



**Defying the Odds:
How I Strong-Armed My
Way Into Law School**
Advice for “Non-Traditional
Admissions Candidates”

LAW

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When I expressed my intent to apply to law school, I was instantly told that the odds were overwhelmingly stacked against me.

Minorities do not get into law school because they do not perform well on the LSAT. Women are not as successful as their male counterparts in law school. It is very hard to have a family and pursue a legal career. If your grades are less than stellar, you will not be considered. And the list went on and on. Rather than internalize the possible negative outcome, I took a leap of faith and pursued my goal. I like to say that I “strong armed” my way into and through law school. I had to pursue alternative routes and methods to achieve my goal because of the different factors affecting my life. I am a minority, I am a mother and I did not have a 4.0 GPA and 180 on the LSAT. Applying these steps, I was able to gain admittance into law school and successfully complete my legal education.

How can you make your application “sexy” and stand out?

The Law School Admissions Council (LSAC) website became one of my favorites. I memorized all the admissions requirements for the law schools I wanted to attend. One key to applying to law school as a non-traditional student would be to explain what makes you unique to the average applicant and how that will be a benefit to the law school. The personal statement is essential to show off what sets you apart from all other candidates. Do not shy away from discussing the fact you are a single father, or an engineer aspiring to be a lawyer. Make sure to use the personal statement as if this was your opportunity to sit down and speak to the admissions committee.

Where in the world is your ideal law school?

For me it was important that I go to a law school that was receptive to parents and working students. I researched schools that had day and evening programs which would provide flexibility. I also inquired with the admissions department if professors allowed children in class in case I had an emergency. The law school I chose was established with working students in mind. I attended school as a full-time student and had mainly daytime classes. However, it was good to know that I had options in case my situation changed and I had to switch to evening classes and work during the day.

Guess what? Your GPA really does count!

Halfway through college, I realized that the low grade I received in anthropology could actually stand in the way of my dream to be the next Johnnie Cochran. I had to act quickly. Obviously, I started making better grades. I also enrolled in law-related courses, because for purposes of a law school application, making a B in a Constitutional Law class is far more compelling than an A- in Art History.

Most law schools will accept an addendum to your application that is separate from the personal statement. This was a tool I used because my grades during my freshman and sophomore year of undergrad were less than stellar. I had numerous life changes during those years such as getting married and starting a family. This initially impacted my academic life. My addendum demonstrated that even with the added responsibilities of family, work and extra-curricular activities, my grades improved drastically.

How do you prepare for the LSAT if you cannot afford an expensive prep course?

I dreaded the LSAT and had to take it twice. The first time I was not prepared because I could not afford to take one of the mainstream LSAT prep courses, nor did I have the time to stick to the strict schedule that those courses required. I made the mistake of thinking I could just wing it. When I received my score I was devastated because it did not meet any of the median LSAT scores for accepted students. I regrouped and the next time around I had to take an alternate route. I found a company that employed private tutors and allowed me to pay an hourly rate, as well as create a study schedule that coincided with my work schedule. My second LSAT score increased by ten points!

During my journey to law school, I had to sometimes think outside the box to achieve my end goal. A “strong arm” approach meant that I had to highlight what made me a “non-traditional” candidate rather than try to adhere to what I thought a typical student looked like. Most importantly, I made sure I submitted an airtight application that would show the admissions committees why I deserved a spot in their next entering class, and I would be a valuable asset to their program.



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