**Future Career Aspirations and Goals Essay**

I am an information science major with a concentration in information security. For the longest time, I aspired to be in IT and cybersecurity. However, after working in IT and studying it for the last five years (including independent study and classes in high school), I decided it wasn’t for me. I appreciate the knowledge I gained from my experiences, and I’m open to using my degree in my career, but I plan on becoming a lawyer. I haven’t decided what kind of lawyer I want to be yet, but when I am established in my law vertical, I will take over my father’s law firm. Significant things throughout my life made me want to be a lawyer and, for a time, not want to.

The first I can remember was my dad. My dad was a chemical engineer from when he graduated college until he had me. He got called in for jury duty and, because of that experience, went to law school when I was born and became a lawyer, so he’s been one my whole life. Being a lawyer is his identity, and he loves nothing more than the law. I wanted to be like him because I admired how passionately he loved what he did. When I got to high school, I knew the first step to becoming a lawyer would be to join the debate team, so I tried out for and made the team. I didn’t get along too well with my fellow debaters, but I loved to argue, and they respected me because I prepared well, performed better, and wanted to be there more than anyone else. That experience felt natural, and I’m ashamed to say I quit.

One day, I had a conversation with my dad about what I wanted to do and how I felt about being a lawyer. He told me that I shouldn’t aim to be a lawyer because lawyers and doctors are essentially high-level service people and that my goal should be to hire lawyers and doctors instead. I took what he said to heart, and I fell hard into coding and IT because all the research I did then noted that IT and coding skills would lead to high-paying jobs and the ability to hire lawyers and doctors. For a long time, I focused on money and doing what I thought I should do instead of what I thought I would love.

I’ve worked in IT, I’ve worked in fitness, and I’ve worked in sales… and through all those experiences, nothing felt as natural as the feeling I had when I was in debate. I was chasing something that never felt quite right because I chose my path for the wrong reasons. If you love someone or something, it's okay to let it go because it will return if it loves you, too. Working as a paralegal has felt like the most natural thing I’ve done since debate in high school, and my love for the law has returned with its embrace of me.

I don’t have much experience yet, but I have been a paralegal for about a year and have attended two jury trials. When I graduate next year, I plan on taking a gap year to work for my dad, gain experience in the industry, and prepare for law school. I haven’t visited the USF Career Services Website, Career Services events, or a Career Express appointment because I am already working in and gaining high-level experience at my father’s firm. I haven’t done much research as to what kind of lawyer I want to be, but I know that by working for my dad for the next year, I’ll get to try different things in law, and that should help give me an idea of what area of law feels most natural to me. I will go with the flow and see where lady law takes me because I’ve already established and promised myself that I am making decisions moving forward based on what I could see myself loving and doing 25 hours a day, eight days a week.

I’ve learned plenty about law and myself in my short time as a paralegal. I’ve learned conceptually the different ways lawyers get paid and the day-to-day of being a lawyer. I’ve been able to be around, work with, and learn from high-end lawyers across Florida. I’ve also gotten to practice drafting documents and attending trials; trial experience is invaluable. Most lawyers fresh out of law school have barely been involved in one jury trial, much less two, and to be as heavily involved with them as I have been is a huge leg up.

My journey from aspiring to work in IT and cybersecurity to finding my true passion in law has been transformative. While my initial desire to follow in my father's footsteps as a lawyer was genuine, I momentarily strayed from that path due to external pressures and the allure of high-paying careers. However, I've realized that true professional fulfillment comes from pursuing what one loves wholeheartedly.

My experience as a paralegal and exposure to the legal world has reignited my passion for the law, reaffirming my commitment to becoming a lawyer. I am grateful for the valuable insights and trial experience I have gained. As I continue to explore the diverse realms of law, I am confident that I will find the area that resonates most with me. This journey has taught me the importance of making career choices based on passion and personal fulfillment rather than external expectations.

I look forward to embracing the legal profession with unwavering dedication, guided by the belief that following one's genuine calling leads to a rewarding and meaningful career.