

CHRISTOPHER JAMES BRYANT  
2013 DUKE LAW SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP REMARKS

When I was asked to be the student speaker at this year's Scholarship Luncheon, I was honored and flattered. But after accepting the invitation, I struggled to find the appropriate words for my remarks.

It seems like everyone had a high school English teacher who said the best way to get over writer's block was by writing. So I followed Mrs. Kolar's advice and wrote down everything that came to mind regarding Duke, the Law School, students, faculty, staff, various extracurricular opportunities, and the scholarship program. I quickly realized that the problem wasn't that I did not have enough to say. I had too many things to say in five minutes! So I'll do my best to distill it down in a few short minutes.

I am incredibly grateful for the scholarship that Mr. William Louis-Dreyfus provided, and for the opportunity it afforded me to attend Duke University School of Law. I can honestly say that without the scholarship, I would not be in law school right now. And since my LSAT score was about to expire—yes, it took me almost five years to decide to apply—I may not have ever gone to law school.

When I decided to apply to law school, my wife and I set a few guidelines. The law school had to be in the Triangle (she's at the school down the road). The law school also had to provide its graduates with quality career opportunities throughout the country. On these counts, Duke was the clear choice. We also established debt limits. We decided that if I did not receive some scholarship support to offset the loans, I would not go to law school.

When I graduated from college, I worked as a public school teacher for three years. On weekends and during the summer, I played guitar and sang in various venues around North

Carolina and in a few other states. I even delivered pizzas for a while to save up to buy an engagement ring. I learned a lot from these experiences, met some very entertaining characters, and made some great friends. But I did not make enough money to come anywhere close to paying for law school.

After mailing in the application, I agonized for days. Would I get in? And if I got in, how would I pay for it? Although I did not know it at the time, the answer to both of those questions came in the form of an email from Dean Hoye. Dean Hoye asked me to come in for an interview, and I had no idea what to expect. During the interview, his questions about my resume, essays, and letters of recommendation made it clear that he had paid close attention to every detail. A few days after the interview Dean Hoye sent me additional copies of a comic book about copyrights written by two Duke professors that I had used to teach some of my students about music and the law. Shortly after that, I found out that I was accepted to Duke as a William Louis-Dreyfus scholar.

After almost two years here, I cannot think of a better place to be. The students, staff, faculty, and alumni of Duke University School of Law are the most friendly, accomplished, and generous collection of people I have ever met. And in large part, that is due to the donors. All of the scholarship recipients come from different backgrounds, but we all share the same feeling of appreciation for our scholarships. It makes us even more excited about Duke Law, and even more likely to continue the tradition of generosity in the future.

Thank you all for making the Duke experience so incredible.

Christopher J. Bryant

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