The Dorsey family has a strong tradition of legal education and practice. Kristen Dorsey and her father, Emerson L. Dorsey, Jr., are alike in many ways, including their modest nature, discipline, work ethic, and shared passion for golf, basketball, and the Baltimore Ravens. Kristen received her degree from the University of Maryland School of Law, where her father, a partner in the Baltimore firm of Tydings & Rosenberg, was a classmate in 1979.

Kristen's decision to attend law school after studying journalism at Northwestern University was a surprise to her father. "I was shocked," says Emerson. "It never crossed my mind that she would go to law school. I thought she would be a very good journalist with her determination and creative flair."

Midway through Northwestern, Kristen made the choice to work more directly with people and not just write about them. "I decided to go to law school, but I didn't know if I wanted to practice law," she says. "Dad didn't steer me one way or the other [with my decision]." He knew she would do what she wanted to do anyway.

Attending the University of Maryland was an eye-opening experience for both. "The school is a lot different now," says Emerson. "Some of her professors don't use the Socratic Method, but give straight lectures. It's an outstanding school. I couldn't get accepted there now." Growing up in Frederick, Md., Emerson didn't know any lawyers, much less any African-American lawyers. "As an African-American student, she has a tremendous amount of opportunity, more than the African-American students had when I was in law school," says Emerson, who was president of the Black Law Student Association his third year. Kristen served as treasurer of the organization.

"Before I went to law school, I never knew what a real estate lawyer did," says Kristen, who recently joined the public defender's office in Orlando, Fla. "Family always came before work for my dad. He never really talked about work at home before. Since going to law school, I now know a lot more about what he has accomplished." Pride in each other's achievements might top their list of common traits.

"I am proud of all my children, but this is different," Emerson says. "Kristen is the only one who went to one of my schools." She agrees. "It feels good to have gone to the same school as my dad," she says. "How many children can say that?"

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