

Teddy T. Personal Statement

Accepted to the University of California, Los Angeles

My father, as a child grew up doing his homework under the moonlight at midnight. My family immigrated to America on October 19th, 1990 from Ethiopia. My name is Tewodeross Teshome and I too was supposed to be born in Ethiopia like my parents. However, my parents came to America seeking opportunities for themselves and their unborn child. My father grew up in Ethiopia and did not have much but his loving family. My father had two outfits that he wore. One was a school uniform and the other outfit was a working outfit. From a distance it looked like a brownish paper sack bag. Every time my father tells these stories, it saddens me. It inspires me to take the opportunities he did not have. Each morning every time I get ready I see something that my parents never had; many options of clothes to wear, pancakes, eggs, and hash browns for breakfast, and even small things that we take for granted, like a toothbrush. Just the opportunity to take a warm shower shows me that even though we're not rich by any means, I take pride in what my parents have done for myself and my other siblings. This moves me to be the first in my family to graduate high school and go to college. However, without knowing my future, it is important to understand my past, our history.

At the age of fourteen, I took my first trip to Ethiopia. Catching a plane to Gondar I saw straw huts against a plain field of nothingness. We drove to my parents' village. Children were surrounding us and throwing rocks at our car. It is rare for them to see a car. I saw firsthand the hardships and struggles that my parents went through. The children were so skinny that although their clothing size read "small" their clothes looked baggy as they hung off of their bodies. It was devastating, but my visit had allowed me to realize what keeps these people alive; their rich culture and sense of community and family. In my time there, I saw a beautiful culture. I felt grateful that I am an Ethiopian. I also felt grateful for being born in America. Having two cultures gives me a different perspective in my choices and in my life. Growing up with two dynamic cultures is very interesting. Ethiopian culture is mainly about family and community. American culture is about seeking the opportunity for the individual. I am fortunate for being raised in America. Because I have had more resources than my

parents did growing up in Ethiopia, my father has taught me to be grateful for what I have, and for my education.

I know that living in the United States has not been easy for my parent. My mother, who inspired me to do well in school, went to nursing school when she was pregnant with my younger sister. Her daily schedule consisted of taking the children to school, going to nursing school, picking up the kids, making dinner, and then studying in her “free” time. In addition, the most impressive thing about this story is my mother would achieve 100% on her tests. This shaped my whole perspective on education. This motivated me to do well and work hard in school. My mother is a true inspiration. My father is also the most hardworking man that I know. He drives a taxi day and night. It is a dangerous low paying job. He provides food on the table and a roof over the family’s heads. My father taught me the basic lessons in life. What is right and what is wrong. Even though sometimes my father and I do not agree on everything, we do agree on accomplishing our goals and never giving up.

I am determined to rise to the occasion and take advantage of a higher education. My plan for my future is to become an independent international businessman. I will later go back to Ethiopia with the education I have gained and use it to build a hospital. I visited a hospital in Gondor, where you could see the evidence of the corruption. The patients barely had any food, they lacked stethoscopes and clean needles to provide mothers and children with much needed medicines. My dream hospital would consist of having enough doctors, healthy meals, and enough supplies to eliminate suffering and to bring hope. Receiving my college diploma will bring me success in the future. However, I am not only concerned about my future, but the future of parents as well. My goal is to make them proud. My father, a child growing up doing his homework under the moonlight at midnight will not regret the hardships he endured so that his son one day might have a better life.