BLOGS

In Conversation with Preethi (Christ University) on her Law School Journey and Admission to Georgetown University

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In this conversation with CLATalogue, Preethi talks about her motivation to pursue law as a career, her law school experience as well as her journey to pursue law at Georgetown University Law Center.



Tell us a bit about yourself.

Hello there! My name is Preethi. I am a recent law graduate from the School of Law, Christ (Deemed to be University), Bangalore, and soon to be studying at the Georgetown University Law Center in Washington, DC, as a merit scholar. A pure-bred Bangalorean, a multilinguist, an avid reader, a wanderlust, a foodie, a coffee aficionado, and an amateur entrepreneur. That's about me in a nutshell.

Law has always been something that I wanted to do, right from High school, given the fact that MUNing, public speaking, and debating were things I truly enjoyed doing. Apart from my law

school activities, I enjoy dancing and listening to retro music.

How did you start your journey in the field of law?

My grandfather inspired me to pursue a career in the field of law. My paternal Grandfather, Late Mr. Narayana Gowda, began his law school in the early 1950s in Bangalore; however, due to some unforeseen circumstances, the degree was left unfinished. On many occasions, my grandfather reiterated how it was always his dream to argue at the High Court of Karnataka and make his mark as a lawyer.

Being an active MUNer during my high school days, my inclination towards trying to understand the rules, regulations, and legal aspects of international relations pushed me to pursue law.

My journey to see myself in law school was indeed arduous. After a great deal of persuading and convincing my parents, who are doctors, I decided to take up law. As it is customary in Indian society for children to follow in their parents footsteps, I was extremely confident that science and biology weren't my forte, so I chose a different path to enter the legal field. Time and again, I wonder what my life would have been like had I been a doctor, but I certainly have no regrets and thoroughly enjoy my work and academics.

Being a Bangalorean, NLSIU was my first preference, and I began my preparation for CLAT right after 10th grade. Despite all the hard work, neither CLAT nor NLSIU materialized and I went on to pursue my undergraduate at the School of Law, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bangalore.

How were your initial years in law school?

My initial years at law school were more about figuring out where I fit in – whether it was Mooting, Debating, Presenting Papers at Conferences, or publishing. The constant pressure to build a good CV and do academically well were the major challenges I faced during my initial years.

It was not until my first paper presentation at a national-level symposium, where I presented a working paper on the critical analysis of The Commercial Courts Act, 2014, that prompted me to choose that path and figure out that I was actually also good at research and publications, given my flair for writing.

I also had the additional burden of finding the right internships to supplant my theoretical knowledge with practical experiences and make sure I reap the full benefits of the limited time of internships. From then on, during my five years of Law school, I completed a total of seven internships, each of which taught me a different set of skills.

Most of my professors and mentors constantly emphasized the need to have a diverse profile and taking their advice I made sure that I was able to tailor my own professional profile in the same manner.

What motivated you to pursue law as a career?

As I previously mentioned, my main source of inspiration and motivation to pursue law was my paternal grandfather. His anecdotes and aspirations slowly began to transform into my own, and I would often dream of becoming a lawyer myself.

Further, my MUNning experience in school solidified my intent to pursue law as a career, given my inclination toward understanding the legal aspects of international relations and how countries mutually collaborate to make various international policies. It was this drive that pushed me into law school.

In addition to law school, I have always been interested in understanding how businesses and trade function. This led me to develop an interest in corporate and business law, and I continued this passion throughout law school.

Furthermore, coming from the startup capital of the country and my dad being an entrepreneur himself pushed me to delve deeper into the subject and pursue it as a career.

Tell us a bit about your experience while seeking admission into LLM courses. How was that experience different from the time you took the entrance test for UG?

My urge and interest to pursue an LLM in International Business Law crystallized after a summer school program at The Hague Academy of International Law, situated at the Peace Palace in The Netherlands.

Learning from the Legal luminaries of the world and attending various study tours to various organizations of the UN prompted me to delve deeper and deeper into the subject to better equip myself with the practical aspects of international trade and business.

It was around this time, when I was in my final year of law school, that I began my research on the various LLM programs available abroad, particularly in the domain of International Business Law. After a good four months of research and various questions on how to craft my SOP, I finally decided to apply to a few of the Ivy League Institutions in the US.

Drafting my SOP and scholarship essay was indeed a herculean task. Most consultancies were charging a bomb, and I took it up as a challenge to draft my own SOP and personal essays for the university application.

The entire procedure took me about a solid 7 months; right from shortlisting universities to drafting my essays and completing the application-related formalities. This was also the time when I was simultaneously juggling my semester-end exams and an undergraduate dissertation that required my full and undivided attention. Amidst all of this,I finished my applications to universities and waited to hear back.

After a month full of rejections from all the major Ivy League universities, there was a time when I completely lost hope and started seeing myself as a failure, especially after choosing to do something on my own without any guidance. I had even started questioning if I was really made for being a lawyer and if choosing medicine would have been a better choice.

Just when I had a few months left to figure out my future prospects, was when I received an admission offer with a merit scholarship from The Georgetown University Law Center at Washington DC.

I also did receive offers from the Geneva Graduate Institute, Geneva, University of Berkeley, California and the New York University School of Law. Since the International Business Law program is unique to Georgetown, I chose this University for my masters.

What were your top 3 sources of information while applying to colleges to pursue LLM?

The three main sources of information that helped me immensely during the application process is-

a. LinkedIn posts and content from former students of Universities that I wish to apply to b. A book called Top 10 LLM Personal Statements which was shared to me by my seniors
c. Official University Websites for information related to courses and the syllabus

What would you say sets apart your story from others?

Coming this far and getting selected for an LLM with a merit scholarship at one of the world's most prestigious institution has indeed been a long journey. Little had I imagined that about 8 years ago I would actually achieve all that my grandfather used to narrate.

The journey to law school was also a herculean task, especially when It took me months of convincing and persuading my parents to let me do what I felt that I was made for.
As doctors, they hadn't a clue about the legal industry but all they had was the support (in all forms) that they were able to provide.

Navigating my way through law school, getting selected for summer school, having intellectual conversations with the Deputy Secretary General of the ICJ and PCA has indeed come through the dedication, hard work and perseverance.

There were times when I questioned everything and even decided to quit law school but the perseverance kept me going. During the past few months, when I ended law school, there were many "life-coming-a-full-circle" moments that I cherished thoroughly. Especially when I was asked to judge a moot competition, speak to my juniors about application process and navigating through law school itself.

All of this has taught me one thing that – Nothing in this world comes easily and all we need is perseverance and the will to achieve. Absolutely, without hard work, no success comes easily.

With much thought and deliberation, I decided to help other law aspirants and law students such as myself who wish to go abroad and pursue their dreams. There were many hurdles that I had to overcome by myself during these five years and it was indeed a great learning experience.

It was through this experience that I launched "IKSHA" – A mentoring service mainly focused at study abroad consulting and law school mentorship. I also help law aspirants to figure out how to crack entrance exams through the mistakes I made, telling them not to repeat the same, especially because I wrote CLAT twice and couldn't make it through to an NLU. So far I've been able to help out about 15 students through IKSHA to figure out their career options in law school.

Any advice you'd like to pass on to law school aspirants and law students?

My advice can be summed up in five points-

a. Law isn't something like a backup career option, if you do not wish to dedicate your everything into it , don't even consider entering into the field.

b. Hard work is the key to success, nothing comes easy.

c. Network and make contacts as much as possible once you start law school, be active on LinkedIn right from the beginning.

d. Read extensively. It helps you in more ways than one as a law student.

e. For all law students – make sure you are well prepared for every lecture. Take notes as and when professors are explaining.

This interview is a part of our series #MyStory where we interview law students and legal professionals.

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