

Chauntay Parrish

I intend to use my legal education to become a public defender. As I grew up, I observed my family members being taken away by the system and constantly cycling in and out of jail. Even though, my family members were involved in illegal activities, seeing them in the courtroom, not receiving the best representation broke my heart. By witnessing the disturbing cycle of my cousins going in and out of prison, I decided to become a lawyer. After reading the book *Crook County: Racism and Injustice in America's Largest Criminal Court* by Nicole Gonzalez Van Cleve, I decided to become a public defender. In this book, the author touched on how minorities are mistreated, and the system does not work in their favor. This book exposed me to frequent injustices that occur in the criminal justice system that I was not aware of. After reading this book I was outraged; it reminded me of my family, and I wanted to know if they experience a similar encounter.

I wanted to do something about this. I decided I would become a public defender that initiates change in the system, to give clients the best counsel possible and ensure they receive fair treatment. So, from this day, I knew I was destined to become a public defender. Within the system, I strive to add diversity and representation for minorities through my work as a public defender. I desire to make minorities feel like the system is just, equal, and race neutral. Minorities will be able to rely on me as their public defender. When I become an attorney, I will fight for my clients. I will be a zealous advocate for them utilizing every resource available to fight their case, to provide them with the best possible defense. In my role as an attorney, I will put forth my best effort to help them fight their situations. I want to let my clients know I understand, I want them to see someone that is a minority who is willing to assist them. As a public defender, I will go that extra mile for my clients. Ultimately, I shall be the public defender

that changes the individual's perception of the system and makes them understand I am fighting for their due process rights. In sum, I plan to become a public defender that is hardworking and dedicated to society.

Furthermore, as a progress in my career I want to start a community center. I want people to be able to come here and get help, whether it was in school, work or legal problems. The principal goal of my community center is I want to hold weekly events where people in the community can come out and get legal questions answered or any legal advice. Also, I want to host programs informing individuals of their rights, assisting them in interpreting laws, and teaching them how to respond to police officers. I want individuals to be able to come to this center and get their questions answered about how the criminal justice system work. In essence, I want the community to be informed of their rights.