Brazilian immigrant brings passion for justice to the law

Former exchange student returns as lawyer

By NATALIE ST. JOHN EO Media Group

LONG BEACH, Wash. -Pacific County's newest attorney has a rare gift for picking ambitious goals, and then achieving them in record time.

Originally from Brazil, Pamella Nogueira, 25, first came to Raymond as 15-yearold exchange student. A decade later, Nogueira, who was admitted to the Washington State Bar in April, is living in Raymond again, married to a local man, and launching her career in the justice system. During an interview at her office, Nogueira talked about her passion for social justice, her breakneck journey through law school, and how she found a home-away-from-home in Raymond.

From São Paulo to Raymond

Nogueira grew up in São Jose Dos Campos, a large city in the Brazilian state of São Paulo. Both of her parents are attorneys, and her father still runs a private criminal law practice. Their enthusiasm for law was contagious.

"I went to career day in first grade dressed as an attorney. I guess that's when it started!" Nogueira said. She only considered other career options very briefly.

"You have such an access to helping people. It's amazing," Nogueira explained. "Even if I choose not to be an attorney per se, there's just so much I could do. I never found anything else that had that many opportunities."

When Nogueira first came to stay with the Hanson family in Raymond for six months, she only spoke very basic English. However,



Natalie St. John/EO Media Group

Pamella Nogueira is a new attorney working for the Guy Glenn Law Firm.

her language skills rapidly improved. She loved the Hansons and the other locals she got to know.

"It was probably the best experience of my life. The people were so nice. It was incredible," Nogueira recalled. Although Raymond couldn't be more different than her busy tropical hometown, she felt totally at home.

"I like the rain, I like the green, I like the quietness," Nogueira said.

High-speed higher education

Nogueira started studying law at a Brazilian university, but eventually, both she and her sister — another attorney who now works as an auditor at a large Chicago accounting firm — decided to try their luck in the U.S.

Nogueira enrolled in an intensive English program at Tacoma's Pacific Lutheran University. It was supposed to take six months, but Nogueira powered through the curriculum. After three months, her advisors ran out of work for her to do, and cut her loose. She registered at a community college and began earning the credits she needed to transfer to an American university.

When she enrolled at University of Washington, Tacoma, her advisors told her she couldn't study law as an undergraduate, so she had to pick another major.

"I said, 'OK, which ones can I take the fun classes with?"" Nogueira remembered. The advisors suggested a major in "politics, philosophy and economics."

"They promised me I only had to take one more economics class, so that was OK!" Nogueira laughed. That major allowed her to take lots of classes about human rights — a topic she's still passionate about. She graduated about a year later, in August 2012.

"I'm not a fan of school, so I hurry a bit," Nogueira joked. "If I know I have to get it done, I just do it."

Commuting to law school

By the time she entered University of Washington Law School, Nogueira was dating her future husband, Todd Maneman, a Raymond electrician, so she decided to commute to law school.

Typically, UW's competitive, highly demanding law program takes three years, but Nogueira asked her advisors if she could get it done in two years. They thought she was nuts.

"Those advisors had no faith in me!" Nogueira said. "They told me, 'You can't do it.' I said, 'Well, I'll see you later then, after I get my degree!' I didn't sleep much." Nogueira took enormous course-loads, waking up as early as 3 a.m., to drive to Seattle as much as five days a week, often while working part time.

At the end of the first year, she had to do an externship for school credit. She clerked for Pacific County Superior Court Judge Michael Sullivan, which involved keeping records, preparing reports about upcoming cases, and doing legal research. Nogueira liked working for Sullivan so much that she extended her externship, and even continued volunteering for a couple of months after it ended. That experience proved invaluable, as it helped her get to know the local members of the legal community, including her future employers attorneys Guy Glenn and Nate Needham, of Guy Glenn Law Firm in Long Beach.

During her last couple

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of terms, her school schedule was less demanding, but Nogueira was still going fullsteam. In March 2015, she started working as a "Rule Nine intern" for Guy Glenn Law Firm, meaning that she could perform limited legal duties, under supervision from experienced attorneys.

Battle of the bar

Nogueira finished law school in August, about a year before most of her peers, and married Maneman in a simple ceremony in December. She had one remaining obstacle standing between her and full-fledged attorney status: The bar exam.

Few law students graduate ready to take the notoriously difficult test, Nogueira said. In 2015, about 77,000 U.S. law students took the bar, and just 59 percent of them passed, according to the National Conference of Bar Examiners.

Nogueira sat for the bar in February. It was a relief to be done, but she didn't allow herself to believe she was really done until after she received her test score in April.

"I had to Google it. After I Googled it, I still didn't quite buy it. It took me a couple of hours to believe I actually had passed," Nogueira remembered.

Practicing law locally

Nogueira finds a sense of purpose in practicing law in a rural community.

"It's an opportunity of making sure that our rights are being respected, and things are done the proper way. Even if a person is guilty, they deserve to have a fair, just, proportional punishment," Nogueira said.

These days, she's taking on bigger, more complex cases at Guy Glenn. Outside of the courtroom, this involves lots of research, conducting interviews, and negotiating with prosecutors to get fair deals for her clients, Nogueira said.

3A

As a member of the drug court panel, Nogueira helps supervise offenders who have been given a chance to get serious about sobriety, in lieu of jail time or other traditional punishments. The offenders have to take drug tests, follow a 12-step program and consistently update the panel on their progress. Nogueira says she is "passionate" about alternative programs like drug court — she believes they have real potential to help people with mental illnesses or addictions break out of the often endless cycle of poverty, crime and incarceration.

"I feel that sometimes, these people are not being given a proper response to their actions. I feel that sometimes we don't have the proper response," Nogueira said. "They keep reoffending, reoffending, reoffending. If jail didn't work once, it didn't work twice, it didn't work three times, is it going to work the fourth time?

Given her fondness for staying busy, perhaps it's not surprising that Nogueira moved pretty seamlessly from school to career without ever taking a real break. After keeping up such a demanding schedule during her whirlwind educational spree, she said, settling into "real life" in her adopted hometown almost feels like a vacation.

Laughing, Nogueira said, "I'm still trying to figure out what people do for hobbies, now that I only have one fulltime job!"







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Evening listings **TUESDAY**

TUES	CUESDAY EVENING A - Charter Astoria/ Seaside - L - Charter Long Beach													M AY 31
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