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“Love This Child Forever”

FORT WORTH, Texas – More than 40 students from Texas Wesleyan University School of Law participated in National Adoption Day on Nov. 15, assisting local attorneys, including alumni, in the adoptions of dozens of children who were welcomed into new families.

The adoptions were finalized at the Tarrant County family courthouse in downtown Fort Worth. Each year on National Adoption Day, the courthouse opens its doors for a rare weekend morning and judges volunteer their time to finalize the adoptions of foster children.

“Students learn so much in [National Adoption Day] because they get to speak to real clients and generate actual court documents,” Jennifer Ellis ’05 said. “My student used prodoc to generate pleadings, drafted letters to other parties and clients and interviewed the family. All of these things are skills he will need once he begins to practice. He will be more prepared and professional in practice after having had this experience.”

Ellis supervised 3L Matthew Wright, who will be graduating in December. Wright said that in addition to learning about some of the practical aspects of family law, he gained a new appreciation for the need for lawyers to be involved in the adoption process.

“I knew I was in a very private place in a family’s life,” Wright said. “It also became more personal during the adoption when you, the student, utter the words ‘you promise to love this child forever,’ mixed with the somber atmosphere of the courtroom and the intense emotions of the family. It is a very special, personal and humbling experience.”

Wright had completed his *pro bono* hours prior to signing up to participate in National Adoption Day, but said that the event was something he had always been interested in but never able to take advantage of in previous years.

“I have always supported the idea of adoption, and this just confirms the need for families to love and care for these children,” Wright said. “I have a greater appreciation for the need for lawyers to be involved in the process.”

National Adoption Day started in 2000 and grew from the work and dedication of law firms, foster care departments, child advocates and courts. This is the eighth year Texas Wesleyan has participated in the event.

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