

My name is Taylor Christine Ingram. I am 22 years old and from Fallon, Nevada. Fallon is a small agricultural community, famous for being the home of the US Navy's Top Gun flight school, but to me, it's just home. Last December I graduated with Cum Laude honors in 3 ½ years from the University of Nevada, Reno with a GPA of 3.945. I received my BA in Criminal Justice and minored in Business Administration.

Attending college during the Covid era was definitely a challenge. Online classes and other restrictions imposed on us created an environment of isolation and frankly, despair. I missed the in-person interaction with classmates and professors and also the ability to volunteer in the community or play co-ed sports during that time. Having to serve as my own IT person to overcome technology problems during online classes and proctored tests gave me an education of its own. But I made it through and came out a stronger person (although perhaps a bit more anxious!) This experience taught me the importance of determination, staying focused, setting high goals, and working hard. Exactly what I plan to do in law school and in my legal career.

From a very young age, I have wanted to be a lawyer and work in the criminal justice system. This is largely due to my family's history of public service. My dad, a member of the Choctaw Tribe of Oklahoma and now retired, served in the United States Marine Corps, then worked in law enforcement, and was eventually elected Sheriff of Churchill County, NV. My mom is the Director of Pre-Trial Services in Churchill County, and my older brother, Tyler, is the elected District Attorney for Elko County, NV. I am proud of my family's service, and I wish to continue that tradition.

In 2023 I was admitted to the University of Idaho College of Law. I am now a first-year law student and among the youngest in my class. I find myself in the situation of having this incredible opportunity, but also carrying the stress of paying for it. My parents are, or are

planning to, retire and while they have sacrificed immensely for my brother's and my education, they have also taught us the importance and appreciation of contributing to our own success. Having signed an agreement to not work, and also having witnessed the harsh effects of student loans on my brother, I am humbly requesting assistance from organizations like yours.

While I have not yet chosen my area of emphasis, I plan to explore criminal law and Native American law, being a registered member of the Choctaw Tribe of Oklahoma. I am extremely proud and completely fascinated by my heritage. My family, through genealogical research, discovered that I am a direct descendant of Chief Apuckshunubbee (1740-1824). He was my great, great, great, great, great, great grandfather. I tell you this not to commit the most extreme case of name-dropping, but to share that finding this out inspired me to do so much research on not only my own family's history, but also many of the critical needs and issues that the Native American community faces. One of those issues that has become particularly interesting to me is that the policies that the American government use to classify someone as Native American is causing what scholars call "statistical genocide." I am an example of that. While I am a registered member of the Choctaw Tribe of Oklahoma, because of intermarriages that we discovered in our research, I also have a high degree of Cherokee ancestry. However, generations ago, my family was forced to pick one tribe to affiliate with and so I am only considered 1/32 native, when it is actually much more than that. Over time these policies will make our heritage watered-down, less recognized and less relevant. While I don't have a solution for this, as an attorney, I hope to spend a large portion of my pro-bono time helping natives and other under-privileged individuals with their legal needs and bringing light and a voice to the issues natives face.

As a lawyer, I see myself in public service, much like my family, trying to make the world a better place. However, at this point my mind is completely open, and I look forward to discovering all of the opportunities that a law degree opens up for me.

Thank you very much for your time and any consideration you may give to my scholarship application.