



Javier Grajeda: Law Student at ASU's Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law

[By Douglas May]

For Javier Grajeda, graduating from college and going to law school is a *very* big deal. "I am the first member of my family to attend a university and a professional school. I graduated from the University of California at Berkeley (go Bears!) with a degree in political science," Grajeda says. To graduate college and pursue graduate studies is quite an accomplishment for anyone, but to be the first in your family to achieve this lofty goal is indeed an enormous feat, setting a new standard for other family members.

Grajeda grew up in the San Fernando Valley in Los Angeles, California. Grajeda has fond memories of living in Southern California during his youth. He says that he liked the beaches, the Lakers, the Dodgers, and the weather. If there's anything unpleasant about growing up in LA that sticks in his mind, it's the traffic.

After graduating from UC Berkeley, Grajeda decided on the Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law at ASU when his fiancée, Molly Weinstein, gained admittance there. Weinstein, currently a 3L student, had a strong interest in immigration law, and the school's immigration clinic was a deciding factor in her decision to enroll at the College of Law. Grajeda says that he agreed to move out to Phoenix with her and apply for admission to the same school. He says that he was fortunate to be admitted to the program and maintains that they both wanted to go to the school because they felt that the Phoenix legal community provided a lot of opportunity for young attorneys.

The Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law opened in 1964 and is accredited by the American Bar Association. It was renamed after retired US Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor in 2006. The school was ranked 51st nationally by US News and World Report in 2007, and is often ranked as one of the top 10 legal writing schools in the country.

The College of Law not only offers a JD degree, but also offers several hybrid degrees, including a JD/MS, a JD/PhD in law and psychology, and a JD/MBA. The College of Law also offers a two-year MLS (master's of legal studies).

Grajeda's decision to enter the field of law came to him during his undergraduate studies at UC Berkeley: "During my undergraduate studies, my focus was on American politics. I learned a lot about the legislative and executive branches of the government. After deciding that I did not want to pursue a career in the field of politics, I decided to be an attorney so that I could be an

advocate." One of Grajeda's favorite courses thus far is Property and Constitutional Law. Grajeda states, "Property was a topic that I did not know much about. I found the course to be very practical, not only as a future attorney but as a consumer. I enjoyed my first year of Constitutional Law because we discussed various contemporary issues that the nation currently faces."

Grajeda is currently involved in an internship program for the summer at Taylor and Associates, a firm that specializes in workers' compensation and Social Security Disability law. Grajeda says that he found the internship by searching the names of attorneys in the city that practiced the field of law that he was interested in. "I spoke to an attorney who was not hiring at the time, but he graciously provided me with the names of other attorneys who were possibly seeking an intern. One of the firms he suggested was Taylor and Associates. I called the office and was told to submit my resume. I then received a phone call from Richard Taylor, the founding partner of the firm. I interviewed with Mr. Taylor, and he extended an offer to me for the summer, and I accepted." Perseverance does pay off.

The experience at Taylor and Associates has been "phenomenal" according to Grajeda. He says, "I have learned the inner workings of a medium-sized firm. I have had an opportunity to research, write memorandums and briefs, attend an oral argument before the Court of Appeals of Arizona, and conduct client interviews. I have had an opportunity to work closely with a fantastic group of attorneys who are experts in the field of law." Grajeda adds, "One thing that is unique about Mr.

Q. What do you do for fun?

A. Watch professional baseball, basketball, and football. Play with my cat Nala. Play a mean game of Madden Football.

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

A. John Legend, *Once Again*.

Q. What's the last magazine you read?

A. *Esquire*.

Q. What is your favorite TV show/movie?

A. A tie between *John and Kate Plus 8* [and] *Godfather II*.

Q. What do you think about the current job industry? Are you hopeful about finding a good law job?

A. I am very hopeful that I will be able to find a good law job.

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

A. I plan to remain and practice in the state of Arizona.

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

A. I am an aspiring harmonica player.



Taylor's office is that it is a refuge for abandoned cats. There are 10 resident cats that call Taylor and Associates home. As a cat owner, I enjoy coming to work and seeing the friendly felines."

Joining student groups can help students meet new challenges and expand their circle of friends and acquaintances, Grajeda says, and he will be the vice president of the Chicano Latino Law Students Association (CLLSA) this upcoming academic year. Grajeda first got involved in the association during his fiancée's first year

of law school. He says, "I attended the CLLSA annual party hosted at Professor Evelyn Cruz's home. I had an opportunity to meet and speak to members of the group. When I started law school, I became an active member. The association's main goals are to improve and advance the status of Latinos in the social, educational, and legal fields; promote and encourage the legal education of Hispanic law students; [and] inform and sensitize the legal community to the unique needs, problems, and issues of the Latino community."

A favorite law school memory for Grajeda thus far is "successfully completing my first year." Asked about other interests he has, Grajeda says, "I am a mentee/mentor for the Hispanic National Bar Association Mentorship program. I am a mentor to a college graduate who will be attending law school in the fall. My mentor is an attorney for Community Legal Services, and I have developed a close friendship with my mentor attorney."