

Tulane law students inspire next generation

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Third-year law student Gary Crosby talks to sixth-graders at Sylvania Williams College Prep. (Photo by Ryan Rivet)

One of the biggest challenges facing minority students from low-income communities is lack of exposure to positive role models.

That was the main reason Krystal Hardy Allen, principal at New Orleans' Sylvania Williams College Prep Charter School, and I collaborated on bringing African-American and Latino students from Tulane Law School to inform and inspire sixth-graders about the possibilities for their future.

We led about 40 eager middle-schoolers from two classes in small-group discussions on Friday (April 8), sharing with them our diverse experiences and explaining the

mechanics of applying to and attending law school.

I shared my experience teaching social studies to middle and high school students in New Orleans before I left for graduate school at the London School of Economics. The students were fascinated to hear that I spent the summer of 2010 as a White House intern.

“Wow! You worked for President Obama?” one student asked excitedly. I told them that a law degree could one day lead them to the presidency.

“President Barack Obama and President Bill Clinton both attended law school before their careers in public service,” I continued, before sharing that it was through teaching and working at the White House that I became inspired to pursue a legal career.

Other Tulane law students described their paths to law school.

First-year law student Charles Phipps was a track and field athlete as an undergraduate. He hopes to pursue a career in sports law.

Second-year law student Monique Arrington applied to law school after seeing too many people from her neighborhood going into the criminal justice system without adequate legal representation.

Robert Waldrup, a third-year law student, talked about attending North Carolina State University and serving eight years in the U.S. Air Force, followed by Elvia Zepeda, another third-year law student, who has an interest in immigration law.

At the end of the small-group discussions, the sixth-graders were asked to share what they learned. Based on their responses, I know we made a huge impact.

Tulane law student Gary Crosby graduates in May and is set to start work as an associate at Milbank, Tweed, Hadley & McCloy in New York in the fall.

Third-year law student Gary Crosby organized Tulane Law Day 2016 to show local charter school students that law school is an option for the future.