

My mother as a role model essay sample

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I often accompanied my mother to work when my after-school babysitter called in sick or was otherwise unavailable. Encouraged to be quiet, I sat under her office desk, unnoticed by the steady stream of clients who came and left. Her specialty was family law and she worked three days a week at the Hartfield Legal Clinic in South Detroit. Because good child-care was hard to find, it was my playground on many late afternoons.

As a privileged child, I didn't know that the clinic was considered the "bad" part of town or that my mother was considered crazy to practice there. She is a talented attorney and could have secured a partnership at her choice of the city's many fine law firms. But my mother was an exception in her field, the rare African-American woman raised in inner city poverty who successfully made it through college and law school. Few people understood why she refused to use her ticket out of South Detroit and instead returned to work at the free legal clinic there. I've only started to understand it myself in the past few years.

All I knew was that my mother was a lawyer who worked to improve people's lives. On any given afternoon, she'd see up to 20 clients and resolve a wide range of problems. A typical day brought clients who were being evicted and needed to know their legal rights. Others were fighting for child support from ex-lovers and husbands who had shirked responsibility for their offspring. Others were elderly people who acknowledged their own mortality and the need for a living will. The clients were a challenge, many unable to read the simplest legal documents. My mother would calmly, slowly read each line to them and make sure they understood. She would challenge them to fight for their rights and not back down from unfair situations or someone withholding

their money. My mother worked hard for everything she had and didn't take kindly to disrespect and abuse. She championed the rights of her clients and fiercely protected their interests.

As I grew older, I began to volunteer at the clinic and do my part to help the community. By age 18, I was more aware of the misfortunes that ravaged many of our client's lives. Most used drugs and alcohol and several supplemented their welfare checks by engaging in prostitution. While they gave my mom lip service about trying to be healthy, we both knew that their life choices precluded caring about anything other than drug use and survival. My mother often worked behind the scenes to try to find a bed for them at a public hospital or rehab facility. She didn't often save a client, but she never gave up trying.

My mother is my most inspirational role model for many reasons. Although she could easily pursue a lucrative career in private practice, she dedicates her life to helping the poor residents of South Detroit. She serves her community without any need for reciprocation. She treats all people with respect, regardless of their race, income or status. She also instilled those same attributes in me. Throughout my career, I will continue to volunteer in my community and share my blessings. I'm certain that my post-MBA work will be in public service, developing policies to help inner city residents. It's my mother's legacy to me and a gift more valuable than any material possession.