From growing up in the poverty-stricken Bronx to leading and empowering an independent citizens’ group in San Diego, Sharmaine Moseley has quite a story to share.

The first in her family to pursue higher education, Sharmaine was part of the University of Albany’s Education Opportunity Program (EOP) for economically disadvantaged students. “This was a huge step for me,” she says. “I didn’t know what the future held but I knew I needed to take positive steps forward, beginning with my education.”

During her senior year, Sharmaine’s EOP counselor recommended she apply for the New York State Assembly Internship, a comprehensive academic program that gives qualified students the chance to work in the New York State Legislature. Sharmaine applied and was put on a waiting list before receiving a position working with Deputy Speaker Arthur O. Eve, the highest-ranking African American in the New York State Legislature. “What a blessing it was to intern in his office for six months,” tells Sharmaine.

Graduating in 1993 with a Bachelor of Arts degree (double major in Psychology and Africana Studies) Sharmaine Moseley accomplished her second biggest win in life. Her first was the birth of her son Kenny just two years earlier. “That was a big struggle,” she shares. “I had to take a semester off to have my son but was determined to finish what I had started. It took me an additional year and summer classes to complete my degree but I’m so grateful I did.”

After her highly successful internship, Sharmaine spent the next seven years as Legislative Assistant to Arthur O. Eve. “I was thankful to work closely with Mr. Eve and his Counsel,” she tells. “I was on Assembly floor during session, wrote memorandums for the legislation he was introducing, did a lot of research and background on his behalf, as well as coordinate the workshop logistics for the New York State Association of Black and Puerto Rican Legislators, Inc.”

To make life even better, Sharmaine’s sister Melissa earned a job in the same office after volunteering there for several months. This was their first exposure to politics and together, they learned a lot about the ups and downs of the political world.
The next chapter in Sharmaine’s story begins in August 1999 at the nation’s oldest independent school of law, Albany Law School, where she served as Executive Assistant for seven years in the Government Law Center (GLC). “This was my first introduction into police oversight and it was a time when community relations with the police were very tense in the City of Albany,” shares Sharmaine. “There was a huge need for mediation, which hit home for me personally because there was a brutal police shooting in the Bronx, just two blocks from where I grew up, and the case was being tried in Albany.”

In 2000, the Albany Citizens' Police Review Board (CPRB) was established with the goal of improving communication between the police department and the community. “My job was to help provide administrative support to the nine member volunteer CPRB,” Sharmaine describes. Soon thereafter, a staff attorney was hired to meet the administrative needs of the CPRB and Sharmaine remained an integral, hands-on public servant for the CPRB in addition to supporting a dozen colleagues, beginning with her mentor Patricia E. Salkin, ‘85 Director of the Government Law Center.

“Patty played a huge role in helping me get to where I am now,” Sharmaine says with a smile. “She was always supportive and believed in me until such a time that I could believe in myself. She pushed me when I didn’t have confidence in myself and we remain good friends to this day.”

When the staff attorney left for another job, Patty invited Sharmaine to accept the position of Coordinator of the Police Review Board, which she did. It was 2007.

In 2011, Pershia M. Wilkins, Albany Law School Director of Multicultural Initiatives and Assistant Director of Admissions, approached Sharmaine Moseley about the UAlbany Weekend MBA Program, noting she was a part of it. Wanting to become more competitive with the hopes of being offered the position of Executive Director of the CPRB, Sharmaine began the interview process with Weekend MBA Program Director Don Purdy.

“Getting my MBA was important to me so I kept bothering Don to see if I’d been accepted into the program,” she laughs. “When he told me, ‘yes’, I was both excited and nervous.”

Before graduating with her MBA in 2013, a lot of things tried to get in her way, including an illness, her father passing away from a brain tumor, and being a single mom to Kenny, who was 19 and daughter, Keana, who was 10 when she began the program. “But I was determined, telling myself, ‘I will get this done.’ And, I did.” She credits her children, family, and friends for their support and understanding in this important endeavor.

The cohort structure was a great fit for Sharmaine, with each member bringing diverse strengths to the table. “We certainly had our moments,” she remembers. “Especially when a big project was due the next day. Studying for an exam all the way across the world in India. We all stuck together and we made it through. It’s quite an amazing feeling to be there from the beginning and end up walking together with our diplomas at the end.”
One of the most important skills Sharmaine mastered in the UAlbany Weekend MBA Program is preparing and giving presentations. “I had very little self-confidence and used to be terrified to speak to a group,” she discloses. “What I learned is, as long as you know what you’re talking about, there’s no reason to be fearful. The presentations gave me more confidence to speak in front of groups and individuals, which is something I now do a lot in my new job.”

Not only did she learn how to present, she learned a lot about business finance, how to write better and how to conduct herself as a business professional. “The Albany Weekend MBA Program helped me to grow professionally and be able to communicate better with others on a professional level. When I received my diploma in the mail, I felt empowered,” Sharmaine shares with pride.

After being told the Executive Director position was not available at Albany Law School, Sharmaine launched a nationwide search for executive work with police oversight. Most positions sought an attorney but Sharmaine persevered, knowing she had something special with her new MBA.

In the fall of 2014, she had a first and second interview with the Citizens’ Review Board on Police Practices (CRB) for the City of San Diego. In December, she accepted the position of Executive Director and in January, moved to San Diego with her daughter Keana, now 13.

“I always tell my children, ‘Never say, “I can’t.”’ Life was never easy for me growing up in the Bronx and look where I am now,” says Sharmaine. “I worked my way toward my goals and with the support of family and friends, I consistently remind myself, ‘I can do it. There’s always another day.”’

To professionals considering pursuit of their MBA, Sharmaine Moseley highly recommends the Weekend MBA Program at UAlbany. “The program is very flexible. It is something you can actually get through and the support is unmatched,” she shares. “A lot of positive things happen when you have an MBA. I didn’t realize how well I could connect my MBA with what I wanted to do until I was offered the job in San Diego.”

Now empowered, Sharmaine’s focus is to help bridge the gap nationally between police and their communities. “Police oversight is very important, whether paid or volunteer,” tells Sharmaine. “The police in San Diego are leaders in body cameras and my vision is to see the City of San Diego nationally recognized for their work with local citizens. We did it in Albany and we can do it here. Never say, ‘I can’t!’”

Click here to learn more about UAlbany’s executive Weekend MBA Program.

Connect with Sharmaine Moseley here:

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