

Neighbor Stories: Yader Morazán

Remember the 1980's? The Sandinistas? The Contras? The Iran-Contra Affair? Daniel Ortega and his dictatorship in Nicaragua? Well, Ortega is still there and again in power. Still oppressing his country and its people, the church, those who speak up, those who disagree with and criticize the regime, those who don't give in, those who strive for change. And this brings us to Yader Morazán, and what brought him to our community.

Yader came to the US after years of practice as an attorney. He received a law degree, taught at the university level, trained as an attorney, and worked in the federal judiciary department of Nicaragua. He worked for legal organizations fighting against violence toward women in a country which at one time was on the forefront of modernizing conditions for women.



But in 2018 things changed. Ortega came back into power. By 2025, except for the presidency, all branches of the government were completely phased out, including the judiciary. The presidency became a dictatorship. Elections were faked. Trials were manipulated, including that of a Catholic bishop, still now in prison, who chose to oppose the government's persecution of the church.

This is when Yader spoke out under the belief that "Change doesn't just happen. You have to do something." He spoke up for civil rights, humanitarian rights, and legal rights. He researched and uncovered evidence of illegal government activities. Yader fought for justice. The consequences of his integrity and courage were swift and devastating. An assassination attempt on his life. Denationalization (loss of citizenship). Forced exile with his six-year-old son clinging to him. And his father and brother detained, imprisoned, and interrogated about Yader's whereabouts and sources.

He came to his new country to escape persecution. He acquired a new job, leaving his legal and judicial career behind. He came to Evansville because he had relatives living here but had to leave other family behind. Despite these challenges, Yader brought his passion with him—his passion for the law, for promoting justice, for helping people. He volunteers at the Immigrant Welcome and Resource Center, advises on legal matters, presents at local schools, trains nonprofits, and serves as an expert on human rights issues. He also shares his expertise about Nicaragua with media outlets such as CNN and Telemundo.

Even with his family and day job responsibilities, Yader finds ways to follow his calling. He says his situation is difficult because he lives here now, but his heart is still in Nicaragua. He accepts his new circumstances with grace and humor, saying (in relation to his work with immigrants), "I have never liked the practice of immigration law, but here I am!" Yader plans to improve his English skills, volunteer more, continue to develop relationships in the community, and work his way back into the legal profession to help others. He states, "People are the center of my life." His other goal is to help his son get a good education, with university in his future.

Yader has reinvented himself and found a new path in a new home. Despite these achievements, he has one great fear. He is afraid he may be returned to Nicaragua to face detention, prison, and torture for the names of his sources. But this doesn't stop him: "Don't let fear paralyze you. You have to speak up."

Assassination attempt, forced exile, living in fear. Making a home for a son in a place that is not home. Working a good job, but one that is not his passion. Succeeding under difficult circumstances. If you believe in chance, Yader Morazán came to the U.S. by chance. If you don't believe in chance, Yader came for a purpose. And he is living his life with remarkable purpose. We are fortunate to have him here as a New American.