

Whitney A. Johnston

Whitney_Johnston@sulc.edu // LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/WhitneyAJohnston

Education

Southern University Law Center- Baton Rouge, LA **2018 - Present**

Doctor of Law, Candidate May 2021

Organizations: Black Entertainment and Sports Attorneys – Law Student Member
Georgia Association of Black Women Attorneys – Law Student Member
Alabama Lawyers Association – Law Student Member
Alabama Young Lawyers – Law Student Member
National Bar Association – Young Lawyers Division

University of South Alabama- Mobile, AL **2011 - 2015**

Criminal Justice, B.A., December 2015

Psychology minor

Organizations: Student Government Association (SGA), Associate Justice
NAACP – Student Member
USA Pre-Law Society
Students Today Alumni Tomorrow (STAT)
Psychology Club
Spectrum – LGBTQ Organization

Experience

Fulton County District Attorney's Office* Atlanta, GA **2017**

Summer Intern

Prepare new case files, draft and E-File legal documents for the Drug and Gang Unit. Attend court during trial calendar, motions, and criminal and civil trials. Assist as needed with all trials.

Woody's Song/Learning Tree **2015**

Fall Practicum

Work with children with Autism in a learning environment by implementing reinforcement in everyday activities in effort to create repetition. Teach lessons of all subjects.

Mobile County District Attorney's Office* Mobile, AL **2015**

Fall Intern

Assist the Check Enforcement Unit locate individuals who have written bad checks by operating secure government software to locate these individuals.

Mobile County District Attorney's Office * Mobile, AL **2014**

Spring Intern

Prepare legal documents for the Forfeiture Department. Attend court during trials and hearings. Sit in on jury selection. Review cases.

Community Involvement

Project PEARL, Inc. **2014 - Present**

Founder and Creator

Operate a 501(c)(3) Nonprofit Organization which aims to instill in young women "Purpose, Education, Aid, Resilience and Leadership" through mentoring, community service and motivational speaking.

Wilmer Hall Children and Women's Home* Mobile, AL **2012 - 2015**

Volunteer and Overseer

Instruct and mentor tutoring for residents and local students of the area. Assist students and residents with homework and studying for State Exams, and College Preparatory Exams.

Research and Publications

Give Me an A; Relation to Values and Academic Entitlement

Dr. Lisa A. Turner, Professor// University of South Alabama Psychology Department

Accepted by Southeastern Psychological Association (SEPA) 2015

Whitney Johnston

Candidate Statement for Delegate of Programming

January 15, 2019

In 1965 in Alabama a large amount of black families were evicted from their homes by the white landowners for attempting to register to vote and for participating in the Selma to Montgomery March. This led to the creation of Tent City. Tent City was formed in a small town in between Selma and Montgomery, it was used to house these homeless families and accommodate the participants of the march. This town is called White Hall, Alabama. I grew up here. Growing up as a young black girl in Alabama, a state that is so full and rich in Black History (American History), I have always been so compelled to be a part of change and promote diversity. As a child, even before I knew what it was that I wanted to do, being surrounded by a history filled with activists, I knew I was going to be a catalyst of change just like those before me.

At the age twelve I decided my purpose in life was to become a lawyer. I was told that “lawyers are the most powerful people in the country.” This was the most thrilling thing to me. I was consumed with thoughts that validated this statement. The Supreme Court is made of lawyers; the presidents are lawyers (*were*); the politicians are lawyers; and lawyers make the laws. However, none of them looked like me. This baffled me. If I wanted to be a catalyst of change the best way to do it was to become a lawyer. If lawyers make the laws then the only way to change the law is to become a part of it. Unfortunately, this would prove to be easier said than done.

As someone who is diverse in a multitude of ways, I am constantly affected by a lot that goes on in the legal system with little representation of people like me. As an African American/Black citizen, I am affected by the disproportionate rates of incarcerations of blacks in the United States, the discrimination, and the police brutality/shootings. On the surface these statistics are discouraging; it does not appear that the legal system is on my side. Sadly, there are only three percent of lawyers in the U.S. that identify as black. This number portrays a view among people of color that the legal system is less inclusive and more suppressive. Moreover, how do we change it? Where do we start? I desire to change this stigmatism in the African American culture by **emphasizing the value in being a part of the legal system**. I want people of color to not only feel invited to take the first step and apply for law school but feel equal and included in the field.

As a woman, I am affected by the government’s desire to control my body and my voice, angered by the lower pay rate compared to the male counterpart, and bothered by the bias/sexism in the workplace. Women make up less than thirty-five percent of attorneys and less than twenty percent of them become partners. In recent years, women have been leaving the legal field at a high rate due to the pay gap and bias. Can this be fixed? I think so. I would like to work extensively with the American Bar Association to help solve this issue and **put in place programs that allow the number of women in the legal field to grow, as well as programs that allow women to feel comfortable at their firm and in practice and to hold those responsible for bias/sexism accountable with the ABA or state bar.**

Whitney Johnston
Candidate Statement for Delegate of Programming

As a member of the LGBTQ community (those that are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, or those that choose not to label themselves), I am constantly affected by the frequent violent acts against the community, the lack of rights, the government's and the people's desire to control who I love, who I choose to start a family with, and the way I, and others like me, choose to live our life. I am constantly weary of where I can be affectionate with my partner and whether I can live in my truth and share my sexuality without fear of judgment and threats. This feeling, to many members of the LGBTQ community, is equivalent to being caged in your own body, you are not free to be yourself. Many people commit suicide because of this feeling or try to change or hide who they are to fit in as a way to avoid those uncomfortable and sometimes idiotic conversations or judgment. In many cases, people hide as a way to protect their livelihood and career. I have never desired to be that person and I want others to feel comfortable being themselves as well. In undergraduate, I was a member of Spectrum, which was an organization dedicated to making LGBTQ students feel included. As a law student, one of the main reasons I chose to attend my current law school was because they had an organization dedicated to LGBTQ students as well and working to resolve legal issues that affect the rights of the LGBTQ. Once I actually got to the school, I found out the organization is no longer active. This saddened me to think that LGBTQ members at my law school are either fearful to be their true selves in the law school setting or that people genuinely just do not care about the rights of the LGBTQ community. This drove me to work diligently with the Student Bar Association at my law school to see that this organization becomes active again with me playing a vital role in its success. I want to ensure that every law student both at my law school and others feel included and not ashamed. **I want to ensure that the importance of LGBTQ rights are made known to everyone as a way to foster positive dialogue and catapult change nationwide.**

As a Delegate of Programming, I will work diligently to ensure that more people see the advantages of being in the legal field. Just as law school has been for me, I want to encourage others from diverse backgrounds to apply so that they too can use their voice to become a catalyst for the positive change they wish to see in this country. In conclusion, I will strengthen the vision and perform the duties of the position with the utmost diligence and confidence. I will represent the American Bar Association with the highest degree of professionalism and ensure its continued growth and presence in all aspects.

Thank you for your consideration,

Whitney Johnston