

Personal Statement

“It ain’t nothing to find no starting place in the world. You just start from where you find yourself” (August Wilson) are words that would describe my reality. My starting place, at least in my mind, was pursuing an undergraduate degree that would propel me to the sky, a sky filled with clouds of dollar signs. My head was in those clouds, but my mind and heart truly were not. Even though I felt I knew my starting place, not having the true desire or the right reason for the desire is like not having a starting place at all.

Growing up in a home where money was always available and not ever wanting for anything, I was fueled by a desire to always have it that way. My mother was a successful businesswoman, and my father was an attorney. My parents always gave me the tools to succeed in life, and I felt my family’s expectations were for me to be as successful and prestigious as my parents. However, my expectations were to mirror my parents’ actions to become as wealthy as them. My original plan was to go to college, major in Pre-law, and go to law school afterwards. I would graduate and pass the bar within four years. From there, I would become a defense attorney and share a law office with my father, Bland and Bland. This plan was so natural for me because it was “my destiny,” at least according to everyone. It fascinated me how eyes would just “light up” when I told people about my plan to become a lawyer. I felt like it was the right thing to say to people and to do to satisfy everyone and my greed.

That plan changed because desires fueled by anything other than passion will cause a person to “run out of gas.” I wanted to be a lawyer for the wrong reasons, and it quickly caught up with me. I never did my research on the admission requirements to get into law school, thus not knowing a good G.P.A. was essential into getting into law school. I “skated” through college on natural intelligence alone and finished with a subpar cumulative GPA of 2.56, which could have been much higher if I had applied myself. Pushing myself to still live up to others’ expectations, I joined the Pre-law Society and was elected president my senior year; I did not put my all into it and did not take advantage of the opportunity to learn about the legal profession. I can honestly say I never researched the pros and cons of being a lawyer, the law schools, etc.

During my senior year, I took the LSAT for the first time and did not even take the initiative to apply for it; my mom did. Because of never studying, I made a disappointing 142. The reality finally “settled in,” and I knew in my heart that I did not want to go to law school. Of course, the status and riches of the profession were great. However, I had grown to realize that if I could not even muster up the energy to research the profession or the schools and study for the LSAT, I sure could not make it in law school. I was tired of school; therefore, lack of faith, laziness, and defeat caused me to come up with the notion that maybe being a lawyer was just “talk” and not actually what I wanted to do. With a made-up mind that law school was not for me, I put it on the backburner and started working in sales after college.

I have worked for numerous companies since graduating from college and learned a lot about myself that I had never paid attention to previously. I realized that I have a strong work ethic, and I am a quick learner. Any challenge I faced was met with a drive that caused me to conquer that challenge and be the best at whatever I was doing. These qualities afforded me a promotion from an entry-level position to Branch Manager at Enterprise Rent-A-Car in 2009, and I am currently a manager at Walgreen’s Inc. However, there has always been something missing during my professional career. Despite how well I did at my job, I never felt fulfilled. I was always thinking about being an attorney and what could have been if I had not given up or if I was motivated by passion.

Even though I have spent a lot of time in other professions, I believe that all my present and past experiences are/were meant for my development in some way. Through these experiences, passion finally caught up with my “what if” thoughts. While working at the various companies, I have noticed the injustices that people endure in the work place. Because of their ignorance of the law, many people have no way to fight back. I have witnessed wrongful termination, unfair labor practices, declining unemployment, and upper management taking advantage of lower-level employees. One thing I have never been an advocate of is people being taken advantage of. The type of incidents I witnessed restored my desire but for the right reason. I have a newfound desire to want to learn laws so I can challenge what’s wrong in the world. I want to defend those too vulnerable to defend themselves, whether this vulnerability stems from lack of knowledge or fear, and help them have a fair opportunity to succeed. I also began to reflect on the people I grew up with. They were not fortunate to have the life I had, and they strayed away from what was right to get whatever they could however they could. I want

the opportunity to defend the kids who made mistakes but want to do better. I don't like to see lives ruined after mistakes and the years of imprisonment that sometimes result from those mistakes. I want to help them remain out of jail and, at the same time, motivate and teach them how to be successful the right way through different routes and avenues. This new desire and passion led me to retake the LSAT to improve my score and reapply to law school.

I have researched plenty of law schools in America and the one that truly sticks out to me and I want to attend is UALR Law School. I visited the campus this year, and the site is extremely beautiful with an exquisite library. UALR offers a part-time program; therefore, I can go to school and still work to provide for my family. This university offers courses on corporate law, legal research, and criminal law, which are areas I want to obtain knowledge in. UALR has an in-house Bar Exam prep course, which is great for preparing students for the Bar Exam. At this university, 92.5% of all graduates are employed after nine months, and 86% of students who take the Bar for the first time pass it. UALR has a litigation clinic where I can help the less fortunate in the community while gaining the experience of practicing law. It is a small school, so students are able to receive a better chance of that one-on-one attention from professors. Last, there are extracurricular organizations that include the Arkansas Bar Association and Black Law Students Association, which show that the school pays attention to making the minorities feel comfortable and that they have access to all the tools available.

I did not take advantage of the tools that were available to me for a large portion of my young adult life: my parents' guidance and the opportunity to embrace all I could embrace during my undergraduate education. I never faced any economic challenges; my main obstacle was myself, me getting in the way of what I could be and could do. It was easy to speak on things during stages where I did not have to produce anything. It was only when I had to produce and did not that I truly found myself. Now that I know where I am going and what I am looking for when I get there, I am truly ready to embrace all I can to be the successful man I know I can be.