

# A Summer Starter's Story...

Dear Prospective Student:

I would first like to congratulate you on starting the next big adventure of your life! Of course, like any good (and faithful) alumni, my hope is that you will soon be committing to the Ohio Northern University Pettit College of Law as your choice for building the foundation for your legal and professional career. It is my personal belief, which I know to be shared by my predecessors, that attending ONU Law is the best choice you will ever make to guide you through your professional career. I do, however, understand the gravity of such a decision. You undoubtedly ask yourself countless questions: Will it prepare me for the competitive legal market? Will it prepare me for the bar exam? Will it enable me with the tools to become the best lawyer or best professional you can be? From experience, I can tell you the answer to all of these questions is a resounding yes. But I also know that you will need to assess whether ONU Law is a good fit for you, personally. Since I cannot see the future, or know whether this is the right fit for you, the best I can do is to share with you my “ONU Law story” in hopes that some aspect will relate to your own.



Growing up in a city like Atlanta, Georgia, people often ask why I chose to attend law school at Ohio Northern University in Ada, Ohio. After all, it is located in a small Midwest town surrounded by sprawling cornfields. For me, the choice to attend ONU Law hinged on two factors. First, the personal interaction I had with the Director of Admissions, professors, and current law students during my on-campus visit was warm, welcoming, and without pretense. The exchanges I had with these individuals assured me that the school and its staff were truly vested in my success and the success of its students – not vice versa. Second, the size of the law school was well suited to my learning style, giving myself a competitive advantage to succeed. I didn't want to be just another student among many (e.g., “Hello, Student #534”); I wanted my professors to know me personally (e.g., “Hello, Ms. Russell”), to get to know my strengths and weaknesses so that I could learn from my mistakes. In my opinion, these two aspects, while simple, come together to create the best educational environment for success and are the major qualities that set ONU Law apart from other law schools.

Looking back at my time at ONU Law, I realized that the professors, faculty and staff are among the school's most valuable assets. They are accessible, passionate, and dedicated to molding their students into not just lawyers, but the best writers, critics, observers, orators, and thinkers they can be. Students not only learn the black letter law and legal theory, but they learn how to think differently, analyze differently and write effectively and persuasively. While it's never hand-holding, they provide continuous academic support to their students throughout the tumultuous first year all the way to providing after graduation support while you study two months for the bar exam. Having been out of law school for several years now, I see the benefit of these teachings both personally and professionally.

The quality of the faculty and staff is only complimented by the variety of classes and curriculum offered at ONU Law. The curriculum is unique in that it is not stagnant or fixed year to year, but ever changing. It captures the core courses that every law student should take, but it also offers specialized courses to reflect current emerging areas of the law in order to stay in line with changing trends. The ability for a smaller law school like ONU Law to offer such a breadth of courses for the benefit of their students is really unparalleled.

Further, given the wide variety of student organizations and clubs offered at ONU Law, students are able to tailor their law school experiences to their interests. Personally, I joined Moot Court and served as a member of the ABA Appellate Advocacy Team and even served as the Administrative Justice to the Moot Court Executive Board in my third year, which also carried the opportunity to serve as a coach for a Moot Court team. The skills I acquired from being a team member, to a coach, to an Executive Board member were invaluable; the skills I gained include persuasive public speaking skills, effective coaching abilities and practical negotiating skills that I have parlayed into my everyday work responsibilities in my current job and frankly, are valuable skills in any work place setting.

Apart from my experience with Moot Court, I also obtained hands-on experience from taking part in the Judicial Externship Clinic and the Prosecution Clinic, among many legal clinics offered at ONU Law. These clinics provide students with practical on-the-job legal experience and are a tool to help students realize their career goals, desires, and potentials.

Lastly, I'd like to address probably the best thing that ONU Law offers: its extensive and close-knit alumni network. Apart from the tireless effort of ONU Law's career services that works side-by-side with students looking for employment, ONU Law's alumni network is the next best thing. It is replete with credentialed and successful graduates who know the value of an ONU Law education and the caliber of individuals it creates. I'm very proud to say that both my former job and my current job were obtained through an ONU Law connection. My first job was in the private sector working at the law firm of WilmerHale when a fellow ONU Law graduate employed by the firm reached out when the firm was hiring. After I decided to transition from the private sector, I made a call to another fellow graduate who happened to be working for the newly created Ohio Casino Control Commission to see if he was aware of any opportunities in the area. Several months after that phone call, I accepted a position with the Ohio Casino Control Commission.

I hope that my story and insight has been useful and beneficial either in finalizing your decision-making or in strengthening your resolve in choosing ONU Law. I wish you all the best in your future endeavors and encourage you to take the leap at ONU Law, I promise you won't regret it.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anna Marin Russell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "A" and "R".

Anna Marin Russell, JD 2010

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