

Dear UWA Law School Dean's Circle Members,

I'm a first-year JD student named Olivia (Yating) Huang and a mother to a two-year-old girl. I am extremely grateful for the financial support.

My hometown of Honghu is a small Chinese village, where the traditional preferences for sons are deep-rooted. I had never been treated the same as my younger brother, he can always enjoy nicer food, clothing, and better educational opportunities. When I was a kid I always wanted to be a boy, because boys can always be the ones to eat the middle of the watermelon and have birthday cakes.

When I finished high school, my parents asked me to quit studying and get a job so I could help pay for my brother's tuition. I fought hard after I got the offer from University in Wuhan as I know that's the only way I can change my life. In my third year of my bachelor's degree, I supported myself and passed the Chinese Bar exam. I absolutely love law, so I want to either pursue further education or work in a law firm after I graduate. Starting work at a legal firm or continuing my studies does not provide quick money, so my parents and I argue almost every day. They wanted me to get married as soon as possible (in my hometown there is a tradition of bride price, and they need that money for my brother's wedding and house). I refused and decided to leave China.

You may think my parents are awful, but if you know how they survive in their lives you may have second thoughts. My mother, who has three sisters and one brother, only attended primary school for three years. Her birth mother passed away when she was 6 years old, and her stepmother didn't give her enough food. She was taught how to take care of her father and brother when she was only 9. In her mind, a family can only be called a family if there is a male in the house, even if the man does nothing. My father did not finish his high school education, he was a smart boy, but my grandparents were too poor to support his study. He thinks as a man it is shameful to help his wife do any housework because it is the female's responsibility. That's how he was taught, and he would be laughed at if he did such things. I don't agree with them that boys are inherently superior to girls, but as I grow I can understand and accept who they are and how they become the parents they are. They did their best to raise me, they have flaws just like every other parent in my hometown, they were beaten and got branded. If they were educated or raised another other way, they would be different, but we can't change the past. It took me a couple of years to accept and finally let go of it, but I did.

I hoped to pursue my legal studies in Australia after moving to Perth in 2014, however, the tuition was too high for an international student. I could not afford the tuition, and I did not want to give up law, I have so much passion for it. I changed my plan to get permanent citizenship before returning to university. I am an Australian Citizen now and studying at UWA. How lucky I am.

I always think I'm a very lucky girl. I'm lucky to be born into this world (my mother had two abortions before she had my younger brother as she was constantly humiliated by my grandparents because I'm not a boy); I wasn't drowned or abandoned (some of the girls in my hometown when they were born would be left in train stations or given away); I got the chance to go to high school (95% girls in my hometown don't have the chance finish their high school education), I went to Uni and finished my bachelor degree (3 girls my age In my hometown went to Uni, I'm one of them); I had the chance to come to Australia and study at UWA.

Now I have a daughter, I work and study hard not only for myself but also to show my daughter that we have the chance to choose our own lives, no matter how hard. If we have a dream, no matter whether we claw, walk, or run toward it, if we are heading towards it, eventually we will be there. I'm a slow dream chaser, I have been clawing in the mud, but since I got Australian citizenship and

UWA's offer, I felt like I started to walk, I came to the same height as others, and I can see the views others have been enjoying. Your donation now makes me feel like I may run in the future. You have no idea how grateful I am. You may think you only did something small, but it's big for me and for my family, for my future and for my next generation's future too.

Thank you, thank you so much.

Kind Regards
Olivia Huang

