



Shook Scholarship Program for Kansas Foster Children Reaches \$1 Million Dollars

Kansas City, Mo (July 25, 2018) Shook, Hardy & Bacon has reached an important milestone as part of its commitment to serve children and families. The Kansas Foster and Adoptive Children Scholarship Fund, founded by Shook, has reached \$1 million in scholarships awarded since the program began in 2001. Kansas high school students formerly in the foster care system are able to receive scholarships for university, college and trade schools. In addition to some private donations, the program is primarily funded by state-paid fees for pro bono adoption cases completed by Shook.

“It is a key aspect of our culture at Shook for attorneys to do significant pro bono work and to give back to the community,” said Shook Chair Madeleine McDonough. “Gene Balloun crafted a novel model by converting state-paid fees into scholarships. The Kansas Foster and Adoptive Children Scholarship Fund stands out as a great success.”

Recently retired Shook Partner Gene Balloun, who continues to do pro bono work, started the scholarship program while providing pro bono adoption assistance, together with other Shook attorneys, to families and children. In addition, Balloun and his wife have been foster parents to 29 children, and adopted a son and a daughter who were in foster care.

“We’re honored and humbled to meet this milestone,” said Balloun. “There is great reward in witnessing a young person excel in life. I want to thank my firm and fellow attorneys who provided legal services to make these adoptions and scholarships possible.”

Shook supported Balloun’s idea to use his state-paid fees – averaging about \$600 per case – to fund the scholarship program. Balloun and a number of other Shook attorneys have completed 1,315 Kansas adoption cases, helping hundreds of families complete the legal process of finding forever homes for deserving children. One hundred percent of those state-paid fees went into the scholarship fund, significantly increasing the available funds and the number of recipients who

could be helped in getting their educations. More than 800 scholarships have been awarded.

One of the scholarship recipients, Brooke Barney, now attends the University of Kansas in part because of the scholarship program.

“Foster children can feel very alone,” stated Barney, who is studying community health. “This scholarship means a lot because it recognizes what foster children have been through and gives us hope that we can attend a university. I very much appreciate the opportunity.”

The program awards scholarships to every eligible applicant. The past several years have seen a record number of children apply, as more and more foster children reach adulthood and start to consider college or other training. Shook is committed to serving children in foster care, and works hard to make sure each applicant receives some assistance to afford college. A team of 21 attorneys and staff work on the adoption program.

“It is not often that you enter and leave a courtroom happy, but that is the case with these adoptions,” said Shook Attorney Madison Hatten, who is now taking a major leadership role in managing the adoption and scholarship program. “It is so rewarding to see these children placed permanently in loving homes.”

The Shook Hardy & Bacon adoption team that makes this scholarship program possible includes:

Gene Balloun

Mike Barnett

Chad Beashore

Ruth Anne French-Hodson

Katie Gates Calderon

Madison M. Hatten

Jeanne Janchar

Matt Keane

Laura Lawson

Kirk F. Marty

Bryan E. Meyer

Rebecca M. Oland

Erick Roeder

Katherine Sinatra

Joy Springfield

Ashley Sturgeon

Jim Welch

Anthony Wingrove

Kathy Hoffman – Staff Paralegal

Shawna Johnson – Staff Paralegal

Shook Of Counsel Jolie Justus and Partner Charles Eblen lead the Pro Bono practice group as the Director of Pro Bono Services and Pro Bono Committee Chair, respectively.

About The Kansas Foster Children Adoption and Scholarship Program

The Kansas Foster and Adoptive Children Scholarship Fund was established to provide scholarships for any type of further education beyond high school including college, junior college, vocational, technical or other trade schools. The students eligible for assistance shall be students who are or have been foster children in the State of Kansas, including foster children who have been adopted.

About Shook, Hardy & Bacon

Founded in 1889, Shook, Hardy & Bacon L.L.P. has 12 offices in the United States and London, with attorneys and professional staff serving clients in the health, science and technology sectors in areas ranging from product liability defense and commercial litigation to intellectual property prosecution and litigation, environmental and toxic tort, privacy and data security and regulatory counseling. www.shb.com