Employment Attorney Brad Harvey Featured for Pro Bono Adoption Work in Hamilton County Herald

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Miller & Martin labor and employment attorney Brad Harvey was featured in the October 6, 2023 issue of the *Hamilton County Herald.* In the article titled "Harvey Finds Perfect Pro Bono Niche with Adoptions," Brad Harvey discusses how his own adoption story played a role in selecting adoption cases as the right fit for his recent pro bono focus through Legal Aid of East Tennessee. Mr. Harvey has handled five adoptions for Legal Aid to date, each of which has been a new world compared to his day-to-day legal practice focused on labor and employment law matters and class and collective action defense.

Legal Aid of East Tennessee plans to present Mr. Harvey with a 2023 Volunteer Lawyer of the Year award during its Pro Bono Night later this month for his work on rural adoptions.

Click here to read the full attorney profile, "Harvey Finds Perfect Pro Bono Niche with Adoptions," in the *Hamilton County Herald*.

The full text of the article is below with permission from the publication.

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Harvey Finds Perfect Pro Bono Niche with Adoptions

Throughout his 30-year career with Miller & Martin, attorney Brad Harvey has traveled from Chattanooga to destinations throughout the country to represent clients in high stakes labor and employment matters.

Harvey, 54, graces New York City with his presence about once a month as part of his work for Coca-Cola, for example, and he's handled class actions as far away as California. These trips to distant locales made his many jaunts to Cincinnati to contribute to a case seem like idle walks in a park.

So, it makes sense that Harvey didn't blink when Legal Aid of East Tennessee sent him to do a pro bono adoption in a rural area outside of Hamilton County.

"I wanted to do something charitable, but pro bono is a tough fit for my practice," Harvey explains. "I saw a lot of estate work and landlord-tenant situations, but those are outside my expertise."

While reading through a list of available pro bono cases about a year ago, Harvey spotted a couple of adoptions. They struck an emotional chord in him.

"I was adopted as an infant and had wonderful adoptive parents. So, I had a personal connection to those cases," Harvey recalls. "The first one I did was in Hamilton County, and then Legal Aid had one in Meigs County. I said, 'Sure, I'll do that one, too.'"

Harvey's first case involved helping a stepfather adopt the child of a single mother whose biological dad was "AWOL," he says. Later, he assisted a pair of grandparents with an adoption, and he recently helped a woman who'd cared for a 10-year-old boy since he was 9-months-old become the child's legal mother.

"He'd lived with her all that time, and at some point he'd started calling her 'mom,'" Harvey explains. "It felt good to legally give him a home and a family."

Word spread throughout Meigs and McMinn counties that Brad Harvey from Chattanooga was doing good work on adoptions. Soon, aspiring adoptive parents who didn't have the resources to pay for the process were calling him. After referring them to Legal Aid to ensure they'd qualify for aid, he was pleased to help them.

Harvey has handled five adoptions for Legal Aid to date, each of which has provided him with an experience that was foreign to him as a labor and employment attorney.

"Once, a young boy was allowed to put on the judge's gown and swing the gavel," Harvey smiles. "When the judge announced the order for one I did in Meigs County, the attorneys who there were for regular motions starting clapping. Then the entire courtroom applauded,

which I've never seen."

There was a time when Harvey nearly chose a career that would have put in him classrooms instead of courtrooms. While an undergraduate student at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, he studied English and political science, and for a time he wavered between teaching and practicing law.

The law won.

"There was no moment of clarity, but at some point, I had to decide, so I went to Law School. I like reading, writing and the logic of the law, as well as arguing a case."

While attending Vanderbilt Law School, Harvey served as a summer associate at Miller & Martin's Chattanooga office. When the firm offered him a job, he accepted.

"I liked the people, I liked Chattanooga, and my parents were still here. Also, Miller & Martin has a solid practice for being in a midsized town. It wasn't a hard choice."

Havey emerged from law school uncertain about the kind of law he wanted to practice. Miller & Martin slotted him in the corporate department, but after over a year of that work, he said it wasn't his cup of tea. So, the firm assigned him to a team that was defending a nationwide discrimination class action for Deloitte & Touche.

He enjoyed the work and found himself under the tutelage of Miller & Martin's contingent of labor and employment attorneys, including John Bode, Chuck Lee, Judge Christopher Steger and Ron Ingham. (Or rather, "the legendary Ron Ingham," as he puts it.) He says the time these attorneys spent nurturing his understanding of the practice of law shaped his career.

"Miller & Martin has enough people on hand to give you personal attention, but the firm isn't so big, you're just a number," Harvey notes. "When new attorneys come in, we hope that they'll spend their career here and invest in them accordingly."

If there's a theme running through Harvey's life, it could be that he's partly a product of the investments people have made in him, beginning with his adoptive parents – Dr. Hathaway Harvey, a local surgeon, and Nancy Harvey.

"I was born in Indianapolis and was fortunate the adoption agency placed me with my parents, who were unable to have children of their own," Harvey says. "As an adoptee, you realize you weren't entitled to anything from birth, and that you could have wound up in any situation, so I'm thankful I had wonderful adoptive parents."

Harvey says his dad, who's 84 and still practices medicine, is his hero, while his mother, who died a few years ago, was his heart. "She was a wonderful mom. Adoption isn't always a positive experience; there are other sides of it."

Harvey's parents brought him to Chattanooga when he was 1. As he tells the story, his dad and another doctor had just graduated from medical school and wanted to establish a practice together in a city with a warmer climate.

Harvey, in turn, has invested in others. Long before taking on rural adoptions for Legal Aid, he was a tutor and unofficial big brother to four underprivileged boys who were part of a learning disability class. Harvey was assigned to the class while a student at Duke and continued mentoring the young men as he took a yearlong sabbatical to choose between academics and the law.

Harvey remained in touch with the foursome and periodically visited each of them for about a decade. After losing touch with the men over the years, he began searching for them about a decade ago, and has located three of them.

"Being a part of their lives was meaningful to me," Harvey says, "and I've enjoyed reconnecting with them."

During the pandemic, Harvey also looked for and found his biological parents. Although his birth father died many years ago in an accident, his birth mother is still alive and they have developed a relationship, he says.

"My (adoptive) mom said she'd support me searching for my birth parents, but I felt funny about it. I did have a natural curiosity about them, though, and at some point I decided I wanted to know who they were."

When Harvey's birth mother met his adoptive father, the first thing his dad said to her was, "You gave me a great gift."

Although Harvey and his wife of 24 years, Aimee, do not have children, they are dog parents. Or, as he says, they're "the kind of dog parents that drives non-dog people crazy."

"We're very doting," he laughs.

When Harvey and his wife are not spoiling Louie, their rescue (who's a mix of rat terrier, chihuahua and "et cetera," he notes in an email), they can often be found riding bikes or running, either in Chattanooga or another far flung destination.

This summer, the couple added a 100-mile gravel bike race in Steamboat, Colorado to a travelogue that includes trips to cycle in Hawaii, France and Majorca, a Spanish island.

In addition, Harvey has competed in about 20 marathons.

That said, he'll likely continue to drive to any additional rural adoptions he does, as he'll probably want the people in the courtroom to reserve their applause for the families he had a hand in shaping. But it's unlikely he'll blink when the phone rings and it's Legal Aid on the line.