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Veterans clinic volunteer, Brian Faucett

 Brian Faucett Vet Clinic

Tell us a little about your background as a lawyer.

In law school, I began interning at Land of Lincoln Legal Services helping victims of domestic abuse obtain orders of protection under the supervision of Capt. Amy Morgan (now Maj. Morgan), who is largely responsible for the attorney I am today. Morgan taught me many things about being an attorney, but most notably that the practice of law often requires a sense of duty rather than practicing purely for financial gain. My law partner, Larry Thomason, had a similar background with similar beliefs, so when we decided to start a private law practice, we incorporated this belief into it. Now, I practice exclusively in family law, while Larry divides his time between family law and estate planning.

When did you first become involved with the veterans clinics?

I can't take credit for most of this; Larry (*Thomason*) had already been working with Bob Stoeckl in the veterans clinic and introduced me to it when we started Thomason & Faucett, LLC. After my first clinic, I was hooked. It became immediately apparent that this program truly strives to simply provide help to those who need it and do not know how to get it. Everyone involved in the program is great to work with as well.

Why is pro bono service important to you?

I believe that helping those in need who cannot help themselves is necessary for any community to function. I was born and raised in St. Louis County (Oakville) and have lived in St. Louis City since law school. I love St. Louis, and I plan on spending the rest of my life in St. Louis. I would not want to live in a place where everyone is purely acting in their own self-interest all the time.

Is there a case that stands out for you or a certain kind of help that is most often requested?

I only handle family law issues, so I see a lot of veterans who agreed to a child support amount or custody arrangement while they were serving because they felt like they didn't have a choice, and have just lived with it because they thought it could not be changed. Often, these agreements are incredibly unfair to the veteran, but they feel trapped. You'll often have this type of legal issue combined with a rough stretch of life circumstances which can leave them feeling beaten down. It is rough.

How much time have you volunteered in the last year to pro bono work?

Right now, I am hovering around 70 to 80 hours of pro bono work between the veterans clinic, volunteering as a court-appointed attorney on the St. Louis county order of protection docket and serving as a county special private prosecutor for order of protection violations.

How does it feel to have helped so many people with their legal issues?

It feels great to help, but the attorneys that volunteer for the veterans clinic usually only have enough time to point people in the right direction; the real trick is to actually solve their issues. That usually falls to the amazing attorneys at Legal Services of Eastern Missouri.

What advice would you give other lawyers about getting involved with veterans clinics?

I would advise them to do it. The need for volunteer attorneys is growing with more and more veterans coming out to the clinics for help.

Is there anything you would like to add?

Find time to volunteer for something you care about. It can make you feel great, improves your community, and it can even open up opportunities for you.