

As I approach my final days of my LLB degree at the University of Dar-Es-Salaam, it is time for me to reflect how I got here and the lessons that I have learnt along the way. Growing up lawyers were some of my favourite people, even before I knew what it took to be one. Their cars, mansions and dapper suits (when you bumped into one in a court street) got my attention and that of every ambitious kid who wished to make a living. I was really convinced deep in my heart that, one day when I become a lawyer I would easily share in such possessions, henceforth I decided to pursue a career in law.

In 2015, I was lucky to be one of students selected to pursue law at the University of Dar es salaam and I thought that my dreams were close to being a reality. However, things were not as I imagine and I quickly learnt that being a lawyer is not only about dapper suits, fancy cars and a mansion, it does in fact involve lots of late nights studying, sacrifices and years of learning. It is this in mind that made me feel obliged to share some of the lessons that I have learnt over the last 4 years of perusing a law degree.

Here are a few things that I have learnt in my journey and I think anyone looking to pursue a law degree should know beforehand;

### **Law is a heterogeneous field;**

From a layman's perspective law seems to be a very simple field, one that a person can master straight out of law school. I am afraid that this is not the case in reality. Law is composed of a lot of disciplines and each discipline has its own technicalities. Mastering law in one discipline will take lots of hours of study, discussions and a couple of years of practice. Furthermore, some disciplines of law are very wide especially those that involve international laws. As a novice it is important to choose a few disciplines early on that you are good at and stick to them.

### **Mentor;**

A mentor is a person that is ahead of you in the law career and can provide assistance in terms of guidance advice or connections. When I started university, I did not know how important a mentor was until it was too late. In the legal field a mentor can guide you on what courses to specialise on, techniques of answering questions, how to be an outstanding lawyer to mention but a few. In most cases, a mentor can be a person who is ahead of you in terms of education or even an advocate of the high court of Tanzania. In some circumstances where you are fortunate enough to come from a family that has relatives that are lawyers, one of them can be your mentor. I think mentors are important as they have travelled the same road you are in and may have learnt a few tricks along the way. I would



Dapper suits anyone? My journey to a career in Law.

urge young aspiring lawyers to have a mentor, as this will not only open different opportunities but will make your law journey far much easier and hopefully more interesting.

### **Law is a commitment to lifelong learning;**

A career in law is dominated by lengthy documents, from cases memorandums, contracts to legal opinions. Achieving, success in the legal field one has to read widely. The moment you chose a legal career be prepared to commit to learning and reading your entire life of practice. If you are not one for reading then being a lawyer can be a nightmare.

### **Extra-curriculum activities;**

It is fair to say, studying law can consume a lot of energy and put you in immerse pressure. For this reason, it is important to engage in extra-curriculum activities related and unrelated to law as this will make the journey more intriguing and memorable. I would recommend that some of your extra-curriculum activities be related to the law. The actives could range from essay writing, moots, writing and editing articles, debates or any other career enhancement activities. These activities are important to a law student since they debut talents and may help you identify your strengths. Who knows you may even catch the attention of a future employer along the way!

Now that I have come to the end of the road at the University of Dar-Es-Salaam and have had the time to reflect on how I got here, I would say that what started as a journey to dapper suits and fancy cars has been one of the most challenging, insightful and rewarding experience that I have been through. There were lots of surprises along the way but overall, I am grateful for all the knowledge I have gained. It is my hope that my journey will be of great insight to aspiring law students and possibly inspire some of you to take on the challenge.

**By; WALTER VALERIAN MWACHA.**

*University of Dar es Salaam (LLB), General Secretary of University of Dar es Salam Moot Court Club.*

*Email: mwachawalter@outlook.com*



Dapper suits anyone? My journey to a career in Law.