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Changemakers: The Long Road To The Law : Kiron Ireland

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CHANGEMAKERS

The Long Road to the Law



Kiron Ireland, RWU Law Class of 2023

[Juris Doctor](#)

Kiron Ireland always knew he wanted to be a lawyer. But as a child growing up in the developing nation of Antigua, he knew that the country's educational system could not help him achieve his future goals. All roads to the law led away from his home, but they were roads he was willing to travel, knowing that there would be hardship and challenges, because he would not be deterred from his dreams.

Ireland first left Antigua about a decade ago, landing in New York City with his brother and sister in order to attend school (their parents would join them two years later). He eventually found his way to John Jay College of Criminal Justice. John Jay turned out to be the ideal place for him, as he was fully committed to their mission of exploring justice in its many dimensions. He studied hard and earned a scholarship for students with a keen interest in government. The scholarship had an internship component, through which Ireland was assigned to the District Office of the New York Assembly Speaker Carl E. Heastie. "That internship changed the trajectory of my life," explained Ireland. "In my work with the Speaker, I had a lot of

opportunities to experience the innerworkings of government firsthand, and I was offered a full-time job right out of college.”

Though his dream of becoming a lawyer had not faded, Ireland felt he had not done well enough on the LSATs to get into law school and decided to stay with the Assembly for the immediate future. He found himself working a great deal in constituent services, which often involved pointing constituents toward outlets for much-needed legal expertise. Said Ireland, “On a regular basis, I saw a huge need for basic legal advice for my community and other underrepresented minorities. Because filling that void was my main reason for wanting to become a lawyer, I was revitalized and motivated to pursue my dream.”

The Pipeline for Justice at City University of New York helped get Ireland positioned for entrance to law school, and he was excited to be one step closer to accomplishing his dream. But when he first arrived at Roger Williams University School of Law, he found himself homesick for New York City, his family, and his large support system of fellow Caribbean natives. He struggled a bit academically, but found the critical mentorship and guidance he needed to help pull him through. “Professor Thompson, the Academic Success Director, and Professor Brown (now Dean Brown) helped me so much,” said Ireland. “They led me to understand that one of my biggest problems was that I did not know how to write for law school. I had always been a good writer and got As in college, but it turns out legal writing is literally a different language. Professors Thompson and Brown worked with me at night and taught me: ‘No passive voice!’ ‘Get straight to the point!’ ‘Be clear and precise!’ I truly believe I could not have stayed in law school if it weren’t for Professors Thompson and Brown.”

And Ireland didn’t just stay; he thrived. The once-home sick first-year student now plays a large role in the in the RWU Law community, particularly as the Student Bar President.

Now that his dream of becoming a lawyer is within his grasp, Ireland said he will be honoring all of those who helped him reach his goal by providing mentorship to others who need it. He said, “A lot of people have helped me along the way. The mentorship I received has gotten me to this point. It’s very important for me to give back to others.”

Ireland remains equally steadfast in commitment to helping others through the law. He is currently working at the Rhode Island Public Defenders Office and would like to stay there after passing the bar. “My main goal is to understand the criminal justice system more so that, some day, I can implement some sort of change for the better,” Ireland explained. “One of my current mentors is a judge, and he told me ‘Our legal system is very fragile. Oftentimes, new law school graduates enter the system and think they can effect immediate change. But that is not possible.’ I know I need to gain all of the knowledge and experience I can, and with that, I can make a small difference that might be a big deal to others.”

Author: Michelle Choate