

TENNESSEE BAR JOURNAL

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Thanksgiving in Tennessee

It's Thanksgiving in Tennessee. A lawyer with a baby riding on her hip — we'll call her Cindy — bastes the turkey and turns her oven down low. Next, she's headed to Bruce Street in the heart of Sevierville. Before she serves her family Thanksgiving dinner, she's got a parenting plan to do for a client. After completing the first draft of the plan, she marks up her comments on the proposed new guardian ad

"... Tennessee lawyers, scattered from Memphis to Mountain City, commit countless unselfish acts in service to their profession and their communities, leaving a proud legacy never to be forgotten."

litem rule, e-mails them off, and gathers up her little angel just in time to make it home for Thanksgiving lunch.

It's Thanksgiving in Tennessee, and in upper east Tennessee a lawyer we'll call Frank takes his nephew for a hike along the Appalachian Trail. He keeps up a good pace. He knows his family needs his help getting ready for dinner on this holiday night, but in between the hike and the dinner, he hides away upstairs in his study to review the straining budget for his community legal clinic.

It's Thanksgiving in Tennessee. A young lawyer — we'll call him Nick — begins to prepare for a deposition in a pro bono case he accepted last summer. Depositions are set for Friday afternoon because his client couldn't afford to take off work. Later on Thanksgiving night, in an office that's otherwise deserted, he reviews a three-inch file to select documents to review with his grateful client on Friday morning.

It's Thanksgiving in Tennessee, and in Chattanooga a partner, mom and bar leader — we'll call her Marcy — stretches her back after serving the homeless at a nearby church. Sitting in the corner of the church basement is a briefcase with a product liability brief that needs to be finished and a program agenda for the National Conference of Bar Presidents for which she is responsible.

It's Thanksgiving in Tennessee.

Before dressing for the family lunch, an overworked district attorney — we'll call him Bobby — takes a call from a Lebanon police officer about a meth lab explosion on Wednesday night. He throws on some blue jeans and stumbles out the door, hoping he can get back in time to pitch football with his neighbor's boys before lunch. He knows as he approaches the crime scene that he'll be up early Friday morning meeting with officers and hitting the books when no one else is in the DA's office on College Street.

It's Thanksgiving in Tennessee. A young couple in Nashville fixes a hearty breakfast together as the sun rises. The husband heads out for a Thanksgiving morning hunting trip and the wife — we'll call her Jackie — reads a deposition to prepare for an injunction hearing on Monday. She stops on page 133 and reads TBA member benefit contracts to prepare for her TBA membership committee conference call on Tuesday.

It's Thanksgiving in Tennessee. In Columbia, a young lawyer — we'll call him Patrick — wakes up from a sorely needed afternoon nap and digs out of the back of his briefcase his training materials for the Wills for Heroes program. He's only written one or two wills before but he's always admired those who fight fires and crime and he wants to do what he can to help them get their affairs in order.

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It's Thanksgiving in Tennessee. In Jackson, a young father — we'll call him Jonathan — bathes and dresses his twins so his wife can volunteer at the nursing home on Thanksgiving morning. They have nothing special planned for lunch except some time to rest their bodies and their minds from their hectic life. He's invited down the street to watch a football game. He makes a cameo appearance but then excuses himself because he has a pro bono custody matter set on Monday. The stakes are too high for him to give less than 110 percent.

It's Thanksgiving in Tennessee. A sole practitioner — we'll call her Jane — pays a visit on her dear friend Anna Belle, to brighten her Thanksgiving afternoon. On the way home, she wrestles with the lock in her office on Main Street in Crossville and remembers that she owes a report to the House of

Delegates on the IOLTA program. Next, she prepares a response in opposition to a summary judgment motion that is set in 11 days. She leaves the dictation on her secretary's desk and flips the switch, leaving the office dark and quiet.

It's Thanksgiving in Tennessee. A young lawyer from Livingston — we'll call her Amy — works on a TLAW project to place more women lawyers on the bench. She then turns to a program scheduled for early December to help lawyers deal with burnout, depression and substance abuse. She doesn't quite finish her paperwork because she's due at the American Legion hall to help serve those who can't fix themselves a Thanksgiving meal.

It's Thanksgiving in Tennessee. In Alamo, a member of the Judicial Selection Commission — we'll call him Jim — reads five 100-page applications for a judicial vacancy in a jurisdiction in

which he'll never practice. He believes deeply in merit selection and knows its days could be numbered. He lays the next to last application aside and goes out back to check on the pork shoulder he's smoking. In the yard, his cousins are telling stories of football and fishing and hunting, but Jim pulls himself away to finish the work he holds dear.

It's Thanksgiving in Tennessee and a lucky husband — we'll call him Buck — delights in the young voices of his nieces and nephews and reflects on the memory of his parents. As Thanksgiving night slips away, he kisses his precious wife and gives thanks for the tens of thousands of Tennessee lawyers, scattered from Memphis to Mountain City, committing countless unselfish acts in service to their profession and their communities, leaving a proud legacy never to be forgotten. ^{ATA}

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