



## NEVADA TRAILBLAZERS

# Meet Augusta Massey:

### A Remarkable Journey to Become an Attorney

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**As a mother of two, wife, lawyer, and law-firm owner, Augusta Massey's journey is nothing short of remarkable.**

Massey's path to the U.S. and the law is one marked by tragedy and resilience. Born in Nigeria, Massey is the second-oldest of six siblings. In her teenage years, she witnessed her father's violent death. This tragedy and other circumstances forced her to drop out of high school and eventually flee the country to the U.S., where she settled in Memphis, Tennessee.

Recognizing the sense of security living the U.S. afforded her, Massey was eager to capitalize on her newfound opportunities. While working full time and taking up to 26 credits per semester, she obtained two community college degrees in engineering in two years.

Yet, despite the newfound sense of security, more tragedy followed. Only a few months after moving to Memphis, her 12-year-old brother, while walking home from school, was run down and killed by a drunk driver.

In the aftermath of this loss, Massey and her family were inundated with lawyers—including civil, criminal, and immigration attorneys. During this time, she witnessed first-hand the impact that lawyers can have on a family, both good and bad.

This experience led Massey to set her sights on the law.

Not yet in law school, Massey and her now-husband took a trip to Las Vegas and got married. After the ceremony, outside the courthouse, she vividly recalled seeing a sign for the law firm of Santoro Driggs (now Holley Driggs) and telling her husband she was going to work there someday.

Massey attended law school at the Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law at the University of Memphis where she was active in mock trial – winning the Freshman Moot Court competition in her first year – and various student organizations. As fate would have it, when Massey arrived at a recruiting day in Atlanta during her second year of law school, the Las Vegas firm of Santoro Driggs was there. She interviewed, and after the interviewing partner challenged her to a debate on a topic of her choosing to test her mock trial skills, she received a job offer.

Massey would go on to work at Santoro Driggs for about two years, before joining another firm and then starting her own firm. She focuses her practice in bankruptcy, business litigation, estate planning, and probate. Understanding the impact lawyers can have on their clients' lives, Massey prides herself on providing her clients with the best service possible.

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“Practicing law is a privilege. You have the opportunity to help people and impact lives in a way that is truly special during some of the worst moments of people’s lives,” she said.

Even with her busy practice, Massey maintains a deep commitment to community and giving back. She is serving as the president of the Las Vegas National Bar Association, where she is focused on mentoring, pipeline initiatives, social and racial justice, and scholarship. Currently, her goal is to raise \$40,000 for scholarships for law students in celebration of the association’s 40 years of service in the community.

She also sits on the Nevada Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, has served as a mentor and/or employer with the Summer Business Institute since 2012, and is a Transitioning into Practice mentor with the State Bar of Nevada for newly admitted lawyers. She is a co-founder of the African Diaspora of Las Vegas, a nonprofit association; a judge pro tempore with the small claims court; regular PAYBAC speaker for middle school students; and mentors countless students and lawyers, both formally and informally. She is also the author of three non-fiction books and two self-study courses.

In addition to her community service and pro bono efforts, immediately upon her graduation from law school, and every year since, Massey has funded a scholarship at her alma mater in memory of her late father for the Black Law Students Association.

“Augusta’s commitment to the community is just one of her amazing qualities. She is an asset in every endeavor she takes on,” said Judge Tierra Jones, who has witnessed Massey’s service first-hand.

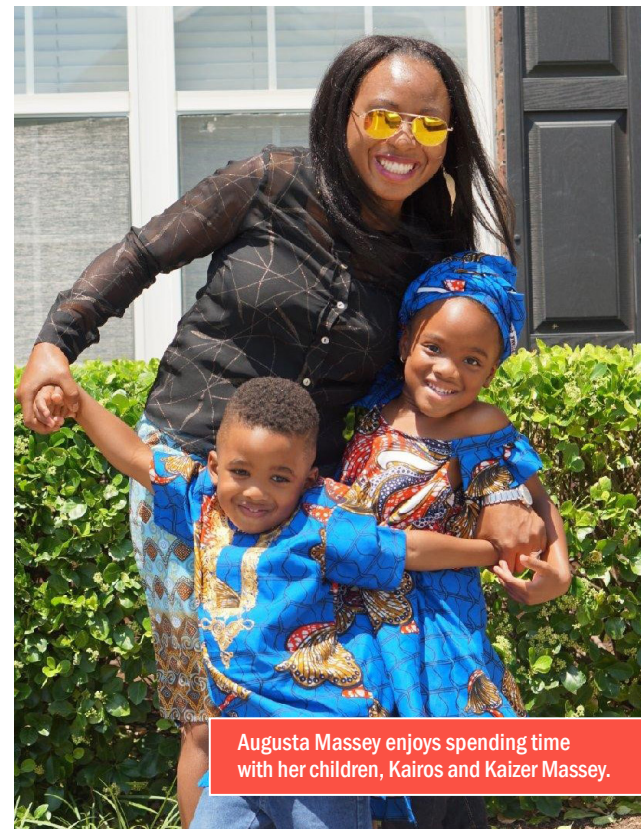
For her efforts, the state bar awarded Massey with the Volunteer of the Year Award in 2021; Vegas, Inc. and the National Bar Association have named her a Top 40 under 40; and she was the 2019 recipient of the Las Vegas Urban Chamber of Commerce’s “Women in Business & Politics” Award, among other recognitions.

Despite her accomplishments and resiliency, what perhaps stands out the most is her joy for life, whether discussing her family, her clients, or the latest new restaurant she visited. When asked how she maintains it, she recognizes happiness as a choice—one that she endeavors to make every day.

In her free time, when Massey is not lawyering, mentoring, or volunteering, she enjoys trying new foods – she is a self-described foodie – dancing, reading a good book, fencing, or travelling to exotic locations.



Augusta Massey and her family celebrate her mother's birthday.



Augusta Massey enjoys spending time with her children, Kairos and Kaizer Massey.



Augusta Massey poses at the United Nations Assembly in New York City.



Augusta Massey's joy for life is evident during a skydiving adventure.