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“FAMILY” LAW

The Holman Law Firm

story by Heather W. Harp

I had seen the billboard throughout Pensacola touting the phrase, “FATHER’S RIGHTS.” I had also seen countless commercials of the Father and Son duo. I thought I knew exactly what to expect, but as I sat in the Holman’s conference room, waiting to meet them both for the first time, I must admit that I had many preconceived notions of walking into this “boys only” club. However, these assumptions were quickly put to rest within minutes of meeting Stephen T. and Justin T. Holman. Not only did I find these two men welcoming and easy to talk to, but I was surprised to hear them both open up so much about what makes them such a unique family firm. While Stephen made a special point to spare the more personal details, he reflected on his own personal experience within the family law court system, not only as an attorney, but as a father. He was quick to note that this personal experience has given him a unique perspective on what his clients go through during such a difficult time in their lives. I was also very impressed to hear Justin explain that the firm’s ambition to assist fathers is not nearly as one-sided as the phrase “FATHER’S RIGHTS” may suggest. As Stephen and Justin cited countless statistics of how growing up in a single-parent home can effect a child, I began to realize that these attorneys, that I once perceived as being strictly “pro-father” advocates, were simply on a mission to give BOTH parents an equal opportunity to be an involved parent in their child’s life.

As it turns out, I learned that an unmarried father in the State of Florida does not have the automatic right to be a part of his child’s life, unless a court order grants him that right. As a result, many times, a father is left feeling helpless and hopeless. This feeling of hopelessness has, too



often, lead to a father waiting months, and even years to fight for the opportunity just to be an involved parent. Meanwhile, not only is the father losing valuable time with his child, but it is ultimately the child who is being stripped of the right to have two parents actively involved in their lives. This is where Stephen and Justin take charge. The Holman's have made it their mission, as lawyers, and as Father and Son, to ensure, absent extenuating circumstances, that every capable and willing parent, whether man or woman, has the opportunity to be actively involved in their child's life.

As I left The Holman Law Firm and passed the same billboard on I-110 that I have passed countless times before, I noticed the phrase for the first time, highlighted in the center of the billboard, "THE BEST PARENT IS BOTH PARENTS". I finally understood. 📍



1940 W. Saint Mary Avenue, Pensacola, FL 32501
Phone: 850.435.6909