



Photo by Boothe Davis.

Robert T. Noone

Adoption Attorney, Robert Noone Legal Services

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ROBERT NOONE took an unusual path to law school. After attending St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore, MD, the lifelong music lover and guitarist worked with an order of Catholic priests serving the poor and advocating for social change in Appalachia.

"They taught me about community organizing and encouraged me to go to law school," he recalls. "They also encouraged me to pursue my music to help support myself. It was not unusual to see a few priests sneaking into the bars where I was performing."

The 1983 West Virginia University College of Law graduate began his career working juvenile cases in circuit court, which shaped his early days as a lawyer and helped him find his calling. Today, as an adoption attorney, Noone finds his greatest success in the quiet of the

courtroom, helping children who will never make headlines.

In October 1989, he opened his own firm: Robert Noone Legal Services. This new venture allowed him to shift his practice to what he felt called to do—represent juveniles in abuse and neglect matters and, eventually, adoptions. He has received many honors over the years, including being named the Champion of Children by the Children's Home Society of West Virginia, and has served on boards for the American Civil Liberties Union, Southern Poverty Law Center and Logan and Mingo Child Advocacy Centers. Noone wakes up every day doing something he loves.

"The first 25 years of my legal career, no one came to me unless things were bad—often really bad," he says. "Now, no one comes to me except when they have made a place in their hearts and homes for an extra person to love. I live in radical gratitude for my law career taking this path, and I have never taken it for granted."

For the last 13 years, Noone has fine-tuned his adoption process for West Virginia families. This process was put to the test in 2019, when, over the course of two days, Noone completed 16 adoptions in four West Virginia counties. The process of uniting families includes hard work and effort, but the results are worth it to Noone.

"It is a feeling of accomplishment and joy to know the people I serve don't have to wait any longer for their forever families," he says.



Noone and his wife, Beth, a licensed therapist, also offer free seminars and trainings about adoption and juvenile practice for foster parents, adoptive parents and those adopting children with trauma. The couple recently converted Noone's 5,000-square-foot law office in Logan into West Virginia Power of Play Therapy, a center to train mental health professionals as registered play therapists to better serve youth in foster care.

"I hope over the years my love of representing kids may have influenced a few others and the joy I try to bring to teaching seminars has made some guardian ad litem proud of their work and the opportunity to advocate for the voiceless," he says. "Without zealous advocacy, it only gets worse, but with enthusiasm in our legal work, lives change." ■

