

Grad argues his way to law school record

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After commencement, Tulane Law School graduate William Igbokwe plans to work at a Connecticut law firm. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

Effective courtroom lawyering requires knowing the facts of the case and the applicable law, but also the art of advocacy.

Third-year Tulane Law School student William Igbokwe said he's spent hours practicing hand gestures and facial expressions, watching lawyers perform and viewing videos of champion advocates to learn the finer points.

"It's that kind of attention (to detail) that separates people who are very good from people who are great," Igbokwe said.

Those efforts paid off: Across three years, Igbokwe has been Tulane Law's winningest-ever student oral advocate in competition.

In January, he was named top trial advocate at the 2017 Southwestern Black Law Student Association Regional Convention.

In February, Igbokwe was best oral advocate at the John L. Costello Mock Trial Tournament in Virginia and teamed with Marco Salgado and Brian Trepanier, who will both graduate this May, to win the championship — a Tulane Law first.

And in March, Igbokwe led a four-member team that won the American Association of Justice regional competition in Alabama and made the national semifinals.

"Mock trial is a team effort," he said. "Every win we've had this year has been a team effort."

Igbokwe also was Tulane Law's best intra-school oral advocate three straight years.

A debater at the University of Texas, Igbokwe ran — unsuccessfully — for mayor of his hometown, 15,000-resident Jacksonville, Texas, in 2013, then headed to law school with advocacy in mind.

At Tulane, he orchestrated a voter registration drive for the 2016 election, helped plan a student-run "Mental Health Week" before law school exams and organized a campuswide collection of feminine products for needy Louisiana women.

After graduation, he plans to work at a Connecticut law firm. And he might run for office again someday.

"No matter what I end up doing, I always want to have advocacy at the center," he said.

The 2017 Commencement ceremony will be [streamed live online](#). Follow us on social media at #tulane17.

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