

“*You* got into Harvard Law?” “What, like it’s hard?” When I first saw this scene from *Legally Blonde*, I didn’t think my life would soon play out in a similar way. Upon getting my acceptance into this highly selective university, one of the first reactions I got echoed the dismissive sentiment of Elle Wood’s ex who couldn’t believe she got in because my own ex at the time, responded to my acceptance in a similar dismissive manner as he negatively said, “I guess UCLA accepts everyone now.” Despite my hyper-feminine looks and personality, I am not an empty headed bimbo my high school peers perceived me to be. I am often not the loudest voice in the room because I choose to let my actions speak louder. Working in silence as a dedicated student and employee became a powerful tool to break the condescending stereotypes placed on me. My commitment to my consistent work ethic helps me show who I am not. Growing up, I was always underestimated because I love the color pink, shopping, and being a bubbly, carefree person. I resonate with movie characters like Elle Woods in *Legally Blonde* because she exemplifies my values of maintaining positivity and kindness amid environments that try to suppress it. We are both not easily swayed by external pressures to be what we are not. At first glance, people see me as a very bubbly and super pink girly girl, but I have more to bring to that. I am a person who knows the importance of being true to who you are, aiming high, and never letting anyone tell you what you are or aren’t capable of. I’ve grown to embrace my femininity while also maintaining my responsibilities as a student and an employee.

While being a fulltime student in high school, I also had a job in the fast food industry. No matter how exhausted I was from class, I still managed to attend my shifts after school and stayed up late to complete my assignments no matter how long it took. My commitment to my job led me to be someone who is not afraid of hard work. This mindset allowed me to learn time management skills of balancing multiple responsibilities from work, school, and extracurriculars. I am not someone who effortlessly gets good grades. I am someone who stays up late and re-teaches the material in order to succeed. I am someone who values and appreciates what it takes to work hard because being a shift leader at Panda Express has taught me what it means to show up and support my co-workers in order to have a smooth and successful shift. I would even take up late night shifts just to come home to study for assignments the following day. In the past, I wasn’t the most studious person during my freshman year of high school. I didn’t prioritize class, I paid more attention to attaining a fun social life, and I was extremely apathetic towards education. As the pandemic hit, my grades dropped and I failed multiple classes. I was then reminded of the struggle my parents had to endure in order to get the life my siblings and I have now. As a result, I made the effort to learn how to appreciate my education since it’s a very important privilege not many have access to. This shift caused me to be a barely passing student to a straight A student. I am not someone who slacks behind but I am someone who can hold themselves accountable for their actions. I know what it means to be driven and to work hard for what you want despite having people look down on you.

All in all, I am not someone who is not afraid of adversity. Experiencing employment as a high school student has transformed me into a person who can get their work done no matter how tiring it can be. I learned the importance of dedication and putting in effort which allowed me to become a driven person who can finish their job with commitment, positivity, and in pink.