

When my former BYU law professor father suddenly passed away in 2012, my world felt incredibly dark. I had just come home from my Spanish speaking mission and had little idea on what to do with my life. Although I struggled with grief, I could distinctly remember the Spirit telling me: "Keep taking Spanish classes." And each semester, I continued to enroll in more courses.

The professors in the Spanish and Portuguese department stepped in as surrogate parents. They showed by example how to teach the way the Savior taught. They inspired me to change my major, apply for the BYU masters program, and ultimately pursue doctoral studies in Hispanic literature at the University of Arizona.

Today I am a tenure-track professor of Spanish at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and the coordinator of the Spanish department. I now get to help young adults the same way my professors helped me when I was in a dark place. We are currently creating a community service-based internship for Spanish majors, reflecting the BYU motto: "Enter to learn, go forth to serve."

I am glad I can be a beacon of light the way my BYU professors were for me.