia Law School in 1972. He earned tenure there in 1975. At the time of his death, he held Columbia's Isidor and Seville Sulzbacher Professorship of Law. For a number of years he also taught seminars at Howard Law School and served as faculty advisor to Howard's *Law Journal*.

Professor Parker's primary area of expertise was contract law, but his unique intellect moved it in many new directions. His 1975 case book, *Modern Judicial Remedies*, was the first to introduce civil rights remedies into the regular law school curriculum. His subsequent writings, including *Law and the Black Experience: A Minority Report*, have all centered on using the law and a fresh and creative sense of justice to resolve the race issues in this country. He formulated legal strategies for cases at the Center on Constitutional Rights, the NAACP Legal and Education Defense Fund and for numerous other organizations and individuals.



Kellis E. Parker

An accomplished jazz trombonist, Professor Parker performed with the Don Shaw Group at the 1999 Naples, Italy, Jazz Festival. He was a familiar part of jazz bands around Columbia University as well as throughout New York and many European urban centers, but he joined most happily with Parker, the band of his son and daughter-in-law, Kellis Jr. and Darliene. These experiences, plus his course in music contract law, "Jazz Roots Revisited: The Law the Slaves Made," made him the first stop on the road to success for many young entertainers.

The family has requested that donations be made to the Kellis E. Parker Memorial Scholarship Fund, to be administered through the Law School.

# The LSAT Meets Binary Thinking: How the Pipeline Course Works

**Binary Solution spearheaded the successful Pipeline to Justice Program. In 2008, the program was awarded the Class Gift at the CUNY Law School commencement**

What does binary thinking have to do with the LSAT? Everything, according to Associate Dean Mary Lu Bilek, who co-teaches the Pipeline to Justice course.

Binary thinking involves exercising the “left brain,” the analytical part of the mind that governs much of legal reasoning. Bilek’s hypothesis is that left-brain performance can be improved with learning and exercise and that improving left-brain skills and the speed at which they are performed leads to improvements in LSAT scores, as well as improved performance on law school exams and on the bar exam.

And that’s the part that anchors the Pipeline Program. The course is geared to improving the LSAT scores of denied applicants to CUNY School of Law, and it includes everything from games that help students master critical reasoning and logic, to breathing exercises for test anxiety, to the use of Webinar technology that allows students to enter virtual classrooms to focus on problem areas. Peer counseling also helps students build relationships with classmates. Enhancing self-esteem is another critical piece of the course.



**Pipeline participant and first-year student Thaddecia Andrews.**

many commercial programs. Kaplan Test Prep, for instance, charges \$1,299 for its LSAT preparation course.

“All the while, we’re trying to surface exactly where the trouble spots are,” Bilek says. “Having adults in a classroom who know why they’re there and who want very much to improve makes for an exciting environment.”

The Pipeline course costs \$700 – roughly half the cost of

The course runs in two parts. In Part I, students meet for three hours on Tuesday and Thursday nights, from October to February, at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice in Manhattan. Monday nights are optional for students who want additional one-on-one help.

In addition, students must attend six, all-day Saturday sessions during the term, taking a practice LSAT exam on each of the mornings, then grading and reviewing the exam, item by item, in the afternoon. All told, during the course, students must take 15 practice LSAT exams. And that’s just the in-class time. Pipeline students spend virtually every minute they’re not at work or sleeping meeting in groups or with the instructors, working through examples, discovering logic patterns, and sharpening their skills.

Some, such as Dustin Smith, now a first-year student who boosted his score 13 points, says he took 35 tests and participated in a six-student study group that also met on additional weekends, before class on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and on all Monday nights.

## **Eva Lana is the Founder of Binary Solution**

The first part of the course is taught by Eva Lana, a Harvard University graduate and an Intel winner for biochemical research. Her past experience also includes working for one of the largest prep test companies. She began closely studying and deconstructing the LSAT exam in 1991. “Eva’s approach is unique and inspired,” Bilek said.

In early February, students take a real LSAT. If they reach a threshold score, they are invited to take the second half of the course. Part II lasts six weeks and is designed to build critical reading, analytic thinking, and post-graduate level analytic writing skills, Bilek said. Students write a five-page paper each week, on which they receive detailed feedback. Each student meets at least once in an hour-long conference with Bilek, but most meet far more often than that.

Part II of the course concludes with a test designed to evaluate each student’s ability to apply the knowledge acquired during Pipeline in a linear, analytic format and to produce a post-graduate level, timed rhetorical essay.

If students achieve in both portions of the course, they are invited to join CUNY Law. “This course requires a huge investment on all sides – from the students, the teachers, and the Law School,” Bilek says. “But the return on that investment is more than worth it.”