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## Fla. Mother And Daughter Handle Law School Together

By **Madison Arnold**

Law360 (August 28, 2023, 4:43 PM EDT) -- Since starting at Florida A&M University College of Law in 2021, Eyesenia Reyes has had an advantage over her classmates in the support of her mother in almost every class she takes.

Her mother and best friend, Maria Reyes, is also a third-year law student at Florida A&M. The duo plan to take the Florida bar exam next summer, and without her mother beside her the whole way, Eyesenia Reyes said she would have a much tougher time in law school.

"The experience is nice because I know that I'm not tackling law school alone," she told Law360 Pulse. "It's very difficult. It's a new environment and nothing like undergrad, and I have told her on a multitude of occasions that if it wasn't for the fact that [she's] here with me, I don't know how I could do it because it's really hard. I also enjoy the fact that I can actually hang out with my mom all day every day."

Maria Reyes said the two women have pushed each other in different ways, as they have different strengths. She said she is the more conceptual person while her daughter is more technical in her approach to studying.

They also have a very similar grade point average and class rank, usually only one or two points off of one another in their schoolwork.

"That's the only time that we'll argue is when we're practicing," Maria Reyes said. "It'll be like, 'No, that's not right. It's this.' And then we'll pick the right answer and then at home [it's like], 'See, I told you I was right.' It's like, 'No, I told you that I was right.' That's how we study, and it actually works out because then that's how we remember oftentimes when the test comes."

Maria Reyes always had an interest in law school, but the prospect of attending became daunting for her after she became pregnant at 15. She ended up attending technical school and eventually worked in the dental field.

However, her husband decided to attend law school at 31, putting the family on a path to make being an attorney the family business. He eventually became a personal injury attorney and encouraged Maria Reyes to go back to school, as well, which she did in her own time.

She took one class every semester and graduated with an associate's degree seven years later, just as Eyesenia Reyes finished her associate's degree.

"I didn't even realize it until I was at her [graduation] because I was like, 'I'm not going to walk for my associate's degree.' And so when I looked at the graduation booklet, because she walked, and our names were together, I was like 'Oh my god, we're officially graduating at the exact same time,'" Maria Reyes said.

The two of them then finished their bachelor's degrees together at the University of South Florida. After that, Eyesenia Reyes wasn't sure about going to law school; she was enjoying doing marketing and sales work.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit and her mother was studying for the LSAT, Eyesenia Reyes

changed her mind and decided she'd give the exam a shot. If she got a decent score and got into school, then she would go.

Now they are frequently seen walking side by side around the Orlando law school, where they've taken all but two classes together, and they share a studio apartment near campus.

"That's why a lot of people thought we were sisters or roommates or something, because we're always just together walking the halls. We're definitely always, always together, and she's my best friend ... and I'm hers," Maria Reyes said.

If another student sees Eyesenia Reyes by herself, she said, "They look at me and they're like 'Where's your mom?' We don't leave without each other."

For their final year, they decided to take all bar-tested classes and to run the school's Christian Legal Society chapter. With summer internships for school credits under their belts already, the two will be free to take one fewer class next semester, so they can begin studying for the bar.

Once they graduate, they may go their separate ways. Maria Reyes is interested in family law, and Eyesenia Reyes said she enjoys the corporate side of the industry.

Eyesenia Reyes said she views the legal profession as a way to make change happen. One day, she said she hopes her younger sister, who is developing an interest in constitutional law, will go to law school, as well.

"For me, the legal profession, I like the variety of it and that ultimately, that's how things get changed," she said. "That's how you're able to make a dent, so to speak, in the world, because there's a lot of professions out there and it's hard deciding what you want to do in your life. But I like how with legal you could go in a constitutional route, you can go business. ... I like how there's something for everybody and it makes a difference."

--Editing by Brian Baresch and Nicole Bleier.