



# TEXAS SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

## THURGOOD MARSHALL SCHOOL of LAW

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INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### **For Media Inquiries/To Schedule Interviews, Contact:**

Susan M. Bynam  
Assistant Dean, Institutional Advancement  
Tel: (713) 313.4273 | Cell: (832)428.3908  
Email: MediaAffairs@tmslaw.tsu.edu



**Talk about a visionary with no vision: After returning to Texas Southern University Thurgood Marshall School of Law following a forced, medical leave of absence, blind law student triumphs law school academia with top class ranking, post recovery from six critical brain surgeries, and will walk the stage during law school's hooding ceremony at TSU's Health & Physical Education Arena on Friday, May 12<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m.**

(May 10, 2017) – Daniel Vaughn, 3L law student at Texas Southern University Thurgood Marshall School of Law, understands too well the ups and downs of doing more with less. Vaughn's family always knew that he would take the leap and enroll in law school to become a lawyer—he exhibited argumentative and persuasive character traits as early as three years of age. It was clearly not happenstance that he would excel in law-related courses during his undergraduate, college days at UT Austin and UH Downtown, where he received a bachelor's degree in general studies in 2012. Yet, after being diagnosed with a brain tumor on August 13, 2010 and subsequently, losing his eyesight circa September 2010, Vaughn has battled the peaks and valleys associated with his disability such as physical and emotional setbacks, six unwarranted but necessary surgeries and medical procedures (including radiation treatments 5 days per week as late as fall 2016), and daily discrimination by nature of his blindness—ordeals that the average person with the ability to actually see often takes for granted.

Yet, Vaughn not only understands perseverance, he embraces it whole-heartedly with every fathom of his being. Determined to follow his life-long dream of becoming a lawyer, Vaughn kept the faith, even when a number of law schools refused to take a chance on him. Yet, late summer 2013, Texas Southern University Thurgood Marshall School of Law (TMSL) did more than take a chance on Vaughn post admitting him as a first-year student; holding steady as "*Most Diverse Law School*" by preLaw Magazine/National Jurist, TMSL opened the door of opportunity for Vaughn to not only receive a first-class legal education, but privileged him a learning experience amongst the most diverse cadre of students and faculty you can find anywhere in the country. With a staunch, unrelenting support network—his fearless mother, Terry Vaughn, who served as his reader scribe, attending every single law class with him daily—coupled with his steady love interest, Jenny Moss, who, by his side, transcribed, reviewed his mother's class notes, and studied with him each evening—the determined law student remained steadfast in his pursuit of a legal career. Even after being thrown two medical curve balls during summer 2016 (i.e. first, a routine eye exam and subsequent MRI revealed the return of his brain tumor—only this time, bigger and more severe—resulting in a forced leave of absence from TMSL, just 14 credit hours shy of completing his degree; and second, learning that his ace of a mother had been diagnosed with cancer), Vaughn never lost focus of his end goal. Post a successful, sixth brain surgery in the fall 2016; after proudly ringing the *free-from-radiation-treatment bell* at Methodist Hospital this past November 11th and receiving a doctor's release to return to law school to complete what he started, Vaughn is slated to finish in the top 10% of his class and will join the '17 TMSL graduating class during the symbolic hooding ceremony on Friday, May 12th, in recognition of completing all juris doctorate (JD) requirements.

Per Vaughn, "I was absolutely ecstatic when Assistant Director of Admissions Kenyon Moore called to inform me that I had been admitted into TMSL. When it seemed no law school wanted to roll the dice and take a chance on me, TMSL gave me that chance to pursue my lifelong dream of becoming a lawyer. My biggest TMSL influence, Professor Fernando Colon-Navarro, could not have made a more profound statement at the beginning of my 1L year when he stated, 'Nobody walks across the stage by themselves; there are countless sacrifices that are made by the TMSL family and our own families to get students to the hooding ceremony moment. I will always be grateful to my TMSL family for opening that door for me and to the faculty, staff and my fellow classmates for their unwavering support. Trust that I plan to walk the stage at both hooding and commencement on Saturday morning. Nothing will make me prouder than to have my two biggest supporters there at both ceremonies to cheer me on—the two ladies in my life who have been by my side daily since my first day of law school—my amazing mother Terry and my beautiful, wonderful girlfriend, Jenny. I rang the cancer-free bell on November 11<sup>th</sup> and six months later on May 11<sup>th</sup>, I complete my last law school final. God intended this journey to be my story and I couldn't be happier."