

Meet Cassius Price



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WILLIAM H. BOWEN
SCHOOL OF LAW

When Cassius Price was an undergraduate at Morehouse College, he went to an on-campus event for the pizza. The speaker was a director of the Georgia Innocence Project.

“She asked how we felt about rape and murder,” he said. “I sat down to listen and forgot about the pizza.”

That chance encounter led Cassius to volunteer at the Georgia Innocence Project, a nonprofit that works to exonerate those wrongfully convicted of rape and murder, until he graduated from Morehouse. It also sparked a passion for criminal law.

“As a volunteer, I was the liaison between the Project and the prisoners,” Cassius explained. “I was their direct line of correspondence, and I helped build cases doing everything from interviews to evidence collection. This was their last cry for help, and it was satisfying that I could have an impact.”

Cassius, who is an Atlanta native, was accepted at nine different law schools.

“I’ve always been interested in being an attorney. The Innocence Project set that decision in stone for me.”

Cassius selected Bowen for several reasons. Prominent among them was the school’s location in a capital city, which meant there were more opportunities available. At the same time, Little Rock is a smaller city than Atlanta, so it provided fewer distractions. He also liked the slower pace of life that Little Rock offered compared to Atlanta.

“I’m still waiting on the traffic everyone talked about during Admitted Students Day,” he joked.

Bowen is also more affordable.

“Getting into law school and finishing is expensive,” Cassius explained. “From LSAT prep through tuition to bar exam fees. I wanted an education that wouldn’t leave me in debt to the point that I couldn’t pursue the career I love.”

“For me, a legal career isn’t about the money,” he continued. “It’s about impact and influence. I can reach out and see a person—talk to them. I can see who I’m helping and see the change I’ve helped them make.”

Cassius pointed to one other reason for his decision—Bowen’s Chapter of the Black Law Students Association.

“Altmease Lowe reached out to me after I applied,” he explained. “She answered my questions and let me know she was here to help. It made me feel wanted and welcomed—that Bowen was a place I could call home. I didn’t have that experience with any other law school.”

Once he was a student, Cassius found another positive in Bowen’s academic camaraderie.

“Bowen is competitive, but it’s not cutthroat,” he said. “I can talk to my fellow students, and they’re helpful. As far as my class goes, we genuinely want each other to succeed. Many of my friends in other schools talk about how students hide books and sabotage other students. We don’t do that here.”

His professors are approachable as well. This fall, Professor dré cummings hosted a welcome back barbecue at his home for the BLSA chapter. It’s just one of the ways the professor has connected with his students outside the classroom.

“He looks for opportunities for his students to pursue,” Cassius said. “He stops in the hallway to visit when he sees us.”

Cassius’ favorite class so far has been Associate Dean Terrence Cain’s Criminal Procedure class. Not only is the topic his favorite, but Associate Dean Cain taught the class with rigor and humor.

“You learn A LOT in his class,” Cassius said. “I have things come across my desk while I’m clerking, and I hear Professor Cain’s voice in my head.”

This past summer, Cassius clerked at the Arkansas Public Defender Commission, where he worked on capital murder cases. It was a job he was particularly qualified for after his experience at the Georgia Innocence Project.

“The job descriptions were exactly the same,” he said. “I was excited to have an impact, and they were happy I already had

the skills they needed.”

For a student attorney who values interaction with his clients, the Public Defender Commission was a challenge.

“Building those relationships was the hardest part of the job,” Cassius explained. “We spent a lot of time convincing them that we had their back and we would fight for them—that they weren’t doomed because they had a public defender.”

Cassius is now clerking for the Pulaski County District Court Public Defender’s office. He is enrolled in his last class necessary for Rule XV certification, which will allow him to practice under an attorney’s supervision. He should be certified by this summer.

Earlier this year, Cassius was part of the Bowen’s BLSA Trial Team as they competed in the Constance Baker Motely Mock Trial Competition. The team practiced and prepared during fall final exams and winter break. They finished fourth overall in the Southwest Regionals, missing the national round by less than one point.

“We are all second-year students who had never competed,” Cassius said. “We started with raw talent and determination, then we received great feedback and advice from our coaches and from each other. We’re proud of how we finished, but we’re all coming back next year to do it again.”

Cassius is also serving on the BLSA board. He’s the chapter’s treasurer and director of pre-law affairs. Part of his pre-law affairs responsibility was organizing the Minority PreLaw Bootcamp that BLSA hosted in the fall. It allowed Cassius to reach out to other students and to further his connections with Bowen’s faculty.

“Professor cummings jumped in immediately to help with the LSAT prep section,” he said.

The other arm of pre-law affairs is actively reaching out to Arkansas college students, especially African American

students, to find out why they aren’t staying in Arkansas for law school. They’re also working with Bowen’s Admissions office to contact applicants.

“Just like Altmease did for me. We want them to know BLSA is here to help with questions. We want them to know they are wanted and welcomed, and that this is a place they can call home.”

As for where he’ll call home after graduation, Cassius isn’t sure. He just knows he’ll be doing criminal defense work.

“You can provide a voice to people to help with getting them justice,” he said. “A lot of people say there’s no money in it. There is this push toward big law. But I’ve never met a criminal lawyer who didn’t love their job and what they do.”