

How did you decide to become a lawyer, and how do you plan to use your skills to bring justice to the community?

In grade school, surrounded by colorful maps with capital cities appended with a shining star, and vibrant floor rugs displaying the alphabet, you have likely been told to *think outside the box*. Of course, this is quite sound advice for the bright-eyed youth. However, for an African American young adult raised in a low-class environment, *the box* was safety; *the box* was familiarity; *the box* was my expected eternal residency. Meticulously constructed, *the box's* socio-political origin requires more depth than this short essay can manage. Yet, for a base-level interpretation, every yellow brick on the road to becoming an attorney was, for me—and those of a similar ethnic and socio-economic background—faded grey: its cement chipping and the soil beneath fertilized with admission fees; costly standardized tests; stereotypical comments fluttering around dimly lit networking events, scenes devoid of inclusive representation. What inspired me to pursue a career in the American jurisprudence system is the inverse of this dramatized—yet, alarmingly so, only slightly—picture. That is, I decided to become an attorney to ensure that the spaces lacking in diversity soon reflect the reality of our nation: the diverse blossoms and fresh minds bursting with innovation yet pigeonholed in the chaffing palm of an antiquated societal structure.

In a practical sense, I am on the path to becoming a decorated attorney and, as such, a faithful servant of my community, to equip myself with the tools necessary to address the social inequities that are rampant today. It is not lost on me that a system that required generations of strategic planning, subconscious biases, and quiet complacency requires a solution as complex and fervent. A solution that is ever-changing, growing; a solution that is not my own, rather a collaborative effort in watering every barren patch one may come across with the delicate patience in knowing that change is evident. As such, becoming an attorney is but one way I seek to heal the wounds of past generations; that is, by thriving in the space *outside the box*, serving as a living outlier to the path those in power set out for minority, low-class youth, especially those from urban environments.

As a practicing attorney, I am confident that I will be better equipped to effect positive societal change by bringing justice to my community, even if indirectly: existing as a living proof that a life of crime, substance abuse, entertainment, or sports should not be the exhaustive list of my realm of possibilities. I plan to use my skills as an attorney to build generational bridges above the waters of systemic oppression, challenging the inequities minority communities have faced for generations. In that vein, I will ensure *the box* is but a frame through which we can all admire a society that is more just, more representative of the excellence that can be found in every corner of our nation.