

On May 15th 2017, I learned a lesson that I will carry with me the for rest of my life: while our innate right to freedom can never be taken away, our personal liberty is vulnerable to our circumstances. In my family's case, our liberty and dignity were reduced to a mere piece of paper and were abruptly seized from our reach.

The day began normal as usual. After living in the library and drinking one (or one hundred) too many cups of coffee preparing for finals, I was ready to enjoy my last summer break before graduation. Just as I had settled in with a novel at the top of my list, I received a phone call from my mother that completely halted the trajectory of our lives as we knew it.

Due to legal restrictions, I cannot provide the details of our situation. However, I can say that my father walked into his office that morning with financial security, job safety, and a house to call home. He walked out of the office that same day with financial uncertainty, no job or home. We lost the very things that define the human essence: well-being, dignity, and hope. I realized that it is possible to reduce liberty and justice to mere illusions beyond our grasp.

In the following days and weeks, our new word going forward was survival. How could we survive without a home to live in? How could we survive without an income? How could I survive without the tuition money needed to finish my senior year and graduate? For the first time in our lives, we did not have the answers; but, we found the individuals who did.

We contacted a team of lawyers to pursue justice on our behalf. There is nothing more vulnerable than submitting your family's well-being, safety, and future to the expertise of others. I know this first hand. However, no matter the level of desperation, risk and reward are mutually exclusive.

After many difficult questions and unexpected answers, our well-being and dignity were not only restored, they were magnified. I can proudly say that nearly a year later, on May 5th

2018, I walked across the graduation stage as a summa cum laude student, with a diploma in hand, and toward a future brimming of opportunity. If it wasn't for the team of lawyers, I would not have been named the "Outstanding Graduate" for both the College of Business and the Marketing Department at my university. I would not have had the opportunity to mentor and lead nearly 300 young ladies as a Head Resident Advisor in my resident hall. I would not have founded and led the first Marketing Society club in the College of Business. I would not have accepted jobs after graduation that have provided ample marketing experience and expanded my business expertise. Finally, if it wasn't for the team of lawyers, you would not be reading these very words.

The currency of an education is not money, salary, or even experience. The currency of an education is opportunity. As difficult as it was, and still is, I proudly call that story mine not only because it transformed my life perspective, but it also ignited my purpose by compelling me to learn that a true leader is rarely the loudest voice in the room, there is always a better answer to every difficult question, hope invariably underlies each desperate situation, and every human being deserves to pursue freedom, justice, and liberty. By personally experiencing those lessons, I now possess the ability to apply them to every situation I face by choosing to never compromise character for success and passion for profit.

The deepest significance of an education is that it is the only investment that can never be taken away. My higher educational journey began as an intangible aspiration, was deeply fought for, and triumphantly obtained. The beauty of my story is that it gave me the rare opportunity to not reduce my education to a mere diploma, but to allow it to become part of my very essence. By fighting for the moment I could walk proudly across that graduation stage, I have realized the value in being a lifelong learner. Because of my unique journey, I have chosen to further my

education and pursue a Juris Doctor degree. Education allowed me to realize how deeply I desire to continually seek it in every aspect of life, both in and out of the classroom.

The job description of lawyers cannot be humbly reduced to words on paper; rather, they have the unique and delicate position to provide others with what can only be measured when given: opportunity. Law will give my story a voice by advocating for a purpose that extends beyond myself. If given the honor to pursue law as my career and calling, I'm confident that I will not only fulfill my purpose, but I will give others the right to fulfill theirs through the power of education.