

Honors College Application Essay Examples

Every summer Tante, a domestic servant in my grandmother's home in Haiti, welcomed me with open arms, spoiling me with my favorite treats. Tante and her family, who also worked for my grandmother, lived in a one bedroom house in the yard. My valued playtime with her nieces and nephews was often interrupted when they were called to carry buckets of water into the house, clean the yard, wash dishes, or cook. Although they worked incessantly, their labor never afforded them the luxuries of education or healthcare. These early experiences influenced my decision to study law in order to give voice to people facing challenges similar to those of Tante and her family.

Social responsibility was a major theme in the legal education I received at Loyola University New Orleans College of Law. Through Loyola's sponsorship, I returned to Haiti in 2008, after a 12-year hiatus, on a charitable mission. I sought out Tante, but learned that she was sent away because my grandmother was too ill to manage the household. What town was she from? Did she have a home to return to? What was her real name? After nearly 30 years of working for my family, no one there knew, and, frankly, no one seemed to care. This troubling realization compelled me, with the help of other association members, to found Konbit Pou Edikasyon, "Working Together for Education," an organization that provides financial support for academic instruction for thirty-three Haitian children at risk of becoming child laborers.

Back at law school, I discovered I was most interested in the courses on intellectual property. In addition to my studies, I worked on copyright and trademark issues as an associate at a law firm, at a major corporation, and as a journalist with the Bureau of National Affairs on its Patent, Trademark, and Copyright Journal. These experiences provided me with the fundamental skills and knowledge required to navigate the complicated terrain of intellectual property law. Still, I had not yet found a way to use that knowledge as an avenue for helping disadvantaged communities.

After receiving my law degree, I researched organizations that use intellectual property to contribute to the economic growth of export industries in low income nations. Ghana's Kuapa Kokoo cooperative is one of the best models I have found for providing people the opportunity, wages, and education for economic advancement. It pays farmers fair prices for cocoa beans, trademarks the products made from the cocoa, allows farmers to learn and participate in the international sale of cocoa, and invests in social projects for the community. Knowing that Ghana's people face many of the same challenges as Haitians—domestic servitude, unethical working conditions, and lack of access to education—I am inspired to understand more deeply how, in only thirteen years, Kuapa Kokoo built its brand based on a successful model of fair business practices.

Although I was powerless to influence the outcome of Tante's life, I hold myself responsible for creating systems that provide low-income communities with real economic and social options. Infusing trademark protection into business models for low-income producers can move their

communities from mere survival to economic breakthrough, providing a bridge toward healthcare, education, and housing—social tools Tante never had access to.