

Introduction to Ships



My first time on a ship was when I was 5 years old and my father took my sisters and I on a trip of this massive naval ship where he spent a large amount of his time training as a Nigerian Naval Officer. I was on the deck with my family when the docked ship moved. With mixed feelings of excitement and anxiety, I made a vow not to get on a ship again. Little did I know that 20 years later I will find myself picking a keen interest in shipping and going on to practice as a maritime attorney.

Work Experience in Admiralty Law



In January 2017, I joined the Shipping, Aviation and International Trade of Banwo & Ighodalo as the team's youngest starting associate. The first time I knew I wanted to practice in this field was in an arrest proceeding with the debt sum of circa \$150,000 owed by a shipowner to our client, who was a necessities supplier. I was tasked with drafting the application/motion for arrest with supporting evidence. Nigerian admiralty procedure closely follows the English procedure, and as such evidence was gold. We filed our application for the arrest on a Thursday, the arrest warrant was granted and served on the ship by Friday morning. By Friday evening, the shipowner paid our client the debt sum in full. Although there were other cases that were not so straightforward, this case birthed my interest in the field. From obtaining arrest warrants of ships to negotiating with ship owners, charterers, cargo owners and crew members, I found my niche. In addition to the thrills of maritime litigation, I was exposed to ship financing, ship acquisitions and charterparty agreement negotiations. It was fast paced with high stakes and demanding clients. After experiencing this, I decided to pursue a deeper understanding of the field – an LLM at Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana.

Advanced Education – Theoretical introduction to Maritime law



With the experience I have gained in the Nigerian maritime industry quite similar to the English legal system, I decided that a master's degree in the American maritime industry would assist in providing a holistic view of the international industry. I have come to understand that the world is a global community, connected by channels and some of those channels are mainly connected by the high seas, or the narrow channels between the states.

Like the different parts of a vessel, from the large hull to the small rudder, each part plays a role in ensuring international trade carries on smoothly. As I have realized, every industry has its peculiarities, and the maritime industry is no different. In the first semester of my LLM program, I took courses such as Charterparties, Admiralty Jurisdiction, Towage and Offshore services as well as Vessel Documentation. My experience in practice came to life in these classes, and I developed a deeper understanding and appreciation of the various challenges maritime stakeholders face.

The future of Maritime law and its impact on the environment



One cannot deny the impact of climate change on the earth, and this increasing concern and awareness in the international sphere as it relates to shipowners, ship workers and other stakeholders. The recent G7 summit has further ensured that climate change remains a point

discussion amongst the world's leading nations. From the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change of 1990 to the Paris Agreement of 2015, and the impending COP26 scheduled in November 2021, the nations of the world are actively taking steps to ensure that mechanisms and structures are in place to ensure reduction of carbon emissions globally. The International Maritime Organization has taken the wheel, with its ambitious vision to reduce the total greenhouse gas emissions from international shipping by at least 50% by 2050 and reduce the CO₂ emissions across international shipping by at least 40% by 2030, 70% by 2050. The implications of these strategies are far-reaching – with financiers forming the Poseidon principles and amendments to the MARPOL to cover the energy efficient design index of existing and new vessels. The future is green, and it is turning green fast.

My interest in the decarbonization process of the maritime industry has led me to focus my thesis on this subject matter, with an aim at proposing ideas and collating thoughts that assist in the drive to ensure we have a clean maritime industry which will benefit all the relevant stakeholders in the industry.

My dream

I received a scholarship when I gained admission into the Tulane University Law School Admiralty and Maritime LLM program on my birthday – April 6, 2020 – during the heat of the COVID19 pandemic. It was a partial scholarship, which covered a portion of my tuition, but left me responsible for the remaining part along with my living expenses. This scholarship would assist me in discharging the outstanding tuition fees and living expenses in view of the completion of my LLM program.

The maritime industry is one of the oldest in the world and over several centuries it has evolved to a major means of trade among nations. Having discovered this area of the law and how underdeveloped the maritime industry is in my country as well as along the West African coast; it is my dream to harness as much knowledge and experience possible to be a maritime law consultant to shipping stakeholders in the Nigerian maritime industry.

Thank you, and I do hope you find my application worth it.