

Personal Statement

With the generous support of family members, mentors, and peers, I overcame significant adversity to attain higher education. Following my parents' separation when I was six, my mother, my brother, and I moved from the Philippines to California, leaving my father behind. In this new country, my family struggled with a household income usually below \$20,000. My mother worked up to 80 hours a week. I frequently walked home from school for an hour in 100-plus degree heat since my mom and brother had to work and could not pick me up. As a child, I asked relatives for cash instead of toys during the holidays so I could help ease my mom's financial strain. I also worked throughout high school to pay for my own food, phone, car, gas, and auto insurance. Fourteen years would pass before I could see my father again.

The inclusion of attorneys from backgrounds like mine bolsters cultural competency, fulfills business imperatives, and advances economic equity in the legal profession. Thus, at Yale Law, I have worked to promote diversity and community involvement. I am the Alumni Affairs and Mentorship Chair of First Generation Professionals, which ensures that first-generation students are prepared for law school academics and their professional careers. In this role, I connect students with alumni and older current students, and help facilitate outreach to first-generation law school applicants and admits. In this capacity, I work with the law school's Diversity Representatives to meet with admits, answer their questions, and—if the choice is right for them—encourage them to attend the law school in an effort to improve campus diversity.

In my own journey toward becoming an attorney, I have gained experience representing both plaintiffs and defendants in litigation and government enforcement actions. I believe this will help me advise and advocate for my future clients. As a Program Performance Auditor, I conducted research-intensive, months-long audits investigating local government fraud, waste, and abuse. Through Yale's Worker and Immigrant Rights Advocacy Clinic, I co-wrote a motion

for summary judgment on behalf of a class of immigrants detained for months or years without access to bond hearings. Further, while interning at the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office, I drafted a complaint based on novel claims and conducted legal research for state enforcement actions alleging unfair competition and false claims. On the other side, as an SEO Law Fellow at Covington and Burling, I helped defend clients in domestic and international white-collar investigations. My analysis of over twenty depositions in one investigation raised important new issues for the legal team.

I hope to practice plaintiff-side trial advocacy representing injured workers, consumers, and businesses. As the first person in my family to pursue a graduate or professional education, I will continue following my calling to cultivate a diverse legal profession and excellence among first-generation professionals. Further, I will ensure that my practice includes pro bono work on behalf of immigrant and low-income communities.