

Through my four year old eyes, I watched my parents, the people I loved the most, throw malicious words at each other that cut like glass. Within the next year, my parents would become divorced and live completely separate lives, with my sister and I bouncing back and forth. My parents made this divided life work throughout my childhood and into my young adult life; whether there was a graduation, a competition, or a dance recital, both of my parents would support us together, and they still do to this day. They wanted to be able to co-parent and work through problems together as a team, even if they were not married any more. My sister and I know that we are blessed to be able to have parents who support us together as much as they do. But there are so many kids who grow up with divorced parents that despise each other. Within my family, my aunt and uncle got divorced and their separation was extremely messy. This left my cousins to choose sides and to this day, none of them have a good relationship with each other. This allowed me to acknowledge the impact divorce has on families at a very young age, and this is one of the reasons why I am interested in family law. There are so many other children who are the products of divorce who do not have the same support that I have had so I want to pursue working in family law in order to help those find the stability and comfort they deserve.

During my summer breaks from college, I had an internship with a criminal defense attorney where I was able to help and learn from working on cases in the office and in the courtroom. While I was in the legal field, I worked on two criminal cases that had to do with children and family, one of which motivated my interest in family law to a significant extent. My bosses received a case alleging a woman had abused her two year old soon-to-be adopted daughter. Our client had taken her niece into her home from the foster care system and was taking the steps to adopt her. It was important to our client that she would adopt her niece not only because she was family, but because she had experienced the foster care system herself and

wanted the best life for her niece. Her niece had experienced serious trauma before entering our client's home, and because of this trauma, she would constantly pinch herself, bang her head up against the wall, run into furniture, and leave large and dark bruises all over her body, including her face. Day care workers saw the bruises on her face one day and called the police which led to our client being accused of child abuse. My heart hurt so much for our client; I truly did not believe she had the ability to abuse her child. After a week-long trial, the jury came back as a hung jury, and a few weeks later, the state decided to try the case again. My heart sank when I heard the news. On this day, I watched the justice system fail. Although situations like this happen every day, I believe the justice system can do the right thing, and this case has lit a fire in me to help it do so.

Throughout this case, I was able to create a connection with our client because I was the only woman working on this case. We came from different backgrounds, but I think she was able to trust me since I am a woman. The legal field is dominated by men, and I want to be able to continue to make connections with those I work with as a woman, especially with the sensitivity of family law. I want to help vulnerable people; I know I want to help vulnerable people regardless of what legal field I work in. I have a particular interest in family law, but I have an open mind, and as I approach law school, I want to be able to explore other legal fields as well. No matter what field I go into, I appreciate the fact that studying multiple fields of law will make me a more well-rounded lawyer. Because of my own childhood experiences and what I've seen in the field, I have momentum and a fire within me, and I want to take this momentum and run with it. I want to be able to make a difference in the justice system on behalf of those I work for, and I can start to make that difference by studying law.