



Paula Langworthy '06

Student

Paula Langworthy is not a traditional student by any stretch of the imagination. She began law school with a husband and five children. She had worked for several years prior to attending law school and she is Native American. After receiving her undergraduate degree at Northeastern State University with a B.S. in Criminal Justice, she worked as a court services coordinator for municipal court in Salina then for a law firm in Salina for two years as a Paralegal. Langworthy always wanted to attend law school but thought it would be too hard with a family. Her step-father always told her she needed to quit waiting and just do it. When he died, Langworthy realized that life is too short and she decided to take the LSAT. She began law school in January 2003.

Langworthy thinks that working prior to attending law school has helped her and that having a life outside of school is also a benefit. "Outside life, my family, helps keep me balanced and grounded and gives me a different perspective than what others might have," said Langworthy. She eventually wants to work in a Wichita firm in civil litigation after graduating. Langworthy doesn't want to sit behind a desk all day; she longs to prove what she knows. Langworthy participated in the Intensive Trial Advocacy Program at law school, which she believes helped her become comfortable in the courtroom.

You could say Langworthy is pretty driven. She grew up with a father pushing her and her brother to do their best and to never be satisfied until they accomplished their goals. Langworthy is Native American, Cherokee to be exact. Her father knew she was capable of so much more than what was expected of, as he said, the "Indian kids." He grew up in a Cherokee home, speaking only Cherokee and struggled his whole life to succeed. He wanted more for his children. Langworthy states that her dad is her hero. He provides the drive and ambition for her to continue. Langworthy quickly became involved at the law school

in the Native American Law School Association. She believes that Native American history, culture and traditions needs to be shared with not only students but faculty as well. "Native Americans have a bad rap and have been looked down on. I feel like I need to get the word out on the positive things of our culture."

Langworthy feels like she has made progress and has noticed some attitudes have changed. She also wants to be a role model and prove to women, people with families and Native Americans that they can go to law school and succeed. Langworthy truly is a great role model, representing all three categories of people she wants to encourage with great esteem and dignity.

Langworthy remembers being told these bits of advice, "A good associate learns to talk less and listen more. It is better to keep your mouth shut and let people think you are ignorant than to open your mouth and confirm it beyond a reasonable doubt." Langworthy said, "I hope the phrase wasn't directed at me but it is very true." Her experience has taught her that you need to consider your priorities and keep in mind most of the pressure put on you is from yourself. She gives special thanks to her husband Kurt and to her children for being so supportive during law school. In fact she believes it has brought them closer. "You realize your time together is precious and you value the time you have together which helps put priorities in order," Langworthy stated.

No matter where Langworthy ends up after graduation, one thing is certain, she is positioned and ready to take on any challenges that life or her profession throws her way.