



## *Ross Mitchell, JD 2004 Entrepreneurial Attorney*

A computer systems and management consultant, inventor, musical comedy producer, and former broadcast engineer and radio announcer, Ross Mitchell has experience in many facets of the business world. As he saw it, acquiring a law degree was the next obvious step.

Concord was a natural choice as Mitchell spent a good deal of time on the road servicing clients around the country. Shortly after graduating in 2004, he passed the California Bar Exam, one of the nation's most rigorous. In subsequent years he was admitted to the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit, and the U.S. Supreme Court. In June of 2009, Mitchell was sworn into the bar of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts -- the first online law school graduate to have won this privilege, and only after persuading the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts, in a six-to-one decision, to allow him to sit for the bar exam. (Massachusetts, like many states, does not allow graduates of non ABA-approved law schools to sit for its bar exam.)

Having a daughter who attends a traditional law school (Suffolk University Law School in Boston) he is able to compare the breadth and depth of the curriculum with his own online education. "I found that Concord provided the equivalent quality of education, and some

times went beyond what was offered at my daughter's law school. For example, criminal law is covered in one semester at Suffolk, but is given a full year at Concord."

Another difference was in the composition of the student body at Concord, a population which is generally older and more experienced than traditional law students. Most are mid-career professionals with a real need and desire to learn the law, whether to enhance an existing career or to pursue other goals. "These were students who were deeply motivated, with clear goals and little time to waste, so the quality of interaction among themselves and with the professors was extremely high," recalls Mitchell. "There was no isolation due to the Internet. We were constantly in touch and the professors were always ready to help."

How does Mitchell intend to use his law degree? "I won't be hanging out a shingle, per se" he says, "but the degree is another tool in my consulting arsenal, and I plan to work on the kinds of projects that you need to be a lawyer to perform." So, ultimately, what is it that motivates Mitchell? "One day I was reading The Boston Globe and noticed that virtually every story had a lawyer involved in it," he says. "It clicked with me that if you wanted to 'play the game' you had to be a lawyer. By being a lawyer you can be more involved in things, more engaged in the world."