

MCBA Scholarship Essay

Growing up I never had an aspiration to be a lawyer. Looking back, I attribute my interest in the legal profession to a chance encounter my sophomore year of college. Early on in the semester, one of my roommates had told me he was going to an informational meeting for the University of Illinois Mock Trial Team. After some convincing, I begrudgingly agreed to accompany him. Although I knew that, under no circumstances, would I consider joining the team.

I didn't know much about mock trial, but I could discern from its name that it likely involved public speaking. I, like many adolescent college students, was deathly afraid of public speaking. I figured I would attend the meeting for moral support, and that would be the end of it. As you may have guessed, that wasn't the end of it. I sat through the meeting and once it ended, everyone in attendance made their way to the front of the lecture hall to sign up for a tryout spot. Not wanting to be the black sheep of the group, I thought I might as well sign up too.

Even after I had signed up, I was still wavering on whether or not I would attend the tryout time I had chosen. The thought of public speaking was terrifying to me, and I couldn't understand why anyone would subject themselves to it for fun. Nevertheless, after much convincing, I did attend my tryout. And the rest, as they say, is history. I soon learned to love public speaking and I learned that I wasn't too bad at it either. By my junior year, I was determined that I would pursue a legal career.

Naturally, my career aspirations include becoming a litigator. And what better place to gain courtroom experience than the state's attorney's office? Luckily, one of my coaches from the mock trial team got me in touch with an assistant state's attorney in McLean County. I have spent three summers now interning at the McLean County State's Attorney's Office. What began as an interest in litigation soon turned into a passion for criminal law.

In order to achieve this dream, I have made sure to take my legal studies seriously. Having practical public speaking skills can only get you so far. A good grasp of legal knowledge is equally, if not more important. Throughout my law school career, I have taken this to heart. I understand the value of a legal education and I do not intend to waste it. I do not see law school as simply a barrier to the legal profession; instead I see it as a way to hone my legal skills and take advantage of the resources around me.

With these tools, I hope to have an impact on the McLean County community for the better. With criminal law specifically, I hope to be able to contribute to a safer and fairer society.

If I do end up working for the state, I hope to never lose sight of the human aspect of the legal system. I hope to be someone who is focused on fair outcomes and not conviction percentages. If I end up defending clients, I hope to protect the rights of the accused and help people that are often in some of their most vulnerable times. Overall, I want to practice law with honesty and respect for all involved in the process.

I am extremely grateful for that chance encounter my sophomore year of college. Without it, I may have never realized the love I have for the legal profession. I would also like to express my gratitude for the McLean County Bar Association. I am grateful for organizations like this for wanting to help students pursue their passions with this scholarship opportunity. Your consideration is massively appreciated. Thank you.