

A Time of Transition: The Marine Corps to the Field of Law

By: Alexis Majano

As we continue to navigate one of the most difficult and tumultuous times in our nation's history, many families, friends and colleagues reflect on the transitions they have had to make in order to adapt to the hardships caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. With any transition comes a moment where one must weigh their options and choose what they believe is the best course of action. This moment arrived for me on November 18, 2014 when I stepped into the Marine Corps recruitment office in Hempstead, New York and enlisted in the United States Marine Corps.

At the time, I had recently turned 19 years old and was enrolled in Hofstra University's Frank G. Zarb School of Business with the intention of attending law school. Ever since I was young, I had an unwavering dedication to becoming the first licensed attorney in my family. As I embarked on this journey, I weighed every option that I believed could secure my future while helping those I cherished the most. That led to my desire to enlist in the Marine Corps Reserves. A reservist enlistment requires one year of active-duty service followed by 5 years of reserve service. Reserve service allowed me to continue my undergraduate studies and attend law school while still serving my country. The transition from a military lifestyle to the civilian world after the first year of active duty was challenging, as most transitions are, but I felt excited and up to the task.

Having college experience when I enlisted resulted in an immediate promotion following the completion of Bootcamp. This promotion allowed me to take on leadership roles in the Marine Corps while providing the foundation in character that would allow me to complete law school and pass the New York State Bar Exam. The leadership roles included, becoming a squad leader in a platoon of 70 marines, obtaining a Humvee license where I was responsible for transporting sensitive equipment, participating in large communication missions that dealt with decrypting and encrypting sensitive information and setting up satellite communications with other bases around the world. These missions were essential in ensuring that all of the equipment our unit maintained was combat ready in the event that it was needed on short notice.

My final semester at Hofstra Law School was a time of constant transition as the Covid-19 pandemic had taken its toll on society in March 2020 and forced all students to push themselves forward and adapt to remote schooling. As a clinical student with the Hofstra Law School Veteran's Law Clinic, all course work and client work was moved online. This shift was challenging because a crucial part of being a clinical student is the hands-on group work and client communication experience. In any event, the clinic pressed on and succeeded in obtaining the help our veterans deserve. Finally, the New York State Bar Exam was canceled twice, which resulted in a remote bar examination in

October of that year. The delayed administration of the exam resulted in students having to further delay full-time employment and allocate more time to prepare for the exam.

There is a saying in the Marine Corps, “Adapt and Overcome”. A statement that could not be more relevant in today’s world. Moments of transition will always present themselves regardless of what field you are in. Whether it is purchasing your first home, starting a new business, or adapting to a life with Covid-19, being ready to adapt and overcome is key.

If you have any questions regarding my military experience, law school experience, or post law school experience during the continued pandemic, please feel free to contact me at Amajano@sahnward.com.