



Top 5 for intellectual property
Franklin Pierce School of Law

BAR & BENCH



A TOP RANKED UNIVERSITY IN THE HEART OF NEW ORLEANS
Sponsored by Tulane University
Tulane Law offers five LLM Degree Programs specializing in Admiralty, American Law, Energy & Environment, and International & Comparative Law.



Discover Law
Connect 1 on 1 with U.S. Law Schools.
06 December 2019 | New Delhi
Register Now for the Forum

INDIAN LEGAL NEWS



CAN FOUNDATION
CONFEDERATION OF ALUMNI FOR NLUS
PROUDLY ANNOUNCES ITS
INAUGURAL CEREMONY & SYMPOSIUM
Date: December 7, 2019 | Venue: Madhya Pradesh Vidhan Sabha

Advertise

Login

Get a Premium Account

Legal Jobs



Home

News

Interviews

Columns

Dealstreet

Apprentice Lawyer

Viewpoint

India Law Connect

In conversation with GNLU's **Hatim Hussain**, the only law student to be awarded the Rhodes Scholarship this year

Bar & Bench December 1 2019

355

The only law student to win the prestigious Rhodes Scholarship for post graduate studies at Oxford University this year was **Hatim Hussain**, a student of the Gujarat National Law University (GNLU), Gandhinagar. He is the second student from GNLU to have be awarded the Rhodes Scholarship, the first being Sameer Rashid Bhat in 2017.

A final year student, Hatim Hussain is presently interning with Justice **DY Chandrachud** at the Supreme Court of India. In this interview with Bar & Bench, Hussain speaks about the reason why he chose to pursue the Rhodes Scholarship, his experience during the selection process, and his future plans once he gets to Oxford.

What inspired you to apply for the scholarship?



I believe there are not many things that have remained as (and equally) desirable as the Rhodes Scholarship for the past 117 years, particularly due to the profound impact it continues to have in providing a platform to shape the lives of one's own self and those of others.

To that extent, Rhodes was an enabler for me, especially coming from a background where the initial 17 years of my life were spent at one of India's largest Muslim minority ghettos. I always had an inclination towards teaching and research, but I could have never pursued postgraduation without a scholarship.

Besides, Rhodes is an incredible opportunity to 'recycle' privilege and work towards providing similar opportunities, especially to many in India, who despite having the requisite potential, may not be able to make a difference.

That said, I never imagined myself to be a Rhodes Scholar! It was only a few months before the scholarship deadline that a Professor at my University motivated me to apply, and I decided to take the shot.

What was the selection process like?

The selection process comprises of three rigorous stages, the first one being the application stage, where the applicant is required to submit a CV, a personal statement and six references, which can either be academic or professional/personal. Based on the applications received, the selection

committee shortlisted 15 candidates from law, and similarly those from four other streams – economics, pure sciences, medicine and humanities.

The second rounds are mostly technical rounds with panelists who are experts in the field. The rounds involve questions testing the knowledge of the field as well as the chosen area of study at Oxford.

Based on the performance in the preliminary interview, the selection committee shortlisted 16 candidates from all fields who are initially called for a high tea with the panelists a day prior to the interview. The next day, the actual interview is held. Based on this process, there are 5 candidates selected from a particular jurisdiction.

What was the most challenging part of the selection process?

I would say that drafting the statement of purpose was the most challenging part for me, as it involves a lot of introspection on the motivation for doing what you do and communicating it in a way that brings about these aspects - *academic excellence, ability to use talents to the fullest, truth, sympathy, devotion to duty, protection of the weak, and passion to serve society.*

I must have spent around a week contemplating on what I should write and took a couple of days to draft it.

However, I would also say that the entire process is a very enriching (and one of the most comprehensive ones to test the potential of the candidate) and I would encourage everyone to apply.

How important was the extra-curricular aspect in this process?

Though an important part of the process (as Rhodes looks at the holistic character and personality of the individual), I don't think extra curriculars should be defined from a limited perspective or in a specific way or number of ways.

For instance, I was involved in a number of activities beyond my academic interests, having been a part of two entrepreneurial ventures funded by the Government of Gujarat and undertaking efforts for the dissemination of education across Gujarat among Muslim communities. I was also pursuing numerous professional degrees, including CA and CS, and took equal interest in both law and non-law internships.

Did your law school experience help?

Indeed. In fact, for many years, lawyers have had a much better chance at securing the Rhodes, due to the ability to be cogent in expressing oneself and the work they have done – a skill the law school experience remarkably helps in acquiring. For instance, in the past, there have been at least two Rhodes scholars among the five who are selected, although this trend is taking a shift in recent years (with less law students getting the Rhodes).

My law school experience has also been transdisciplinary, due to its ability to interact with other disciplines more easily, which helped me in exploring new perspectives on a number of issues I tried to address during law school – both in my research and in the social work I did.

What field of law are you looking to pursue at Oxford?

At Oxford, I intend to study subjects at the intersection of law, finance and technology, and to explore the possibilities of developing regulatory models that can help in eradicating poverty and inequality. My research pertains to regulatory innovation. Specifically, I intend to study the property law models regulating emergence of 'natively' digital assets.

Any advice for future aspirants?

I do not think any advice (especially for Rhodes) could be the 'right' advice, as there is no one way in which one can make a unique application.

However, in my experience, it's important to be versatile and not restrict oneself, exploring different interests and doing diverse things. Law students often tend to perceive academics and extra curriculars in a specific way. Since law is a multi-dimensional field, there is a greater possibility to explore beyond the discipline and pursue activities which are interdisciplinary (innovating across disciplines to make a difference).

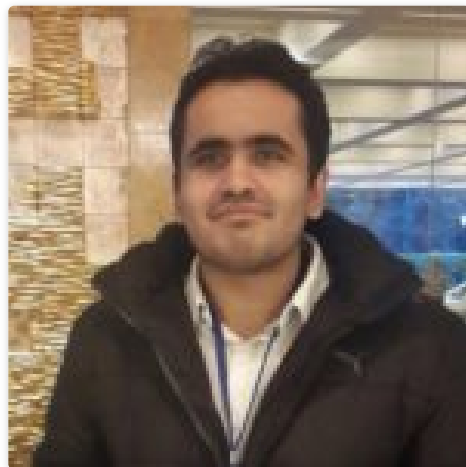
That said, one cannot also discount the importance of a reasonably good academic performance, along with a genuine passion to serve society.

Related Articles



October 30, 2017

In Conversation with 2018 Rhodes Scholarship awardee, Sameer Rashid Bhat



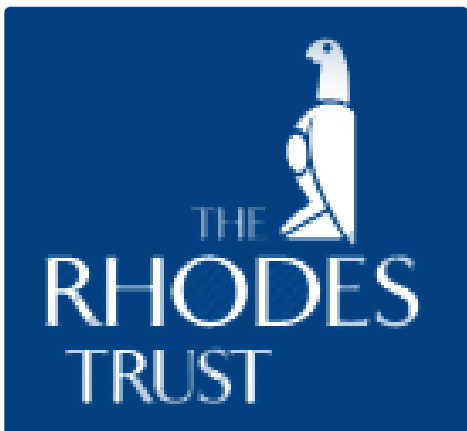
October 31, 2017

Rising above a sea of mediocrity: Rhodes Scholarship recipient Rahul Bajaj recounts his journey



November 24, 2016

Meet Rhodes scholars Vanshaj Jain and Mary Kavita Dominic



November 27, 2012

In Conversation with Rhodes Scholars, Anupama Kumar and Arushi Garg



November 9, 2011

Conversation with Niranjana, Rhodes Scholar and litigator



May 4, 2016

Meet Dr. Nicole Stremmler, organiser at Price Media Law Moot Court

To read the entire article, get a premium account

With a premium account you get:

Already a subscriber ?

- One year of unrestricted access to previous interviews, columns and articles
- One year access to all archival material
- Access to all Bar & Bench reports

Register

Login

[About us](#)

[Advertise on Bar & Bench](#)

[Careers](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)



[Terms of Use](#)

Crafted by Pixelmattic