

Making her case: Dean's Medalist heads to ASU Law with 4 degrees in hand

Hailey Boiarsky pursues courtroom dreams with a passion for serving communities in need

By Jennifer Martin, ASU News
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Editor's note: This story is part of a series of profiles of notable [spring 2026 graduates](#).

Some people spend the bulk of their lives searching for their “thing” — the passion that drives them and feeds their soul. If they're lucky, they find it young enough to make a career of it, but often it's not until they reach the freedom of retirement.

And then there's Hailey Boiarsky.

Growing up, Boiarsky was always mesmerized by Andy Griffith's “Matlock,” a savvy, folksy criminal defense show with dramatic cases. And that fascination never left.

“I think I always knew that I wanted to be an attorney,” she remembers.

Her experiences with unhoused and disabled populations only reinforced it — and pointed her in the direction of public defense.

“In high school, I worked a lot with homeless communities and disabled populations,” she said. “I saw how a lot of wrongful convictions were happening in those groups. I knew I wanted to go the public defense route, to help those communities.”

So right out of high school, she set her destination for law school.

Now, Boiarsky is graduating as the [School of Social Transformation](#)'s Dean's Medalist, an Outstanding Undergraduate for the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and a Barrett Honors student with four degrees to her name: political science; women, gender and sexuality studies; justice studies; and philosophy with an emphasis on morality, politics and law — plus a minor in

criminology and criminal justice, and a certificate in disability studies. She starts at ASU's Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law in August.

As a third-generation Sun Devil from Mesa, Arizona, Boiarsky paved the way for her education through numerous funding opportunities, including the [Leadership Scholarship Program](#), the [New American University President's scholarship](#), the [Craig and Barbara Barrett Political Science Scholarship](#), the [Legacy Scholarship](#) and the Past Chairs' Legacy Award.

Throughout her time at ASU, Boiarsky has built a resume that matches her unshakeable drive. As senate president in Undergraduate Student Government, she wrote more than 130 pieces of legislation aimed at improving the student experience and helped manage a \$3.5 million budget.

She also gained hands-on experience in the legal field as an intern with the Maricopa County Office of the Public Defender, where she assisted with trial preparation, observed court proceedings and saw firsthand how legal decisions change people's lives.

At the same time, she served as a University Hearing Board member, contributing to campus accountability processes, and continued volunteering in adaptive theater with the city of Mesa — a program she has been part of since high school — supporting performers with disabilities in a full-scale production each year.

In her junior year, she defended an honors thesis on the power of popular media in influencing public opinion, using the movie "Barbie" — a film that sparked wide cultural conversation — as a case study. This involved interviewing focus groups before and after watching the movie to explore how people define feminism and how much those definitions are influenced by media.

So, how did she manage to do all of this in four short years? Quite simply, Boiarsky has found what she loves and loves what she does — and she is intentionally selective with her time.

"I only do things that I know are going to fill my cup," she said. "And if I learn something is not serving me, I let it go. Four majors is a lot of work, but I also have never felt overburdened or overwhelmed because I am so passionate about each subject matter."

Ahead of graduation, we caught up with Boiarsky to learn more about her time at ASU.

Question: What has been valuable to you about pursuing more than one degree?

Answer: There are no downsides to wanting to learn more and expanding your field of study. It has been so valuable to connect core themes across different disciplines because what you study does not just exist in one content area.

If you're going to choose dual degrees, you'll see connections in any career paths or any degrees you pick, because everything is so interconnected in our society. I have seen gender injustice in the writings of philosophers. I have read pieces by defendants frustrated by political impacts. You are never limited to one point of view.

Q: What's the best piece of advice you'd give to those still in school?

A: Don't let anyone write your story. I had people along the way tell me I wouldn't be able to do things, and now I'm graduating with four degrees. Only you know what you're capable of.

Q: What's one change you'd love to see in the world — and how would you use your degree to help make it happen?

A: I think that as a society, we have lost the ability to kindly disagree. There is no more empathy in debate or willingness to look outside of your own stance. I truly think all of my degrees emphasize implementing humanity back into public conversations.

This story originally appeared on [ASU News](#).

Main image



Hailey Boiarsky, a third-generation Sun Devil from Mesa, Arizona, will cross the stage with four degrees this spring and attend ASU Law in August. Photo by Meghan Finnerty