

Tiffane King

Recipient of a \$2000 CMMS Deshae Lott Ministries Outreach Program Scholarship



A three-time scholarship recipient, **Tiffane King** is beginning her third year of law school at the University of California at Irvine. As a result of a gunshot wound in 2005 she sustained a nearly-fatal, traumatic spinal cord injury, and needs assistance with mobility, transferring and position changing; personal care; occupational therapy, physical therapy; routine medical procedures; and housekeeping.

To hear her tell her own story, “ As a formerly active, able-bodied woman suddenly thrown into the world of the disabled, I obtained a unique and painful perspective on rejection and discrimination that can only be achieved by way of experience.... An initial ‘handicap’ that I fought to overcome was the feeling of being “small” in a society that was enormous, established and set in its ways. “ Armed with this new awareness, she determined to pursue a specialty in disability law. As she began to adjust to her new life, she was shocked by the lack of continuity of care, the fact that physical therapy was impossible to attain, and the fact that there was no effective system of protocols to monitor and address the needs of someone in her condition. A relentless advocate for her own care, she came to the realization that everyone navigating these limitations deserves such an advocate.

She has now finished her second year of law school with a cumulative average of 3.356, and has done so in the face of repeated medical challenges. While in law school, she has served on the Board of the Black Law Students’ Alliance, and also as an active member of the Law School’s Disability Rights Society. This past year, she served an externship with federal district court judge Terry Hatter, who praised the quality of her work. In addition to more valuable legal experience, the position afforded her an opportunity right at the outset to advocate for the disabled. Astonishingly, in this day and time, the court had provided no handicapped parking for disabled individuals who wished to enter the courthouse. (Surprisingly, no one had sued!) After having to seek help from someone to push her wheelchair several blocks, she spoke out and was ultimately able to obtain the designated parking spaces. She found this brush with advocacy a very rewarding experience, which bodes well for her very promising career.

As she enters her third and final year of law school, she is now planning to pursue a career as a prosecutor. One of her professors, Daniel Alexander, says he believes that as a victim of violent crime, “she will bring a different perspective and passion to the profession that others may lack and/or overlook.” Tiffane, we wish you the best in this final year of law school, and look forward to following a life and career that is bound to make a difference in the world.