

# ASU Law grad turns a changing industry into a new beginning

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

For more than a decade, Samantha Graubard built her career telling other people's stories. As a television journalist, she covered complex issues, asked hard questions and delivered investigative reporting she remains deeply proud of. But as the industry began to shift — with layoffs, closures and a rapidly changing media landscape — Graubard found herself at a crossroads. She knew it was time to think not just about the next story, but about her own.

Trusting that instinct, she made the decision to return to school and pursue a Master of Legal Studies at the Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law at Arizona State University, where she's graduating in May. Based in Washington, D.C., Graubard pursued her MLS degree online while working full time. What began as a practical step toward career stability quickly became something more: an opportunity to build a new foundation, expand her perspective and prepare for a transition into a new field.

"This degree helped me transition from my old career in television news to my new career in policy communications," Graubard said.

With a stronger legal foundation and a deeper understanding of the systems shaping public discourse, she's stepping forward with the confidence to grow, adapt and make an impact.

"All of my professors taught me how to think like a lawyer when I am looking at a fact pattern or real-world situation, which is the most important lesson that I learned as an ASU student," she said.

In recognition of her accomplishments as a master's student, Graubard was named the recipient of the MLS Outstanding Student Award.

*Note: Answers may have been lightly edited for length and/or clarity.*

**Question:** What was your "aha" moment, when you realized you wanted to study the field you majored in?

**Answer:** My “aha” moment came once I realized my former industry was no longer sustainable. I worked as a television journalist for 14 years, and I am incredibly proud of the investigative work I delivered. But the journalism industry has faced widespread layoffs and position eliminations, media company consolidation and a shrinking audience. That is why I decided to continue my education by going back to school to expand my legal knowledge and develop the skills I need to excel in the policy communications world. My instinct turned out to be right because the D.C. bureau, where I used to work as a television Washington correspondent, was closed down after 55-plus years of coverage in November 2024. I am so grateful that I trusted my gut and went back to school to earn my MLS at ASU, setting myself up for a new career path.

**Q: What’s something you learned while at ASU — in the classroom or otherwise — that surprised you or changed your perspective?**

**A:** I was nervous at first to go back to school after more than a decade. But I was surprised to learn that, despite my time away from the classroom, I was able to jump right back in. In fact, in some ways, I am an even better student now than when I was an undergraduate from 2006 to 2009, because I am now a working professional with the wisdom and discipline that come with professional experience.

**Q: Why did you choose ASU?**

**A:** I chose ASU because it was the most cost-effective option for the Master of Legal Studies program that also allowed the most flexibility for my schedule, because I work full time.

**Q: Looking back, what moment or experience at ASU stands out as especially meaningful to you, and why?**

**A:** It was especially meaningful for me to complete my contract law class because for many years, I felt I was on the losing end of non-compete contractual clauses and other predatory provisions in my employment contracts that I now better understand and could better navigate if needed.

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

**A:** Keep challenging yourself and keep learning.

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

**Main image**



In recognition of her accomplishments as a master's student, Samantha Graubard was named the recipient of the MLS Outstanding Student Award. Courtesy photo