

From Lab Coat to Law School

Christelle Kamga Pride '17 was just 18 years old when she took the test that would change her life.

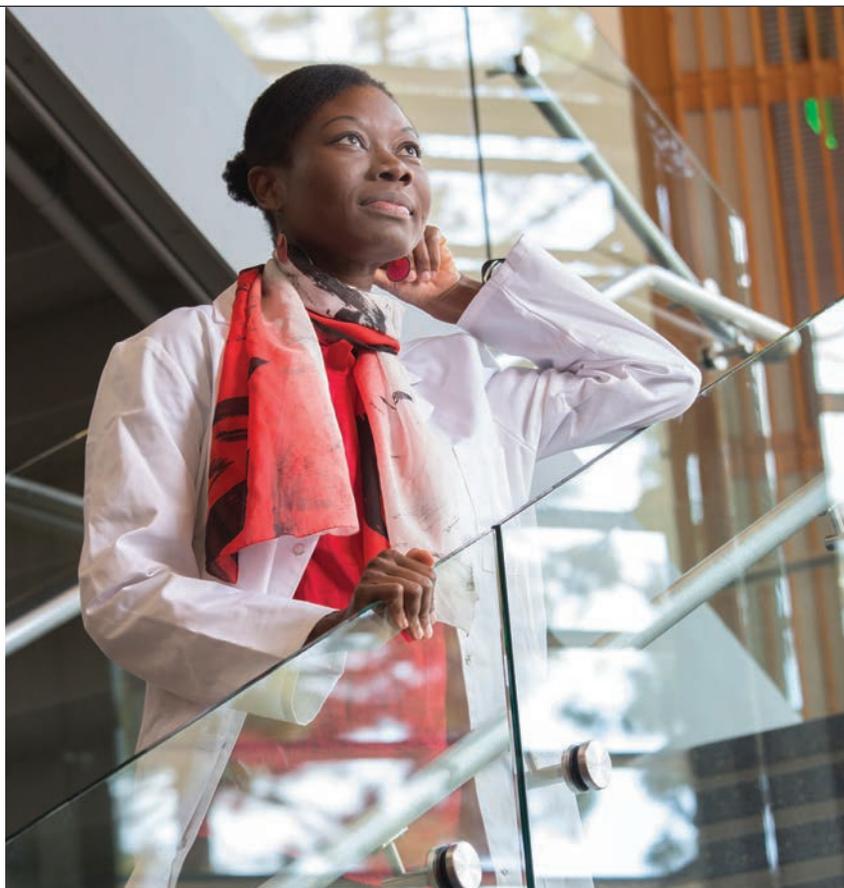
Pride had taken countless tests as a young science prodigy in her native Cameroon, but this one was notably different—this one would deliver a ticket to study in the United States.

Pride loved to read as a young girl in Douala, Cameroon's largest city. But there was no public library in her neighborhood, so she would sometimes trade her lunch for books. She attended a private high school where her mother was a teacher, and later—at 15—enrolled as a chemistry major at the University of Buea.

At the time, a single goal dominated Pride's thoughts: securing a scholarship. "I told myself I'd do whatever was required to get it done," she says.

During senior year, her hard work combined with a lucky break. Guest teacher Thomas Huang, a Fulbright Scholar from East Tennessee State University, made a special announcement to his chemical kinetics class: His two best students would be offered graduate scholarships to ETSU.

"Imagine telling that to a class of 60 students hungry to study abroad!" Pride says. "We knew the race was on."



STILL EXPERIMENTING: Christelle Kamga Pride '17

Pride earned perfect scores on every test and assignment in Huang's course, but knew she needed to be perfect on the final, too. When Huang returned the graded exams, Pride ran to a secluded place to check her score: 100 percent.

In 2003, she arrived in Johnson City, Tennessee, for ETSU classes—and culture shock. "I remember telling myself, 'I'm never going to buy tomatoes if this is how much they cost!'" she recalls.

Tomatoes or not, Pride earned a master's degree in chemistry in 2005 and went on to a Ph.D. in pharmacology from the University of Louisville in 2010.

During her postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Pittsburgh, she

began soul searching—no longer sure that scientific research was her calling. "I'd always wanted to go to law school, but I felt like I'd missed that train," she says.

Through connections, Pride met some patent attorneys in Pittsburgh and decided to pursue the field, earning her patent agent certification last year.

Landing at Berkeley Law has exceeded her lofty expectations. "My first-semester classes made law come alive in a way I hadn't considered before," she says.

Pride is unsure exactly how patent law will figure into her future. She's pursuing litigation, which means one thing for certain: Many more tests ahead. —*Wendy Witherspoon*