

## Why I Want to Be a Paralegal

When first accepted to college, I was a theatre major with emphasis in performance and research. After one year of that major I realized that I did not have the personality type to be on a constant look out for small jobs. I also did not want to be moving constantly. I had a vague idea of applying to law school if theatre didn't go anywhere for me. After much thought, I realized that law school was what I really wanted to do with my life.

From an early age I was greatly interested in mystery novels and law shows. I was especially attracted by the type of novels that allowed the reader to attempt to solve the mystery before turning to the last page to read the answer. My favorite television show has been "Law and Order" since the age of eleven, however inaccurate it may be. I believe that it was partly the attraction to books and shows like these that planted the idea of being a lawyer in the back of my mind.

When I began high school I became a student school librarian. I kept that post until I graduated (with library service cords). While I was a librarian I became very familiar with the ins and outs of the Dewey Decimal System, and I helped both teachers and students with research. I came to realize that I liked researching. In the high school theatre department and later the college theatre department, I became a dramaturg: the person responsible for doing any and all research needed to perform a play.

After I came to college as a theatre major I realized that I missed being a librarian. I also realized that I did not like the uncertainty of theatre. The ghost idea of being a lawyer if theatre didn't work out became more solid. After thinking about how much I like research and figuring things out, it became what I wanted, not a back up plan.

So I changed my major to Paralegal Studies and found a job as a legal secretary/paralegal. I have come to realize that the legal field is wonderfully diverse and that being a paralegal is just as important as being a lawyer. Legal proceedings would come to a lurching halt if everyone who performed duties that could ascribed to Paralegalism disappeared for a day.

I have related this personal journey to you, as it is during this journey that I have realized what I want from life, and thus my job. I want to be a paralegal because the work is exciting, varied, and intellectually stimulating, so I'm sure never to get bored, and the eleven year old girl in me can pretend to be in an episode of "Law and Order." There is enough routine and organization that the librarian in me is happy to know where everything goes and what forms to follow. Most importantly to the wife and one day mother in me, the job is steady and has mostly set hours (except for the night before trial!) so I can see my husband and we can begin planning our family.

I know I'm supposed to be noble and say that I want to be a paralegal so I can help people and fight injustice, but my motivation is much more selfish than that. I want to be a paralegal because it makes me happy. Helping people is a pleasant side benefit, but truly I just find myself suited to the work and happier in my job as a legal secretary/paralegal than I have been in any other job I've ever had. There is a profound feeling of satisfaction in slowly working through my 'in' tray and filling my 'out' tray.

And even though I've said helping people is not my sole motivation, it is particularly heartwarming when someone thanks you with tears in their eyes for the work you've contributed, or when a little old man brings you a few flowers (Picked from his

own garden!) for your desk; both of these examples wonderful moments that I have gotten to experience since beginning my paralegal education.