



NC Central
UNIVERSITY

School of Law

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I am a first-generation college and will be a first-generation law graduate in a couple of days. I probably should say I am a first-generation law graduate because both of my parents and other immediate family members have returned to college to obtain their bachelor's degrees after I graduated in 2014. I like to think I inspired some of my own family members to return to college and pursue whatever dream they had in mind. As it relates to my dream, I have always wanted to be an attorney. Ever since I was an adolescent, I would sit in front of my computer and comb through various legal cases while giving my unsolicited and overwhelmingly uneducated opinion on each case. At the time, I was not too keen on the legal jargon used, but I did empathize with the people involved in those cases, and ultimately it was the people and their stories that sparked my interest in law. I wanted to help people. I did not know exactly what area of law I was interested in, but I just wanted to use my voice to help others. As simple as this sounds, this desire to help others is what initiated my journey to law school.

A decade later, I found myself on the receiving end of an acceptance letter from NCCU School of Law. As excited as I was then, I had no idea the journey that awaited. As I entered NCCU School of Law in 2015, I struggled so much. I did not understand the discipline required to be a successful law student. I struggled with outlining, retention of the material, and exams. At the time, I just wanted to get by by any means possible. But this get-by attitude did me no favors. Law school required sacrifice, but at the time, I did not understand that. As I struggled in school, I also endured family challenges at home. My grandmother was diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer. When she was first diagnosed, I was shocked, but I did not think my grandmother would die because I had not experienced death in my immediate family before. I just thought that she would recover, and our lives would return to normal but that didn't happen. My mother and I took care of my grandmother until she died.

After my grandmother passed, my grades did not get any better, and I finished the academic year with a GPA of 1.989. After my academic dismissal, I thought my absence from law school would be brief, but I was mistaken. It took almost four years to return to law school. During those four years, I tried to do everything I could to get back into law school. I enrolled in a graduate program, maintained a 4.0, and graduated summa cum laude. I took a LSAT prep course, retook the LSAT, and scored 13 points higher than my original LSAT score. I wanted to show that I was still a viable candidate and at this point, I felt good. I felt redeemed, and I thought I would be returning to law school soon. I reapplied to NCCU School of Law and other law schools, but I was rejected by every single school I applied to. After I received those rejection letters, I spoke with my mom, and remember telling her that I would apply one more time and if I did not get in, I was not going to apply anymore. The decision to reapply was one of the best decisions of my life. I was readmitted in 2019. When I received my acceptance letter, I was excited but nervous because I did not know what to expect. I knew what a failing law student looked like, but I had no idea what it looked like to be a successful law student. I was extremely insecure about my academic dismissal and whether I could successfully graduate from law school. Every time I received a grade that was below average, I was reminded of my past failures, and it scared me. I did not want to fail, and I did not want another opportunity to slip away. I was determined to pass. From that point, I decided that I would give law school everything I had and if it worked out for me then great but if it did not then at least I knew that I gave it my all.

I finished my first semester with a 3.5. The week before finals I was acknowledged at the annual law school awards for having the highest grade in my property and contract course. That same week, I also received an email stating that I was chosen for a summer internship with the Department of Justice. I can still remember how I felt that week. I was overwhelmed with joy, and finally felt like I could finish law school as a top student. The next week my brother passed away unexpectedly. I remember being in shock. I was just rejoicing in my law school accomplishments the week before and now my mother and I were making plans to bury my brother. I could not believe that my brother was no longer in this world. He was one of the few people, aside from my mom, that was rooting for me to finish law school. I was heartbroken, but I told myself that if I could not bring him back the least I could do is honor him by finishing law school. As I entered my 2L year, I could finally say that I was getting the hang of law school. I did not feel out of place as I did before. Eventually, I became a property tutor, evidence tutor, joined the NCCU law journal, and discovered that I ranked second in my class.

As grateful as I am that I was readmitted, I am more grateful for the hardship I endured during this journey. It shaped my work ethic for the better and it matured me in ways I never imagine. Overcoming my own adversity allowed me to see who I could become and what I could achieve if I continued to remain resilient despite possible failure or rejection.