



Voice for Adoption Recognizes Shook Retired Partner J. Eugene Balloun for Improving Lives of Foster Children

KANSAS CITY, Mo (Nov. 4, 2019) Voice for Adoption, a national adoption advocacy nonprofit group, has selected retired Shook Partner J. [Eugene Balloun](#) for its 2019 Breaking Barriers Adoption Award. The [award](#) recognizes Balloun's efforts in overcoming barriers to adoption including age, geographic location and special needs of children from foster care. VFA estimates there are 123,000 children in foster care needing forever homes.

VFA will recognize Balloun and other winners at the 15th Annual Adoptive Family Portrait Project Display and National Adoption Month Briefing in Washington, D.C., Nov.13, 2019.

"I am moved and honored to have been selected for this award," said Balloun, who has helped more than 1,500 foster children find permanent homes. "There is no greater reward than the love of a child with a forever family."

Balloun says these accomplishments could not have happened without the unwavering support of his law firm, Shook, Hardy & Bacon. In 2018, the scholarship fund hit a milestone with pro bono adoptions. The Kansas Foster and Adoptive Children Scholarship Fund reached \$1 million in scholarships awarded to foster children since the program began in 2001. The program uses state-paid fees from pro bono adoption cases to fund the program. More than 1,500 Kansas adoption cases have been completed, helping families complete the legal process of finding permanent homes for children.

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.

"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. This award is recognition of a life-long journey and could not have happened without the help of so many others," said Balloun.

Balloun has earned numerous accolades for his pro bono legal work. The Johnson County Bar Association honored him with the President's Award. FosterAdopt Connect presented Balloun with a Lifetime Achievement Award and *Missouri Lawyers Weekly* selected him for its Icon Award in 2019.

For more information, contact Shook Media Relations Manager Heather McMichael, hmc michael@shb.com or 816.389.0419.

About Shook, Hardy & Bacon

Founded in 1889, Shook, Hardy & Bacon L.L.P. has 15 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

About VFA

Voice for Adoption (VFA) develops and advocates for improved adoption policies. Recognized as a national leader in special needs adoption, VFA works closely with federal and state legislators, as well as other child welfare organizations, to make a difference in the lives of the 123,000 children in foster care who are waiting to be adopted and the families who adopt children from foster care.