



## Paul Singleton: Former Inner-City School Teacher Concerned about Society's Inequities

[By Douglas May]

When Paul Singleton taught inner-city school kids in Baltimore, he realized that working with at-risk students is something that stays with you throughout your lifetime. Later on, when he decided to go to law school, he wanted to go somewhere that was responsive to society's injustices and inequities and be able to do something about them.

Singleton grew up in Greenville, a mid-sized city located in the upstate area of South Carolina. As the largest city in the upstate area, Greenville offers many activities and attractions. Greenville's theaters and event venues regularly host major concerts and touring theater companies. Singleton lived there until he was 17 years old.

He chose to go to Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. The university is highly selective and is known for its rigorous workload. Singleton received a BA in History from Wake Forest, after which he spent two years teaching in inner-city Baltimore through Teach For America (TFA). While there, he met his future wife, another TFA teacher. They spent a year in New York before they both decided to attend law school at the Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law at Arizona State University. Singleton is a 3L student at the school.

When asked why he and his wife decided on this school, Singleton replies, "Being that my wife and I embarked on this journey together, we needed a school that fit both of our needs. First, we noticed that ASU had phenomenal opportunities. The school is located just outside of Phoenix, Arizona. Phoenix is a large city with only three law schools in the area. The opportunities are endless. Secondly, ASU had a strong commitment to public service and pro bono. Whether or not a person decides to teach or be affiliated with education, teaching in the inner-city and seeing impoverished students is something that affects you for the rest of your life. We

**Q. What do you do for fun?**

**A.** Running and baking. I learned to bake while in law school.

**Q. What CD is in your CD player right now, or what was the last song you listened to?**

**A.** Right now, an audiobook is in my CD player. They are great for the commute. I either have a pleasure novel or a *Learning Italian* CD.

**Q. What's the last magazine you read?**

**A.** *Field and Stream*. It is nice to see at least pictures of people catching fish — since I do not catch any.

**Q. What is your favorite TV show/movie?**

**A.** *The Cosby Show* and *The Today Show*.

**Q. Who is your role model?**

**A.** I admire anyone who is honest and stands by his or her word.

**Q. What's the last magazine you read?**

**A.** *Prevention*.

**Q. What's your favorite TV show/movie?**

**A.** *24/Raiders of the Lost Ark*.

**Q. Who is your role model? Why?**

**A.** My Uncle Dwayne is my role model. He started a clothing business from scratch in Greenville, South Carolina. He has been in business for over 10 years.

**Q. What do you think about the current job industry?**

**A.** I think it is sad that a large number of people dislike attorneys. From presidents to civil rights leaders, attorneys have played an important role in our country's history. It is our job as young attorneys to change people's perception.

needed a place that not only recognized society's inequities but also encouraged its students and alumni to remedy these inequities."

Singleton isn't sure what made him want to become a lawyer, but he knew that he was going to law school when he was in the sixth grade and on the student council. He enjoyed changing the rules and school policies. He thought, "I would like to change laws when I grow up. Lawyers deal with laws, so I should go to law school." Singleton did indeed go to law school, and he maintains that his best friend and closest classmate, his wife, has been his greatest influence while there.

Singleton seems to enjoy many aspects of law, one being the advocacy aspect.

"When people (or entities) seek a lawyer, they are usually saying one of two things: (1) to a trial attorney the client says, 'I am not familiar with the legal system, and I need someone to help me navigate these difficult waters,' or (2) to a transactional attorney the client says, 'This is what I want to do. Can you help me meet my goals?' Either way, the client is putting a piece of his or her life, problem, or goal in the lawyer's hand. I enjoy having the opportunity to assist clients in these matters."

Singleton's favorite courses at ASU are tax courses and evidence and trial advocacy courses. He says he likes courses that have clear rules. With Tax and Evidence you simply look up the rules or regulations. He



likes trial advocacy because he wants to be a trial attorney. Singleton interned at Osborn Maledon (OM).

“Our career services distributed information about spring writing interns. It was a very valuable experience. OM is a big law firm, minus the stereotypical big law firm horror stories we often hear about. They do quality work.”

Singleton’s career goal is to enjoy work every day. He will most likely do litigation, probably in the public sector.

“I love the competitions. I love the feeling of being incredibly nervous and having to present something before a judge or mock jury. Thus, litigation seems like a natural fit.”

He is also involved in various student associations at his school. He’s a student ambassador for the Black Law Student Association (BLSA), he’s involved in the American Association for Justice (AAJ), and in his first year he was involved in the Women Law Students’ Association

**Q. What do you think about the current job industry?**

**A.** I think it is sad that a large number of people dislike attorneys. From presidents to civil rights leaders, attorneys have played an important role in our country’s history. It is our job as young attorneys to change people’s perception.

**Q. Are you hopeful about finding a good law job?**

**A.** I think all legal jobs are “good law jobs.” Thousands of people would do anything to get into law school, and sadly, they do not make it. I do think there are jobs that fit certain people better than others. It is just a matter of finding what you like. I am going to pray, and I know I will find a “good” job for me.

**Q. Will you stay in the state you’re in for a law job, or is another state more appealing at this point?**

**A.** Arizona offers the most opportunities. However, given that most of my family and my wife’s family lives east of the Mississippi, it is very likely that we may move.

**Q. What is something that most people don’t know about you?**

**A.** I have a sweet tooth.

(WLSA). In the BLSA he wants to support African American students. As a student ambassador he thinks that their admissions staff does a wonderful job, and he wants to tell other students why his school should be their number-one choice. In the AAJ he loves competing in trial competitions. And in the WLSA he wanted to support women students.

One favorite law school memory so far has been going to Las Vegas and competing on the AAJ’s mock trial team. Singleton also enjoys the school’s pro bono activities. He feels that it’s nice to use what he learned in the classroom to help real people.

When asked if he has any advice for his law peers, Singleton responds, “Try to spend time with your family and the people that you love.”