

The Accident and Injury Law Office of Terry Bryant 2022 Law School Scholarship Essay

*By Marco Pagano*

When I was thirteen, a couple of friends and I took it upon ourselves to call every senator in the country to voice our concerns about several damaging agricultural practices. Lacking a response, I decided to start writing opinion pieces and posting them on social media. A few months later, a local journalist came across one and invited me to a live interview, marking the beginning of a period of actively listening to the concerns of my local community and reporting on them and making me the youngest person to ever work professionally as a journalist in the country. Moving to the United States was not the end of my service, but a new beginning. My family, a group that I like to define as my relatives and my community, is the force that drives me.

My first experience as a volunteer in my new country took place at the local hospital. It was there that I met the value of empathy face to face. I could see firsthand how a kind word or gesture can transform someone else's world, and I learned that going the extra mile for those under one's care can have a wonderful impact on their hearts and one's own.

Once, I was tasked with walking an elderly lady in a wheelchair through the hallways. She had been there for six months. She told me about her life, her childhood in Philadelphia, and her deceased husband. After a while, we sat down in a quiet niche and continued to talk. When I brought her back to her room, she thanked me and asked me, with tears in her eyes, if I was going to come back the following week. I reassured her that I would. This encounter, along with many others during countless nights helping the most vulnerable, alone, and scared showed me how a simple act on my end could brighten someone's day, or week, and this lesson will accompany me for life.

I went on to volunteer at a summer camp, and then I became a volunteer catechist in my

local church, preparing students for their First Communion and Confirmation twice a week, and assisting in the organization and preparation of their respective Sacrament ceremonies. In my undergraduate university, I served as Secretary of Communications and as President of two large campus organizations, where I continued to get involved with the student body and connect with other organizations and instructors. I cared deeply about my fellow students, and I wanted to make our school an even better place for them. Throughout this process, I never ceased to send weekly reports on current international developments to four different radio stations in Argentina. I did this pro bono, as I knew that these local stations needed it.

Likewise, during my senior year of high school, I delivered a speech before the Board of Education to advocate for the enforcement of the requirement that schools across the county teach Holocaust education. As a result, the following year three high schools introduced Holocaust Education courses, and one middle school and several elementary schools introduced curriculum to fulfil the requirement. At the end of the day, it all comes down to how much I love my community and how much I want to improve it.

Together with my passion for my community always came a passion for the law. I attended my first university law class as a guest back in Argentina when I was fourteen. Soon after, already in the United States, I continued to take law classes in high school. Furthermore, I took part in two mock trial competitions, and I observed another law school class before I even started college. During the summer in between, I went down to the county's courthouse to watch trials and judicial proceedings in person. While attending Florida International University, I took undergraduate law classes and I remained informed about significant developments in the legal field.

Now, as I approach this major steppingstone in my life, I look forward to combining my two passions to advance the interests of the community. The pandemic showed us that we are all

called to make an impact, regardless of our occupation or the size of our mark. Well, I know that my impact will be thanks to the professional and personal tools that my law school education will provide me to thrive in the legal field. From a rank-and-file lawyer in the short term to a leader in twenty years, I aspire to use my newly acquired skills to take up those legal battles that are now above me. Regardless of my field of choice, I wish to be at the forefront of the struggle for a world that is fairer, better, and kinder to everyone that inhabits it.

I must prepare to confidently and skillfully stand on the front line, so I will participate in moot court during my education. I will become involved in clinics to enhance my ability to take the stand and articulately defend those in need. I would like to join a journal, at least, in order to be able to analyze situations critically and come up with creative solutions to the issues afflicting the community. I will continue to volunteer and participate in charitable activities, so I do not cease to improve as a person, which is my most important goal. Furthermore, I look forward to joining this new community and to the incredible collaboration opportunities that will arise from engaging with those I meet. After all, one is not alone in the plight for justice.

Whether it be for a kid and his future parents awaiting their adoption hearing, an immigrant family facing wrongful deportation, or a defendant mistakenly accused, I know that I will continue to dedicate my time and efforts to my community by using our judicial system to protect those that need it the most.