

When I was a child, my father drove me to school every day, and each day, without fail, the last thing he said to me before I shut the door was: “I hope you get what you deserve.” For years, I thought my dad was a jerk. I would mock him after I shut the door... I hope YOU get what YOU deserve, Dad. But as I got older, I realized that he was being genuine. He wanted me to get all of the good things that I deserved, and to know that I was entitled to nothing. If suitable, he also wanted me to learn from any of the bad things I may have deserved. Today, I am going to explain why using AI systems in the practice of law will help hardworking Americans get what we deserve.

Firstly, I am a fierce advocate for women’s rights, and what we deserve is equal scrutiny and equal opportunity. Vast amounts of literature concur that lawyers tend to work from dawn to darkness. Work life balance is a myth in the legal profession; and flexibility is a wispy and seemingly unattainable goal. Long hours, emotionally draining casework, and ultracompetitive atmospheres directly correlate to dissatisfaction in the practice of law. In particular, women are disproportionately affected by heavy time expectations due to what sociologists call The motherhood penalty. This concept is widely documented and argues that mothers and young women are consistently perceived as less likeable and “less committed” to their jobs because there is a perception that family obligations are likely to supersede work demands. This means women face more barriers in

getting the job, receiving a promotion, and obtaining fair compensation. AI can alleviate such normative discrimination and the strenuous time demands placed on lawyers by assisting with e-discovery.

IBM's ROSS, is technically the first AI attorney. Using the software, lawyers can type their questions in plain English, and ROSS will read through the entire body of law and return a cited answer, topical readings, case law, and secondary sources. It will also notify you if a new court decision will affect your case.

Automation can replace roughly 15-25% of the tedious, time-consuming tasks lawyers must complete on a daily basis. This equates to more time to develop case-winning strategies, interacting face-to-face with clientele, and more time to go home to care for our families.

Second, we have an abysmal lack of access to justice in rural communities in America. Growing law school costs have pushed lawyers to the coasts, where salaries promise to help repay loans and contribute to savings accounts. Unfortunately, rural and impoverished communities lack legal support; and where it exists, there is no guarantee that it is affordable, effective, or even within a 200-mile radius. Repercussions from a lack of legal counsel range from overt violations of state or federal law to covert power hierarchies where disadvantaged

populations cannot get “access to public benefits or employment,” and families at risk of homelessness are evicted.

Recently, a 19-year-old Stanford student created a chatbot to appeal over \$4-million in parking fines. His AI chatbot, unlike Siri, was built with the human capability of learning and absorbing information to build a case-specific argument. With a 64% success rate, his chatbot was able to appeal more than 160,000 parking fines in just 21 months. Similar chatbots can bring basic legal services to our nation’s most vulnerable populations while simultaneously unloading lawyers who spend too much time fighting menial disputes when they could be resolving larger matters.

Finally, as I prepare to graduate and matriculate to law school, I must consider how SMU is preparing me for a workforce that coexists with AI. While AI can collect and siphon information, a skilled strategist is required to assemble the information in a meaningful and persuasive manner. Currently, AI cannot perform essential components of a lawyer’s job including storytelling, connecting to and reading the audience on a personal level, and persuasive oral advocacy. At SMU, essay writing is one way to develop rhetoric, but what we can push further is the ability to transition written argumentation into effective oral persuasion.

In conclusion, aspiring lawyers can prepare themselves for a tech-savvy future by developing persuasive advocacy skills. I posit that AI will be an empowering tool that will help diligent Americans to get what we deserve. This means helping women fight the motherhood penalty so that we can earn higher salaries; and so we can break into the upper echelons of law firms. And it means helping rural citizens gain access to the basic legal counsel they deserve to protect their families, their children, and their homes.

Thank you.