

Keiara Burke

Prompt: Why I strive to become an attorney

Due to my father being in the military, I have been moving around since I was 3 or 4 years old. This nomadic lifestyle has resulted in the development of many great attributes. One of my many strong suits is being very adaptable due to the constant uprooting and starting over in a new place. I also developed the ability to quickly form emotional bonds with people. This ability has led to a love for connecting with people from all walks of life.

In elementary school, I had a friend who was different from many of the children in my class. Some of those differences were that she wore the same clothes to school; she rarely had food at lunchtime; and she wrote on the large lined paper that you practiced your ABCs on when you were little. Despite any of that, she was my friend. I shared my lunch with her, and played with her during recess. I became very protective of her. Whenever someone would try and make fun of her for not being able to write like the rest of us or mock her clothing, I would defend her. Looking back, I realize this was where my passion for helping others began. This has become a constant theme of my life thus far.

Since my sophomore year of undergrad, I have set a goal to helping minorities, especially those of my own community. The founder of my alma mater, Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune was a pioneer in so many ways and she is one of influences to make a change in the world. She built a school from a literal dump that the city gave her with \$1.50 and faith during a time period where she could be killed for her actions. My school's motto is "Enter to Learn, Depart to Serve". Now that I have graduated, I want to continue my education, specifically in law, to be able to help others. I earned my bachelor's degree in Finance at an HBCU. There we

learned of the history of this country that we do not learn in our K-12 experience. One of the many atrocities I learned was the Tulsa Massacre of 1921. A thriving city of black owned business burned down to the ground alongside thousands of its residents. We cannot forget the past but we can learn from it and improve our future. I have two experiences that have influenced my decision to pursue corporate/business law.

My biggest commitment to helping others was during my junior year of undergrad. I was able to participate in the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program as a tax preparer. VITA offered free basic tax return preparation to qualified individuals such as people who generally make \$56,000 or less, persons with disabilities; and limited English-speaking taxpayers. The program was also offered to the students on our college campus. The best part of this program was being able to connect with and offer assistance to the people from the community.

During the summer after my junior year, I interned at JPMorgan Chase & Co as an Analyst. I worked on a team to help a non-profit organization develop financial solution. While developing these financial solutions, our team noticed that the non-profit lacked many of the resources that would make it successful. For example, it did not have a well-established marketing team or an accountant to handle the financials. The non-profit also had a \$10,000 grant with no idea know how to use it. I believe that if this organization, like many more small businesses, had the necessary resources it would be able to achieve so much more.

Having a strong legal footing is also very important when starting a small business. My plan is to build a company that helps small business owners, particularly minorities. This company will have all the different components needed to start a business such as a marketing

team, business strategy, payroll, legal, etc. My goal is to contribute to revamping a Black Wall Street someday.

Alongside my company, I would like to develop an initiative that caters to the older children in the foster care system. Older children have a harder time being adopted due to the negative stereotypes that comes with the adoption process. The reason this will be alongside the company is because I would like them to work for the small businesses that we work with. This will give the small businesses younger more energized staff while also benefiting the children. The children will learn all the basics of life such as home and personal care skills, life-management and organization skills, and professional skills.