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Local Attorneys Share Solo Practice Tips

FORT WORTH, Texas – Law students with an interest in small and independent legal practice had the opportunity to hear from a panel of local lawyers who successfully ventured out on their own during a career services and Tarrant County Young Lawyers Association-sponsored event at the law school on Feb. 27.

Over 80 students attended the presentation. The speakers, three of whom were Texas Wesleyan law alumni, included Daniel Hernandez '00, Greg Jackson, Jason Mills '00, and Curren Kubes '04. Each panelist gave a brief overview of the events that led to their personal decisions to spearhead their own legal practice before taking questions from the audience.

While each attorney had his or her own words of advice for students, each stressed the value of networking, patience and humility.

“You have to find somebody you know, people who are willing to help you out,” Hernandez, who sought mentorship from his older brother, said. “Swallow your pride, and be willing to do a little bit of everything.”

Mills echoed Hernandez' emphasis on connections, and also stressed the importance of self-sufficiency during the start-up years of an independent practice. He told students that he did everything from stuffing envelopes to answering his own calls for the first two years of his practice.

“If you go out on your own, you have to do everything yourself,” Mills said. “Don't expect to make money in the beginning. Expect to gain reputation and experience.”

Mills is currently Fort Worth's first and only board certified immigration attorney.

Jackson, an alumnus of Baylor Law School, differed from Hernandez and Mills in that he worked in a large firm prior to starting his own practice.

“You can always put off that decision to go out on your own,” Jackson said. “There is always a risk involved, and you have to learn to ride the waves.”

Jackson told students that while there is never a “right time” to open a solo practice, he has never regretted his decision and that going to work each day is “the greatest thing in the world.”

Kubes, who also worked in a firm before opening her family law practice, stressed the value of building and maintaining connections in the legal community.

“The most important thing is exposure and being humble,” Kubes said. “Get out there, meet people. They will take you in.”

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