

When younger, I never truly realized the impact a lawyer can make in difficult situations. This was only revealed to me recently through a situation involving my great grandmother's former house. Some of my earliest childhood memories occurred here. The big, white house on Tower Street in the town of Westerly, Rhode Island was the sight of almost every Fourth of July cookout, Thanksgiving dinner, or family gathering I attended growing up. Present at these gatherings would be my immediate family, my grandparents, my great aunt (who I called Auntie Ro), great grandmother, and many other aunts, uncles, and cousins from my extended family. I would often lose track of time while playing wiffle ball and bocce with my family, picking the tomatoes from my grandfather's garden, or lying in the hammock that hung in the front yard. These experiences make up some of my warmest memories. My great grandparents, Italian immigrants, saved their money and built this house to raise my grandfather and my Auntie Ro in, as well as for future generations to come and enjoy. When my grandparents began their family, they moved my mother and uncle with them into the upstairs unit, while my Auntie Ro raised her children in one of the downstairs units. My great grandparents lived in the last remaining unit: a perfect example of a home filled with love. This family history, coupled with the many events of my childhood that occurred at this house, make it an incredibly special place in my heart.

Unfortunately, I have not been back to this house in four years. When my great grandmother died, her dying wishes were that her property be divided evenly between her two children, my grandfather, and my Auntie Ro. In my great grandmother's initial will, the house was left solely to Auntie Ro, excluding my grandfather. When this error of omission was discovered, my great grandmother expressed her desire to hire a lawyer to change the will so that the house would be left to both of her children. Not wanting his mother to spend money on such legal fees, my grandfather and his sister agreed orally that they would share the inheritance,

regardless of a legal document. However, my Auntie Ro then went on and deceptively hired her own lawyer to place the house in a trust with the beneficiaries being her children. This excluded my grandfather, the rightful heir, out of his inheritance, and defied my great grandmother's dying wishes. As a result, a divide was created in the middle of my family: my mother, grandparents, and me on one side, with my aunts, uncles, and Auntie Ro on the other, ending all family events and bonds between the two sides. We have not seen nor talked to the other side of the family in the four years since this occurred.

While this situation has been devastating to see and experience, it has proven to me the powerful impact a lawyer can make in keeping families together. Had my great grandmother not listened to my grandfather and hired an attorney to change her will, my grandfather and his sister would share ownership of the house, and more importantly, our family would not be divided. Without an attorney, my grandfather had no voice and no power over the situation, as my great grandmother's will is binding, but a verbal agreement between siblings that was ruined by greed is not. This has greatly contributed to my strong desire to become a lawyer. I want to be the one who can give people a voice in moments of inequity or injustice, the lawyer who fights for people to get what is rightfully owed to them.

Over the last four years, I have geared many of my actions toward reaching this goal. These include majoring in English to improve my writing skills, working as an intern during my junior year with the Worcester County District Attorney's Office to gain a greater understanding of the legal system, and then working as a Sales Intern the following summer to improve my oral communication skills. These experiences have nurtured my preparation for law school, and I hope to attend New England Law to further prepare me to enable all people to find and use their voices.