

The fear came, not in a wave but in a trickle. An offhand comment from a teacher or a family friend. An overheard excerpt from the nightly news, spilling from the kitchen television into my bedroom. A glance at the Chesapeake Bay, stolen from a perch in the third row of my mother's station wagon—even then, and even to a child, its receding shorelines were apparent.

I would learn to call the ensuing sensation by a host of names: climate anxiety, climate grief, climate dread. This feeling, what the organizer Daniel Sherrell calls “coming of age at the end of the world,” has been the defining influence of my life, as I have worked to determine my responsibility in the face of a potentially apocalyptic force. Each and every aspect of my life has been shaped by the specter of climate change—perhaps none more so than my desire to become an environmental attorney, working towards a more sustainable and ecologically just world.

In my work as a writer and organizer, I see the same dynamic play out on a daily basis: those who suffer disproportionately from the impacts of environmental degradation—communities of color, low-income communities, indigenous communities—are often the people with the least access to legal redress. The effects of this disparity are tangible, and often devastating. In Watts, a low-income community of color in South LA where my organization works, average life expectancy is 75 years. Forty miles away in the wealthy enclave of Malibu, it's 90 years. I hope to spend my career working alongside local organizers to change this state of affairs, increasing the accessibility of litigation as a means of achieving healthier, more equitable neighborhoods.

Upon graduating from law school, I intend to work for the environmental law firm Earthjustice. Specifically, I hope to serve as an Associate Attorney with the firm's International Program, collaborating with global communities on the frontlines of environmental degradation. In both this role and throughout my career, I hope to envision and develop innovative legal strategies, leveraging litigation as a tool of environmental justice and sustainability.

My personal and professional trajectories have been deeply informed by the values of equity and social justice. As an undergraduate, I became heavily involved in advocating for the rights of immigrants and refugees, many of whom were displaced as a result of climate change. In addition to creating and

leading my university's chapter of No Lost Generation—a student organization dedicated to raising awareness for the ever-intensifying refugee crisis—I volunteered at Villanova Law School's immigration clinic, supporting clients as they navigated the court system. During my senior year, I served as a program assistant on an initiative designed to train individuals as DOJ Accredited Representatives.

I also co-founded “We, Too, Are America,” an online initiative dedicated to publishing the stories of the countless immigrants who had made positive impacts on their communities. As Editor-in-Chief, I built and oversaw a team of twenty writers and editors, contributing to the platform's growth from a group of friends to thousands of organic supporters. Ultimately, our page garnered around 3,500 followers, our most popular posts reached audiences of over 25,000 people, and our work was featured on a number of major media outlets.

I have continued to put these principles into action as a professional writer. Last year, I co-authored *Changing Lanes*, a report on building a more gender inclusive public transportation system, commissioned by the Los Angeles Department of Transportation. *Changing Lanes* has already had a tangible impact on the way the department conducts business, inspiring a new “direct-to-destination” bus program, among other report-recommended initiatives. I then wrote a proposal to continue this work by developing a replicable framework to be adopted by cities throughout the country. Earlier this month, that proposal was awarded \$500,000 in funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

In *Radical Hope*, one of my favorite books, ethicist Jonathan Lear offers a theory that I consider indispensable to my work, goals, and daily life. To Lear, hope becomes radical when it is, “directed toward a future goodness that transcends the current ability to understand what it is.” I believe lawyers have an essential role to play in advancing radical hope, not merely securing the immediate legal wins needed to defend the environment, but also fostering a world in which communities can imagine and realize more just futures.

The Terry Bryant Law School Scholarship will provide an incomparable foundation for my goals. For one, the financial resources afforded by the scholarship will make it significantly easier for me to practice public interest law immediately after graduation. Moreover, I am excited about the opportunity to

connect with the broader Terry Bryant Law community—both with lawyers at the firm and past scholars.

Climate change is a uniquely interdisciplinary threat, and confronting it will require sustained collaboration across the legal profession. To that end, the relationships I foster during my time as a scholar will deeply inform my life's work as an attorney and advocate.