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Why I went to law school

On a recent visit back to my native state of Florida, I was having lunch with my grandfather, and while discussing my approaching final year of law school, he asked me, “So why did you decide to go to law school?”

I thought it was an odd question to ask me after I had been in law school for two years, but my grandfather was genuinely curious about my career choice. That is most likely because I am the first person in my family to go to law school. Almost every other family member is an engineer, including my grandfather. I have always known that I did not want to be an engineer, but I haven’t always known that I wanted to be a lawyer, either.

In college, I was a business major — determined to have a strong business career and certain that a business degree would guarantee me a successful job.

I never really considered a post-graduate degree because I didn’t think I would need it to find the job I wanted.

Then, in the beginning of my junior year, September 2008, the U.S. economy completely changed.

Suddenly, the professors started telling us that we would most likely not find a business job and would probably struggle to even find a job at all.

One professor in particular told us to consider a post-graduate degree, such as an MBA. I knew I needed to start exploring other post-graduate options, but law school wasn’t yet one of them.

The following semester, I enrolled in a business law class required for my major.

That class ended up becoming one of my favorite classes in college. That’s when my interest in law school really started. After class,

I went to meet with the professor, who told me how law school would open up a lot of doors for me and highly recommended that I consider pursuing a legal education. After that meeting, I began doing more research online about law school.

That’s when I realized how many different career channels law school provides. I always had a passion for environmental issues, and I became excited to learn more about the environmental law field as a possible career path.

Later, I contacted several attorneys, all in different types of legal fields. They told me that while law school is tough, it is also an incredible experience. All of the attorneys I spoke with had fulfilling careers thanks to their law degrees. So, at the end of my junior year, I made my decision to apply to law school.

The last three years have seen steady acceleration from LSATs and law school applications, through a big move from Florida to Chicago and two years of law school to now my final year at The John Marshall Law School.

I couldn’t be happier with my decision. Over the last two years, my critical thinking and analytic skills have sharpened. I have been able to not only experience but to actually assist with different trials and administrative hearings.

Additionally, I have met some of the smartest and most inspirational people who are using their law degrees to truly make a difference in the world.

I have been amazed at what some of my fellow law school peers have already accomplished in life.

I have really enjoyed watching the transformation of my classmates over the past two

years, and I am just as excited about their futures as I am my own.

Even though I am enthusiastic about the future, I know I am not out of the woods yet. Not only do I still have a year of classes and the bar exam to take but I have the hardest challenge of all ahead: finding a job in this down economy.

Even though the economy has slightly improved, the legal market is still struggling. At least once a week, I hear about how there are too many lawyers and too few legal jobs. Law school graduates are not in demand like they were just a decade ago and legal jobs are becoming more and more competitive.

No matter what happens, though, I know that I won’t regret my decision to enroll in law school.

Even with a year left to go, law school has already given me more opportunities than I would have ever had otherwise. I know that my law degree is a valuable asset. It has given me unique and marketable insights into the way the world works. In addition, I have been working really hard over the past two years to make myself stand out among other law school students.

Staying optimistic can be hard to do, though, with the constant news articles coming out about the weak legal job market. Nevertheless, I’ve never felt more confident in myself and in the direction of my life than I feel today as I start my final year of law school.

So that is what I told my grandfather, and he smiled as he told me that he is also happy with my decision to go to law school and that he is really looking forward to being at my graduation in May. And I am equally excited, especially at the prospect of applying my new law skills to protecting our world. ■

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