Numbers define you, but not fully—not totally. In high school I used numbers as a determinant for success, a way to illustrate who I was. My GPA and class rank gave me validation, which is partly true. But what my high school self couldn’t adequately realize is that numbers don’t describe what kind of person you are or will be. I did work hard for those numbers and continue to do so at UCSB, but what college has shown me that high school couldn’t is that people are so much more than who they seem to be on paper, on a resume, or even in a law school application. Numbers don’t define me in this stage of my life, but rather my passion and personality, which stemmed from the tools my parents passed on; *the things they gave me.*

My mother gave to me early on in life the chance to understand determination and drive. She demonstrated to me that with hard work and a fire in your belly, you could achieve anything in the world. We would practice snow-skiing most mornings on winter weekends, following behind her tracks until I perfected them like she had. I had a difficult time maintaining a positive attitude when things went wrong or if I didn’t pick up a skill quickly. However, she pressed on—if I wanted it bad enough, she said, I could get it. As early as kindergarten, she gave me the tools to discover that if you aren’t good at something, you can become so by practice and determination. More importantly she said, if you are good at something, be humble and help the next one in line. She gave to me her tenet; ultimately that anything in life worth something takes hard work and practice. She gave me my tenacity and drive to want to accomplish great things, and the desire to never give up.

My dad gave me my sense of humor and adaptability, two of my most treasured attributes. He has the affable ability to roll with the punches and make jokes along the way, which is something I firmly believe everyone should strive for and something I am lucky I possess. Having a sense of humor puts people at ease—it can fix most anything, and that is ultimately what I hope to do with my life. My adaptability allows me to keep calm and focused in situations, which fosters my relationships with friends, family, and colleagues. With it, I am able to roll with life’s punches and thus take on obstacles rationally and with a level head. I cherish these skills he gave me because they can’t be taught. He gave them, but didn’t have to teach them.

Finally, and most importantly, my parents gave me a chance to be the peacekeeper, the intermediary. Their divorce in my junior year of high school instilled in me the desire to problem solve, to listen, and to reflect. It facilitated a place in which I could practice my skills and develop my knack for mediation. It was a place where I gained the insight into what I truly wanted to be when I grew up: a judge. Rather than the arguers that I spent so much time consoling, I longed to be the solution provider and the fixer. Being a judge allows me the unique opportunity to do what I do best in both my home life and my friendships: to hear, listen, and help. I feel strongly that my place in the world is to solve problems and I can’t think of a better place to do it than from behind a judge’s bench.

I have taken what they gave me over my 21 years with them and have tailored these lessons and traits to fit into the concept of the person I am, departing from what my parents are and creating my own self. While I have them to thank for what I have become, they haven’t given me everything. However, I believe that UC Hastings School of Law is the perfect environment for me to hone in on my skillsets and allow my inner mediator to develop. I am forever grateful for what my parents have given me, but what they didn’t have the chance to give me, I am confident UC Hastings will. Furthermore, I hope the things they did give to me—whether that be determination, humor, adaptability, or drive—I can also give to UC Hastings.