

Juwayne Hylton

What will you be doing after graduating college to help make Jamaica a better place to live in?

It is when I read articles like "Fix the Justice System" (Jamaica Gleaner, 22.11.12) that I am convinced that more people need to take a stand to make Jamaica a better place to live, and I aim to be numbered among them. The article expresses that Jamaica's legal system has failed many times to cater to the needs of its disadvantaged citizens. Consequently, there is a backlog of cases, which further delays justice. I believe that after fifty-five years of independence, Jamaica's justice system should be more advanced, and I vow to play my part in making Jamaicans more confident in their country's justice system, to improve their standard of living.

Enhancing the justice system and fighting for the rights of the oppressed are among the things I plan to do to make Jamaica better. I see myself as a hardworking and God-fearing individual who wishes to specialize in Human Rights Law, own my law firm and ultimately become the Director of Public Prosecution. There are several reasons which have instilled my desire to be a lawyer and an advocate. Currently, Jamaica's legal system does not effectively protect individuals and this can be attributed to its archaic nature and lack of consideration for some of the most vulnerable members of society, persons in poor communities who face extra-judicial actions and are abused in regards to their rights due to their lack of education and power.

Personally, being a student, one who is often silenced by various levels of authority, has encouraged me to be persistent in my vocalization about issues faced by my peers. This silencing is also a reflection of our society. I have been in situations where persons of authority have acted out of malice whilst fully disregarding the effect it may have on persons. It made me feel voiceless, disenfranchised and powerless. This drove a desire to prevent the same from happening to minorities and disadvantaged groups and individuals.

Advocacy and Law provide the perfect arena to facilitate necessary change. I resonate with people like Kayan Lemont who was killed by a police officer who had no charges laid against him despite the allegations. I find it problematic when men in particular commit rape and are given minimal sentences for simply pleading guilty. These examples merely skim the surface of the various issues that I would wish to address in a professional capacity. It is on this basis that I am committed to ensuring that the families and people who have been marginalized because of the lack of opportunities are able to seek the protection of the law and are afforded the opportunity of recognizing their human rights. A solution oriented, human rights-based approach must be explored in relation to some of the most vulnerable groups.

I would act as a volunteer and leader in groups to such as the Jamaica Youth Advocacy Network (JYAN) which deals with youth related issues and Jamaicans for Justice (JFJ) which is human rights centered NG. These groups receive funding from international agencies and my service will help address issues most relevant to our children, women and girls and adolescents amongst other susceptible groups. A more equitable justice and political system ensures that development is better simulated from more equitable distribution of resources and justice for all. I am eager to facilitate the voice of the voiceless.