



## Meet David Lee



On a cold snowy morning, during the worst inclement weather Arkansas has experienced in years, 3L David Lee made time for building

snowmen with his family. The father of three describes himself as having “a curious mind.” Curiosity, intellect, compassion and a strong work ethic have resulted in a Renaissance man, firmly anchored in the realities of life, family and service to others. Lee is knowledgeable in a wide array of topics including the Bible, foreign languages, plumbing, landscaping, baking and now law.

Lee, a native of Fayetteville, earned Bachelor of Arts degrees in history and Spanish from Missouri State University in 2009. He planned to become a linguist and work in the field of Bible translation. That goal led him to enroll at the Dallas Theological Seminary where he earned a Master of Arts in cross-cultural ministry in 2015.

“I am in law school because I went to seminary,” Lee said. “Although I considered the pastorate, I never sensed it was my path. During seminary, I did an internship with a church and helped as an English tutor in a refugee community. Those experiences got my wheels turning about the law, though

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it was just a thought in the back of my mind.”

While in Dallas, Lee worked as the housing maintenance technician for the seminary’s two apartment buildings and was responsible for the upkeep of 250 apartments. The position gave him the opportunity to hone a multitude of practical skills and get to know the school’s international students. Seminary experiences, coupled with working alongside many immigrants in a stopgap landscaping career, led Lee to the School of Law and to his path as a lawyer.

“I saw needs that I wanted to be a part of addressing as a lawyer,” Lee said.

Lee was encouraged to enroll in law school by his wife of 11 years, Jenny, and he credits much of his success to her support. The couple moved from Dallas to Fayetteville where Lee worked in landscaping, and even as a baker, to support a growing family.



David Lee with pro bono volunteers



David and Jenny Lee with Thomas (age 7), Annie (age 9) and Ruthie (age 5).



David Lee with Annie, Thomas, and Ruthie.

“Eventually Jenny told me it was ‘time’ after we had considered law school for several years.”

Lee’s natural curiosity led him to participate in a wide array of law school experiences. He values learning black letter law and sees it as a means to better advise clients in a real world context and in an understandable way. As a 1L, ‘Criminal Law’ and ‘Civil Procedure’ were two of his favorite courses. He later enrolled in ‘Environmental Law’ because professor Sara Gosman challenged him in ‘Torts.’ Lee excelled in research and writing and earned a place on the 2020-21 Editorial Board of the *Journal of Food Law & Policy*. His article “Organic Waster Bans: Beyond the Compost Heap” won the 2020 Arent Fox/Dale Bumpers Excellence in Writing Award. Former Arkansas Gov. and U.S. Senator Dale Bumpers joined Arent Fox following his retirement from the senate in 1999. The award celebrates his legacy. Lee’s article will appear in an upcoming edition of the journal.

As his 3L year winds down, it appears passion for cross-cultural experiences and awareness of the struggles of others will shape Lee’s legal career. Last year, he enrolled in the School of Law’s Immigration Clinic. The knowledge he gained continues to impact his current position as coordinating student attorney for the clinic.

“My time as a student attorney in the Immigration Law Clinic with Professor Beth Zilberman as my supervisor has been some of the best training I have gotten,” Lee said. “She equips her students with the understanding they need to become proficient and eventually fluent in the labyrinth that is U.S. immigration law. She teaches her students how to approach, care for and advise clients and how to toggle between the law and the client’s story to forge effective arguments for that client before whichever administrative agency or court will be hearing their petition or case. Professor Zilberman has instilled me with confidence that I will be able to practice the law skillfully after I finish school regardless of the area of law I practice.”

“David’s work in the Clinic has made a tremendous impact on the lives of his clients,” said Beth Zilberman, assistant professor and director of the school’s Immigration Clinic. “He has represented numerous noncitizen clients in a wide range of complex immigration matters, many of whom have survived significant trauma in their lives. His deep empathy for his clients and professionalism allows him to develop the trust of his clients and be an effective advocate.”

Lee credits scholarship support for making law school possible. In addition to receiving general academic

scholarship support, Lee is the 2019-20 recipient of the Judge Robert H. Dudley Endowed Scholarship and the Washington County Bar Association Scholarship.

The expertise Lee has gained from the state’s bench and bar is also instrumental to his success. In 2019, he was an extern with the Office of the Federal Public Defender for the Western District of Arkansas and currently serves as an extern with the law department at Tyson Foods, Inc. During his 2L year, Lee clerked at Rogers-based Matthews, Campbell, Rhoads, McClure & Thompson, P.A. He credits the lawyers of the firm, particularly Ed McClure, with teaching him the “practicalities of practicing law.”

With graduation and the bar exam on the horizon, Lee looks forward to eventually having more time with his family. He will continue as the family baker and landscaper. He has accepted a position with the Herrera Law Group in Rogers. The firm specializes in personal injury, criminal, immigration and family law and offers services in English and Spanish. “Lee will make phenomenal strides wherever he goes,” as professor Gosman, who challenged Lee in Torts and Environmental law recently said of him, “I can’t wait to see what he does in his career.”