



INTRODUCING The Class of 2023



Romana Afroze

WELCOME Class of 2023

I chose to go to law school because...

I want to become a prudent Attorney.

My favorite...

Quote: “When you give joy to other people, you get more joy in return. You should give a good thought to happiness that you can give out.” – Eleanor Roosevelt.

One thing you would not know about me...

I studied Bengali music for years and planned a career in music.

WELCOME Class of 2023



Kari Ashworth

I chose to go to law school because...

I have always had an innate desire to help others, especially those whose human rights are being infringed upon, and becoming a lawyer will allow me to do this.

When I'm not studying, I like to...

My favorite day trip destination is Cooperstown, New York. My family and I live three and a half hours away, and we have made the trip at least once a year since I was 14.

WELCOME Class of 2023



Hannah Atkinson

I chose to go to law school because...

I find the nexus between neuroscience and law fascinating. I am also passionate about criminal justice reform.

My favorite...

Thing to do is travel.

One thing you would not know about me...

I met Supreme Court Justice, Ruth Bader Ginsburg when she was in Buffalo last Fall.

WELCOME Class of 2023

I chose to go to law school because...

I want to make a difference in the world whether that be through policy or helping one person.

When I'm not studying, I like to...

Read, go on hikes, and discover new recipes to try.

My favorite...

Musical is Hamilton. I know almost all the words to every song, seen it live at Shea's, and of course binged it on Disney+.



Lyndsey Bailey

WELCOME Class of 2023

I chose to go to law school because...

I am passionate about obtaining justice and equality for those who often do not receive it. I also wanted to push myself mentally and morally.

My favorite...

Foods are pizza and donuts. I am patiently waiting for some genius to combine the two.

One thing you would not know about me...

I used to be a paratrooper in the U.S. Army.



Kurt Ballerstein



Monica Benjovsky

WELCOME Class of 2023

I chose to go to law school because...

I want to better educate myself to help people.

When I'm not studying, I like to...

Run, hike, bike, ski, be outside!

One thing you would not know about me...

I am an environmental scientist and worked in Sequoia National Park for a short time.

WELCOME Class of 2023

I chose to go to law school because...

The law is constantly surprising me.

My favorite...

Quote is “everyone you meet knows something you don’t”.

One thing you would not know about me...

I recently adopted two kittens from a local shelter.



Olivia Binda

WELCOME Class of 2023

I chose to go to law school because...

I want to be a lawyer (*gasp*).

My favorite...

Date is April 25th because it's not too hot and not too cold. All you need is a light jacket.

One thing you would not know about me...

I've had twelve teeth removed over my lifespan.



Dalton Bisson

WELCOME Class of 2023



I chose to go to law school because...

I want to be a leader in my community.

My favorite...

Role model is Abraham Lincoln.

One thing you would not know about me...

I am an intense collector of Vinyl Records and dedicated Buffalo Bills Fan. I recently started learning how to play the Harmonica.



David Burgio



Julia Carey

WELCOME Class of 2023

I chose to go to law school because...

I've been interested in practicing law since I was little. I want the opportunity to make real change in whatever career concentration I'm in. My goal is to become a JAG.

My favorite...

Thing to do is travel! I try to spend every break working somewhere new.

One thing you would not know about me...

I'm in the Air Force.

WELCOME Class of 2023

I chose to go to law school because...

I really want to be a voice to the voiceless. Plus, law seems interesting to me.

One thing you would not know about me...

I studied Japanese for four years in college. So I'm a half expert when it comes to something like Asian culture and society. But after graduation, I worked at a PR company for a couple of months.



Jianan Chen



Rebecca Chilelli

WELCOME Class of 2023

I chose to go to law school because...

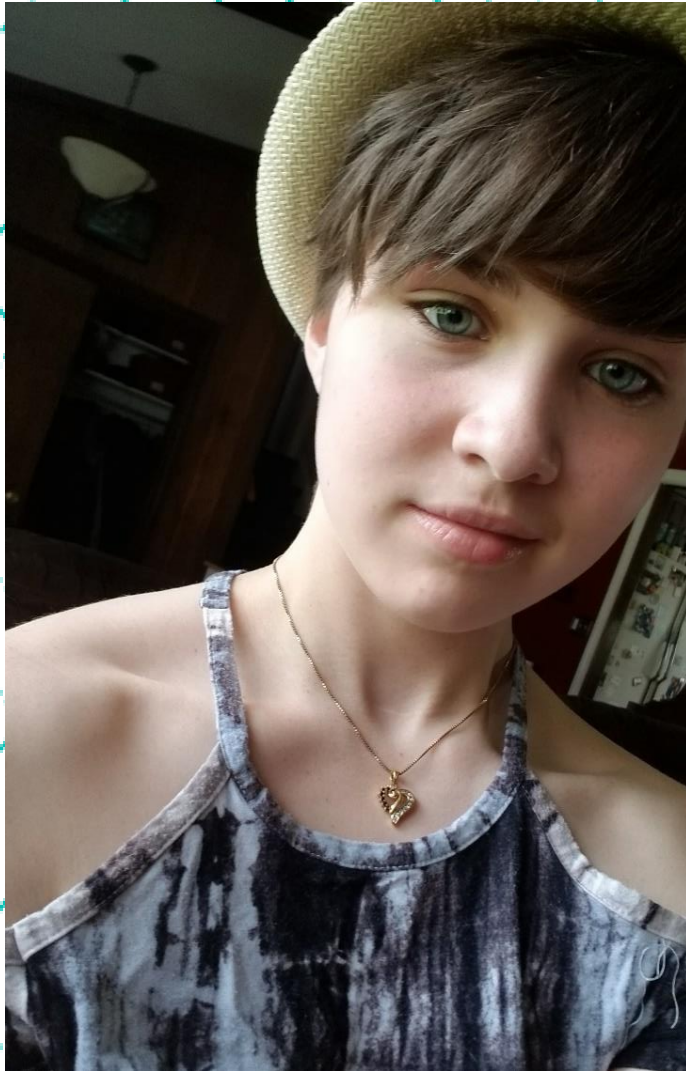
I want legal resources to be accessible to everyone.

My favorite...

Time of day is dusk.

One thing you would not know about me...

Even though my name is pretty common, I don't know anyone with the same first name as me.



Olivia Collins

WELCOME Class of 2023

I chose to go to law school because...

I'm passionate about logic and want a career where I can utilize that interest.

When I'm not studying, I like to...

Bake bread.

One thing you would not know about me...

I only have one kidney.



Kathleen Cooley

WELCOME Class of 2023

I chose to go to law school because...

I want to put myself in a position to succeed while helping others.

My favorite...

Thing to do is travel to different places for the first time.

One thing you would not know about me...

I can say the alphabet backwards.



Micah Coons

WELCOME Class of 2023

I chose to go to law school because...

I want to help fight for the marginalized.

My favorite...

Band is The Mountain Goats.

One thing you would not know about me...

I'm a classically trained musician.

WELCOME Class of 2023

I chose to go to law school because...

The law is the foundation of our society, and lawyers are so critical in not only finding solutions to their clients' problems, but in helping to facilitate real change.

One thing you would not know about me...

I previously had a career in sales in the beauty industry, and I worked for major brands like Chanel and Estée Lauder in NYC.



Kristen Crow

WELCOME Class of 2023

I chose to go to law school because...

I'm very passionate about environmental justice and I believe that working in that field would be incredibly rewarding.

When I'm not studying, I like to...

I really like to read history, play guitar (not particularly well), and work out.

One thing you would not know about me...

I think architecture is really cool to study but never felt artistic enough to do anything with that.



Eamon Danieu

WELCOME Class of 2023

I chose to go to law school because...

I would love to learn and use higher education as a platform to fight for those who cannot fight for themselves.

When I'm not studying, I like to...

Play video games, basketball or badminton. Immerse myself in Japanese culture and collect sneakers.

My favorite...

Sports team is the Toronto Raptors! Reigning, defending NBA champs, always bet on yourself.



Carl Anthony De Las Llagas

WELCOME Class of 2023

I chose to go to law school because...

To use the provided example, I want to become an advocate for the disadvantaged, in a field that plays to my strengths.

My favorite...

Poem is Invictus by William Ernest Henley.

One thing you would not know about me...

Probably everything, except that I like to stay active, advocate for the disadvantaged, and appreciate the occasional poem.



Carolyn Duttweiler

WELCOME Class of 2023



Jamie Englerth

I chose to go to law school because...

I want to become an advocate for special victims. I have a passion to give them a voice to be heard that they do not often get.

When I'm not studying, I like to...

Read, hangout with my family, workout, hangout with my dogs.

My favorite...

Food is pizza!



Peter Evancho

WELCOME Class of 2023

I chose to go to law school because...

I am passionate about mental health and wellness and interested in the intersection of law and medicine specifically as they pertain to the social determinants of health.

My favorite...

Quote is, "Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn."

WELCOME Class of 2023



Chris Fisher

I chose to go to law school because...

I want to be able to take an active role in aiding and assisting people with issues that they are grappling with.

My favorite...

US President is Lincoln. Did you know he is in the wrestling hall of fame, and apparently liked to talk smack to his opponents before his matches?

One thing you would not know about me ...

I am a bluegrass mandolin and banjo musician.



Scott Fogel

WELCOME Class of 2023

I chose to go to law school because...

I want to do work that is fulfilling and makes a difference.

My favorite...

My favorite place to be is on the water.

One thing you would not know about me...

I was in marching band for several years in high-school and college.

WELCOME Class of 2023



I chose to go to law school because...

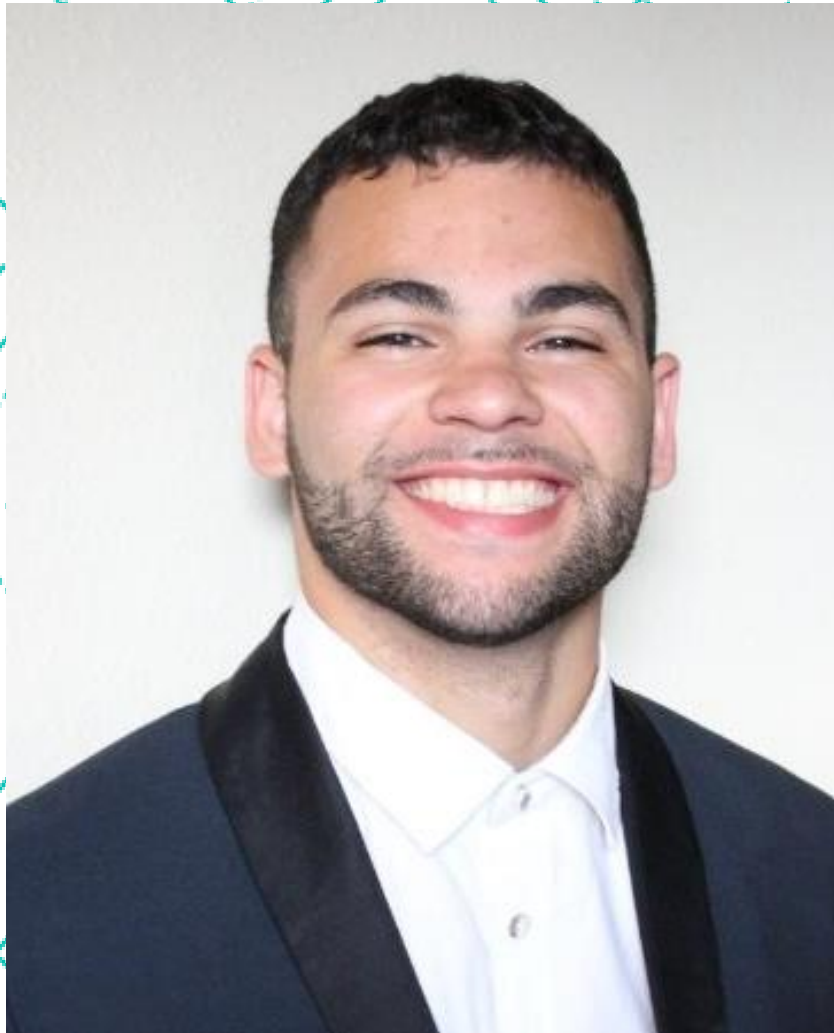
I want to be a catalyst for change in a world that seems to be contesting principles of justice we all hold dear.

When I'm not studying, I like to...

Write poetry and other creative works, paint, and Muay Thai.

One thing you would not know about me...

I dance to the rhythms of my people – Salsa, Bachata, and more.



Giovanni Gaglianese



Victoria Grant Yim

WELCOME Class of 2023

I chose to go to law school because...

I want to give a voice to those who don't have one.

My favorite...

Food is pad thai.

One thing you would not know about me...

I once thought of becoming a veterinarian.



Merve Gulbay

WELCOME Class of 2023

I chose to go to law school because...

I am passionate about representing underprivileged communities.

My favorite...

My favorite duo is coffee and chocolate.

One thing you would not know about me ...

I have been working for the Attorney General's office for over two years!

WELCOME Class of 2023

I chose to go to law school because...

I want to fight for environmental justice.

When I'm not studying, I like to...

Hike and go on outdoor adventures.

One thing you would not know about me...

I am actually a math nerd which is why I studied engineering as an undergrad.



Nikki Hart



Asher Havis-Walton

WELCOME Class of 2023

I chose to go to law school because...

I want to be an advocate for marginalized communities and a more equitable and just legal system.

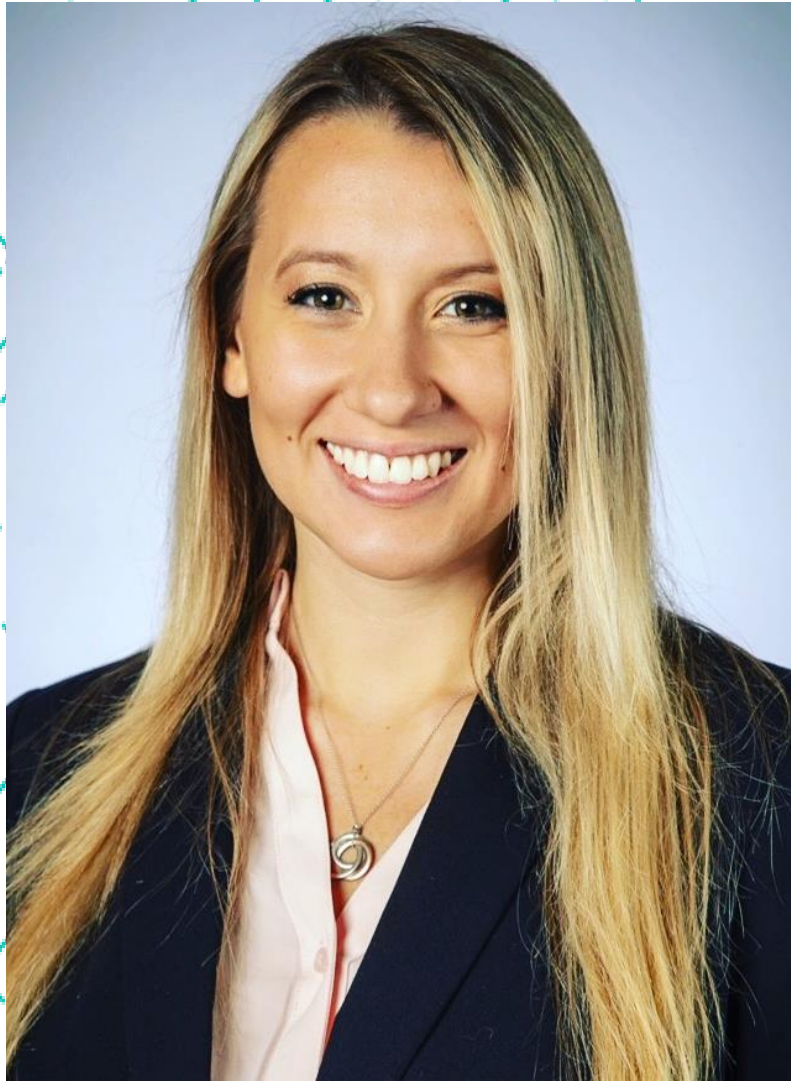
When I'm not studying, I like to...

Read, draw, play video games, and discuss world events.

One thing you would not know about me...

I wanted to be a pro-soccer player.

WELCOME Class of 2023



Danielle Hockwater

When I'm not studying, I like to...

Dance, go out to eat, drink wine, relax, and travel.

My favorite...

Food is surf and turf.

One thing you would not know about me...

I was on America's Got Talent. I also have my own side hustle Divine Designs by Dani.



Mark Houle

WELCOME Class of 2023

I chose to go to law school because...

I really believe in the law and attorneys as a force of balance and justice.

My favorite...

Things are Sunday mornings, debating open-minded intelligent people.

One thing you would not know about me...

I like dancing ballet, (badly). If something scares me, I immediately make myself do it.

WELCOME Class of 2023



Abigail Jackson

← I chose to go to law school because...

I want to use my privilege to achieve justice for others.

When I'm not studying, I like to...

Listen to music ("Punisher" by Phoebe Bridgers is my favorite album currently) or go on hikes with my dog.

One thing you would not know about me...

I can play four instruments.



Connor Johnson

WELCOME Class of 2023

I chose to go to law school because...

I want to learn how I can better do my part to better our world.

My favorite...

Food is buffalo chicken wings.

One thing you would not know about me ...

I coached college football prior to enrolling in law school.



Bryanne Jones

WELCOME Class of 2023

I chose to go to law school because...

I want to help others through some of the most difficult times of their lives through advocacy.

When I'm not studying, I like to...

Spend time outside – running, hiking, exploring new places.

One thing you would not know about me ...

I pace a marathon training group.

WELCOME Class of 2023



Dinara Karimova

← I chose to go to law school because...

I want to be a true cosmopolitan lawyer.

My favorite...

My favorite food is salmon sashimi.

One thing you would not know about me...

I went to the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone before it was cool.

WELCOME Class of 2023



Courtney Kleiman

I chose to go to law school because...

I testified in front of a grand jury when I was younger and since then I have been fascinated with the law!

My favorite...

Vacation spot is the Bahamas!

One thing you would not know about me...

I play the French horn!

WELCOME Class of 2023

I chose to go to law school because...

I want to be an advocate for people who cannot advocate for themselves as well as justice and equality in society.

My favorite...

Movie series is Star Wars .

One thing you would not know about me...

I lived in England for 5 months!



Susanna Klose

WELCOME Class of 2023

I chose to go to law school because...

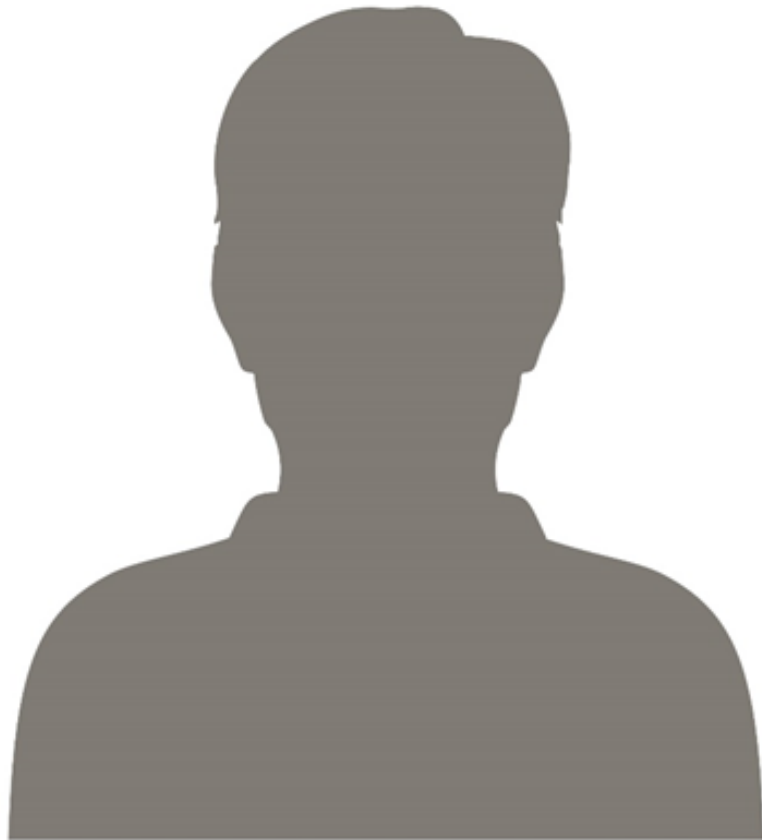
I want to effect change, make a better life for my family.

When I'm not studying, I like to...

Watch sporting events, listen to music, spend time with my daughter.

One thing you would not know about me...

I have lived in 10+ cities and towns.



Nicholas Klugh

WELCOME Class of 2023



Jacob Kobler

I chose to go to law school because...

I want to advocate for equitable health care policy.

When I'm not studying, I like to...

Read, ski, and hang out with friends.

One thing you would not know about me...

I studied biology and will also be pursuing my MPH.



Rebecca Kroll

WELCOME Class of 2023

I chose to go to law school because...

Give a voice to those who don't know how to use theirs.

When I'm not studying, I like to...

Paint, bike, and explore the outdoors!

One thing you would not know about me...

When I was little I wanted to be a tornado chaser.

WELCOME Class of 2023



Maura Kutnyak

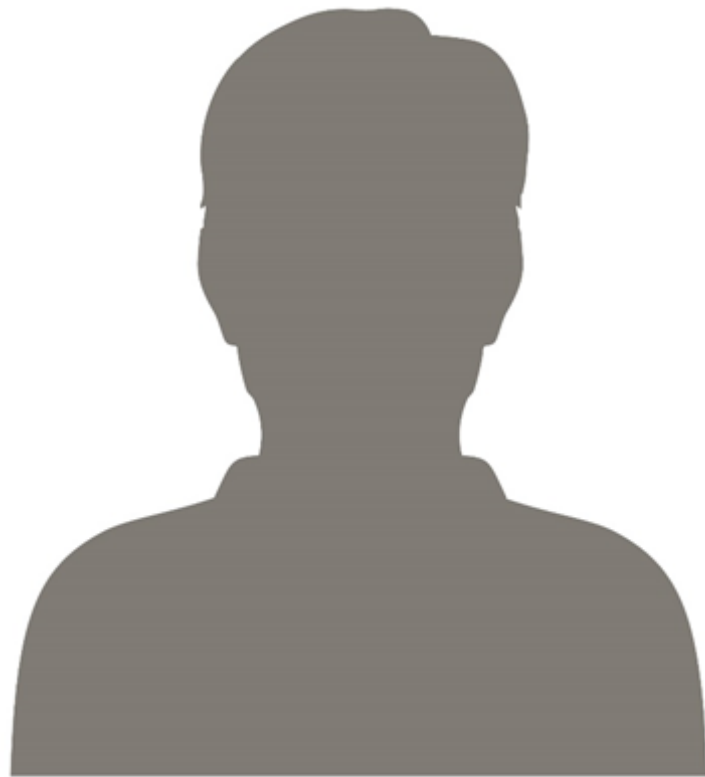
I chose to go to law school because...

I want alignment between my sense of purpose and my life's work. I want a career which is always directed towards creating positive change in myself, my family and my community at large.

When I'm not studying, I like to...

Snuggle with my children, read great books, cook and practice on the aerial fabric.

WELCOME Class of 2023



Jordan Lally

I chose to go to law school because...

I'd like to be a prosecutor.

My favorite...

My favorite celebrity is Cher.

One thing you would not know about me...

I've worked as a family law paralegal.

WELCOME Class of 2023

I chose to go to law school because...

I have always enjoyed reading, writing and formulating arguments. I have always believed law school to be the natural progression of my education and career path.

My favorite...

My favorite quote is “Everyone has his superstitions. One of mine has always been when I started to go anywhere, or to do anything, never to turn back or to stop until the thing intended was accomplished.” – Ulysses Grant



Michael Lang

WELCOME Class of 2023



Joshua Larmon

I chose to go to law school because...

The law is an omnipresent force that controls all of our lives in a direct, personal way. A legal education empowers the individual to understand this force and use it to effect meaningful change for the betterment of society.

One thing you would not know about me...

My first job was being a farm hand at a stable in my hometown Oakfield, NY.

WELCOME Class of 2023

I chose to go to law school because...

I want to provide high quality legal representation to disadvantaged individuals and their communities.

When I'm not studying, I like to...

Explore new restaurants in Buffalo and listen to true crime podcasts.

One thing you would not know about me ...

Before applying to law school I was a high school special education teacher for Buffalo Public Schools.



Katie Lawrence

WELCOME Class of 2023



Emilie Maggio

I chose to go to law school because...

I want to contribute to the work being done to protect reproductive rights.

When I'm not studying, I like to...

Watch X-Files.

One thing you would not know about me ...

My lung collapsed.

WELCOME Class of 2023



Christopher Mahaney

I chose to go to law school because...

I want to go to law school because I want to help ensure that even those who don't fully understand our legal system can still be heard and represented in that system.

One thing you would not know about me ...

One thing you would not know about me is the fact that I was the captain of my high school's shot put and discus teams during my Senior year.

WELCOME Class of 2023



Matt Mason

I chose to go to law school because...

I love learning about history & the law and want to use those interests in a practical way.

My favorite...

Book: East of Eden by John Steinbeck.

One thing you would not know about me ...

I have a twin brother, who has a Masters degree from UB.

WELCOME Class of 2023



Brady Massaro

I chose to go to law school because...

I have always wanted to be a lawyer.

My favorite...

Food is steamed blue crabs.

One thing you would not know about me...

I am a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer who served in Georgia.



Julia Merante

WELCOME Class of 2023

I chose to go to law school because...

I want to use my words to tell a story for those I represent and earn them justice doing just that.

When I'm not studying, I like to...

Shop, try new foods, watch crime movies.

One thing you would not know about me ...

I have a bunch of my poetry published across the country!

WELCOME Class of 2023



I chose to go to law school because...

I enjoy the feeling of finding a solution for a difficult issue.

My favorite...

I love POUTINE!

One thing you would not know about me...

I speak Spanish, Catalan and French.

Cristina Mercader Perez



Andrew Mikolajczyk

WELCOME Class of 2023

I chose to go to law school because...

I had an AFC (Attorney for Child) when I was younger, and it gave me the push toward a similar career to help children like myself.

One thing you would not know about me...

I was an actor in high school and a small bit in college, and considered giving up my studies for an acting career at one point.

WELCOME Class of 2023

I chose to go to law school because...

I want to become a prosecutor to advocate for victims of crime, as well as our community as a whole.

My favorite...

Thing to do is create vision boards and goals for myself.
It keeps me motivated!

One thing you would not know about me...

Is my love for adventure. One of my favorites has been skydiving, I cannot wait to go again.



Shelby Mueller



Ron Oakes

WELCOME Class of 2023

I chose to go to law school because...

I want to advocate for the highest quality healthcare and for nurses and the nursing profession, dedicated to the wellbeing of our WNY community.

One thing you would not know about me...

...at this point you don't know much about me at all! Key points are that I am married, 43, a nurse, and my husband and I have a 17 year old foster son.

WELCOME Class of 2023



Osemudiamen Ojeme

I chose to go to law school because...

A working knowledge of the law is a potent tool to create and be the change I want to see in society.

My favorite...

Quote is: "I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favor to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all." (Ecclesiastes 9:11 KJV)

WELCOME Class of 2023



Lucia O'Quinn

I chose to go to law school because...

Being a knowledgeable advocate for others (whether a person or corporation) is extremely important to me.

My favorite...

Animal – cow; food – sushi; musical – Chicago.

One thing you would not know about me ...

Although I have an ethnically Irish last name, my family is not Irish at all. Also, when I studied abroad in Ireland, my last name was virtually unheard of.

WELCOME Class of 2023

I chose to go to law school because...

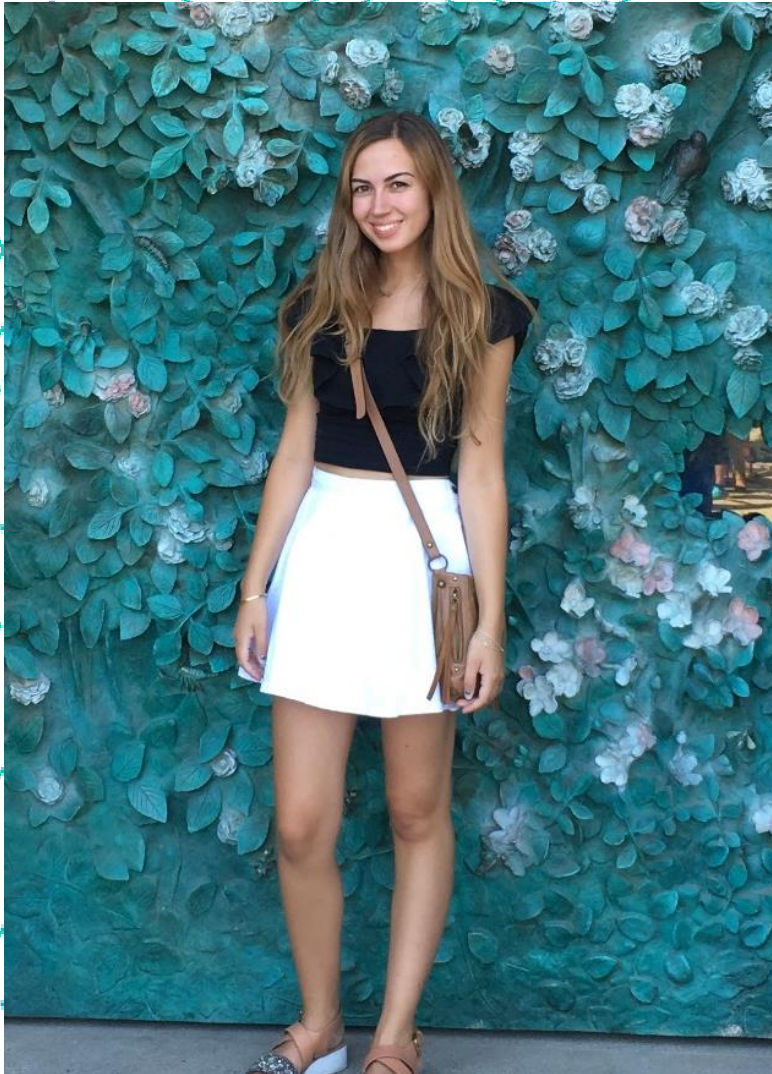
I left my career in marketing to pursue a pathway in which I can be a meaningful advocate for people, places, and animals.

My favorite...

Places are Santorini, Greece and Lisbon, Portugal.

One thing you would not know about me...

I used to breakdance and work as a wardrobe stylist on a few films.



Zoe Peppas

WELCOME Class of 2023



Grace Ponterio

I chose to go to law school because...

I want to become an advocate and effect change for those who have been underrepresented in society.

My favorite...

Activity is a relaxing yoga class.

One thing you would not know about me...

I was a sociology major and once considered a career in mental health counseling.

WELCOME Class of 2023

I chose to go to law school because...

I was interested in having opportunities to give back built into my career (i.e. legal clinics and pro bono work).

My favorite...

Take classes at my dance studio.

One thing you would not know about me...

I recently adopted two kittens from a local shelter.



Elisa Rodriguez

WELCOME Class of 2023

I chose to go to law school because...

I want to meet like-minded people, learn new things, and someday, I hope, get an interesting career.

My favorite...

Two recent favorite bands/composers are Max Richter and Iron & Wine.

One thing you would not know about me ...

I once considered becoming a luthier.



Alec Rosati-Hohensee

WELCOME Class of 2023

I chose to go to law school because...

I love the United States of America and the Constitution and want to fight for our citizens' freedoms.

When I'm not studying, I like to...

Usher home games for the Buffalo Bills at New Era Field in the Fall.

One thing you would not know about me ...

I am a first-degree black belt in Kaizen Karate.



David Ross



Daniel Russell

WELCOME Class of 2023

I chose to go to law school because...

Ultimately and ideally, make sustainability a constitutionally protected human right.

My favorite...

Place is Kennedy Meadow's Resort and Packstation.

One thing you would not know about me...

I once worked as a cowboy.



Kara Ryczek

WELCOME Class of 2023

I chose to go to law school because...

I was a member of the Orchard Park Youth Court during high school and the experience showed me what being a lawyer is like and how I can use it to help others.

My favorite...

Country that I've been to was Italy. I went during high school and it was my first time going to Europe. I went with school to Florence, Venice and Rome.

WELCOME Class of 2023

I chose to go to law school because...

I want to help minorities like myself find a voice.

My favorite...

Quote is “aim higher in case you fall short” from the Hunger Games.

One thing you would not know about me...

I was a vegetarian throughout undergrad.



Yomarís Sanchez



PJ Schmidt

WELCOME Class of 2023

I chose to go to law school because...

I really liked my con law class in undergrad and thought that's what I wanted to do with my life.

When I'm not studying, I like to...

Play golf, workout, go for a walk, read, play video games, or binge watch YouTube.

One thing you would not know about me...

I am an Eagle Scout.



Adam Schop

WELCOME Class of 2023

← I chose to go to law school because...

I enjoy substance and procedure.

When I'm not studying, I like to...

Chill with my new pup.

One thing you would not know about me...

I have two poodles.

WELCOME Class of 2023



Zak Schuler

I chose to go to law school because...

I want to create positive change in my community.

When I'm not studying, I like to...

Watch sports.

One thing you would not know about me...

I played hockey at the University of Maryland.



Madison Schwarzer

WELCOME Class of 2023



I chose to go to law school because...

I want to learn about the world of law, which affects our lives so much.

My favorite...

Sports team in the whole world is the San Antonio Spurs!

One thing you would not know about me...

I was born and raised in Texas and my degree is in East Asian History with a focus on Korean History.

WELCOME Class of 2023



Olivia Senko

I chose to go to law school because...

I want to be able to advocate for a person or company with the backing and understanding of the law.

My favorite...

Things are dogs.

One thing you would not know about me...

I wanted to be a psychologist before I got into law.



Jenelle Senske

WELCOME Class of 2023

I chose to go to law school because...

I want to help refugees and immigrants find a new home in our country.

My favorite...

Fast-food is Chipotle.

One thing you would not know about me...

I've been to 22 countries and hope to visit a new country every year!



Leah Shatkin

WELCOME Class of 2023

I chose to go to law school because...

I want to have a positive impact on the lives of others.

When I'm not studying, I like to...

Run, hang out with my friends and ski.

One thing you would not know about me...

Is that I lived in Montreal, Quebec for four years.



Marissa Shaw

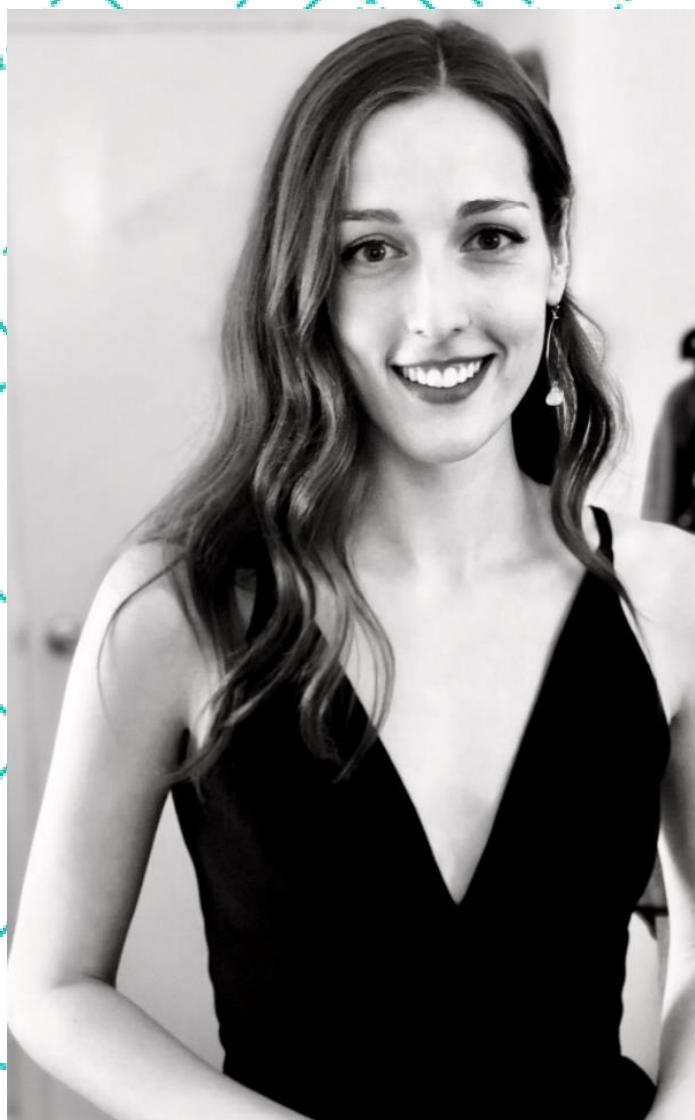
WELCOME Class of 2023

I chose to go to law school because...

I want to actively engage in the policy making process and effect legislative change to advance civil and human rights both in the US and internationally.

One thing you would not know about me...

I am a Coast Guard licensed professional mariner and spent 4 years living and working on tall ships prior to graduate school.



Jennifer Shelton

WELCOME Class of 2023

I chose to go to law school because...

I want a challenging and stimulating career that enables me to build a life in the Buffalo community.

When I'm not studying, I like to...

Cook, read, do yoga, see family and friends, and spend time near the water.

One thing you would not know about me ...

I just came back to Buffalo after three years in D.C. working in progressive politics.

WELCOME Class of 2023



Lucy Shephard

I chose to go to law school because...

I want to become a better public servant. I've worked as a policy analyst for both the federal and state government. I'm looking to add the language of law to my toolbox.

One thing you would not know about me...

I almost became a winemaker in California. For now, wine has become more of a passion. I'm a strong promoter of the Finger Lakes Wine Region and look forward to exploring the Niagara Wine Trail in Western NY!



Kirstin Sherman

WELCOME Class of 2023

I chose to go to law school because...
I want to make change in my community.

My favorite...
Creative outlet is through coding.

One thing you would not know about me...
I accepted a position in the Peace Corps working with developing non-profits but decided to move forward with my legal education once volunteer operations abroad were suspended due to COVID-19.

WELCOME Class of 2023



Dave Shin

I chose to go to law school because...

I have a dream.

My favorite...

Is Habit Burgers.

One thing you would not know about me...

I have considered taking a career in Philosophy area.



Ally Stasio

WELCOME Class of 2023

I chose to go to law school because...

I want to be able to change the lives of others for the better and I believe that doing so as a lawyer can be really rewarding.

My favorite...

...thing to do is visit new places I have never been before (cities, restaurants, shops, parks, etc.).

One thing you would not know about me...

I love to write in my free time and I hope to eventually write a book one day.



WELCOME Class of 2023

I chose to go to law school because...

The world is changing drastically, we need lawyers who care about the people living in it.

My favorite...

Book is *Homage to Catalonia* by George Orwell – which is an excellent first hand account of an underserved area of history.

One thing you would not know about me...

I hold three NYS gold medals for powerlifting.

Andrew Steinhaus



Ryan Thie

WELCOME Class of 2023

I chose to go to law school because...

I want to make a difference in the world through the legal system.

My favorite...

Hobby is Irish dancing.

One thing you would not know about me...

A large portion of my family lives in Ireland and England.



Meg Vassar

WELCOME Class of 2023

I chose to go to law school because...

I want to represent unions and labor organizations.

My favorite...

I have a French press and like to grind my own coffee beans every day. I love coffee!

One thing you would not know about me...

I grew up in Texas and am ninth generation, and spent 12 years going to summer camp in the Texas hill country.

WELCOME Class of 2023



I chose to go to law school because...

I want to be able to affect change within my community.

When I'm not studying, I like to...

Play disc golf and video games, watch sports, peruse the news. I'm also a drummer and trying to learn the bass guitar, but I'm a long way from being good at it.

One thing you would not know about me...

I used to be a champion karate fighter when I was in high school.



Donovan Walker

WELCOME Class of 2023



Nathan Zobrest

I chose to go to law school because...

I wanted a fulfilling career that can have a positive impact on society.

My favorite...

Book is *A Song of Ice and Fire*.

My favorite...

I am an expert in the fine art of industrial belt sanding.