

# A Practical Lawyer with Purpose

Sami Haddad '14 didn't go to law school with a dream of changing the world. He went because his dad told him to.

"I was about 12 years old and my dad's like, 'Listen, you're going to be a lawyer or a doctor,'" he says with a laugh. "I hate science. He's like, 'Well then, you're going to be a lawyer.'"

Sure, Sami sees the humor in that exchange now when he reflects on the story, but there's no doubt he took that early push and ran with it, straight into a career that's all his own.

Now running his own successful family law practice in San Diego, he's known for being direct, efficient, and fiercely loyal to his clients. "I was always good at tests." My application of law was always very practical. Identify the problem, get it done." That mindset has become a cornerstone of his work: focused, results-driven, and deeply rooted in real-world impact.

Sami Haddad's foundation as a lawyer was built on purpose, community, and an evolving sense of responsibility. Though he didn't participate in the Community Law Project (CLP) during law school, the clinic would eventually become a key part of his career.

CLP, which offers pro bono legal services to underserved populations across San Diego, gives law students and alumni alike the opportunity to step into real-world situations and serve those in need.

"Somebody I was dating at the time said, 'You should do it. They need you,'" Haddad recalled. So, he did, volunteering with CLP after law school and reconnecting with the community in a new way. "It was good to feel like I was helping."

"CLP taught me empathy," Sami said, "because you see people firsthand in very difficult situations." That exposure changed his perspective on what it meant to be a lawyer, not just someone who interprets the law, but someone who shows up for people who need it most.



It also influenced how he built his practice. "You have an opportunity, and I would argue, a duty, as a lawyer to provide people with access to counsel, even though they may not have it," he said. That duty continues to guide him. He still takes on cases for clients who can't always afford representation. "I charge what people can afford. I make money. But I still take people who don't have it," he said. "You don't always get paid with money. You get paid with karma."

For Sami, it's never been about billable hours or prestige, it's about solving problems. That mindset, he says, is directly tied to his time with CLP. "Instead of focusing on how to get money from them, it was, how do I solve their problem?" The more he focused on being of service, the more his practice grew. "Once I started doing it, my business tripled."

Now, with years of experience behind him and a young son at home, his motivation has only deepened. "My son is my world," he said. "I have a skill; I can contribute that. If everyone contributed the skills that they have... we would be at a far better place. A place that I want to raise my son in. That's the way I see it."

From the outside, Sami may come off as no-nonsense, even blunt (this author likes that), but the truth is, he leads with purpose. Every case he takes, every client he helps, is about something more. "You're not doing it for short-term gain," he said. "You're doing it for the long-term good. You put good into the world ... the good comes to you."