

## **Personal Statement**

At five, my foster family gifted me a bright yellow and white shiny bicycle with training wheels. Determined to learn to ride the bike and realize the limitations of training wheels, I removed the obstacles to managing balance. Knowing that each fall taught me an important lesson about staying balanced, it took a day to learn how to ride. Today, I ask your permission to learn a new skill set, to balance a public policy education. During this pursuit, I am willing to fall.

Pursuing education up to and including my Juris Doctor brought unique challenges based on my politics of location. Born into a dysfunctional family is another dimension of the politics of location not addressed by Adriene Rich. However, it is relevant to each person, the family dynamic one is born. The abuses contained within my family led to my status as a former foster child. Birth also brought me to my ancestry as a mixed-raced woman, a member of four great tribes, Cherokee, Cree, Irish, and Scottish, yet claimed by none. The one feature that my ancestry shared is poverty. The landscape of impoverishment drives me to seek higher education and degrees, I am committed to helping my people. Income level, I argue, is also another dynamic of the politics of location.

Because I have been gifted with the ability, determination, and privilege to pursue higher education, a chance not afforded to most impoverished people, my success is connected to assisting the impoverished with access to justice via legal services. My goal is to utilize my legal and public policy education to research and lobby for greater legal services for the poor. The truth is that I need Evergreen more than you need me. Bridging the gap between the professions, lawyers, politicians, and public policy requires knowledge. At least two specific skill sets are needed to transverse the diverse fields. My plan to start a not-for-profit in Washington state is included in my public policy statement.

Here's what I can offer Evergreen as a student, a respectful student that includes everyone. A forward and independent thinker who seeks to publish in public policy and law. Any future publication will acknowledge my educational history including Evergreen. Also, I offer my counsel to any student at Evergreen considering law school. As I have with the foster care alumni at the University of Washington who have requested my advice. My law school motto is if I can go to law school, then you can go to law school. Opening doors is my preferred state which I practiced as a course assistant at the law school for the past two years. Currently, I am still employed at the University of Arizona James E. College of Law online program as a course assistant. Teaching and assisting other students attain legal skills is important to me. At the end of the summer, I will complete my LLM degree in IPLP (Indigenous Peoples Law Program). Additionally, I will take the WA State Bar this summer. Next, I will, if accepted, complete my master's in public policy at Evergreen. Followed by an SJD in the IPLP doctorate program at the University of Arizona with a dissertation focused on and conducting mock-jury research studies into Native Americans.