

ORANGE COUNTY

# Attorney JOURNAL

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Strategic Planning  
for Small Law Firms

Roy S. Ginsburg

Sometimes You Have to Say "NO"

Robert Denney

Protecting Clients  
from Unnecessary Liability  
When Using Social Media  
in Recruiting and Hiring

Todd R. Wulffson  
& Lindsay Ayers

Attorney of the Month

Brett R. Wishart

RESTORING HOPE

PROFESSIONAL PROFILE  
OF THE MONTH

Rick Kraemer  
30 Years of Personal and  
Professional Accomplishments  
Which All Began with a Camera

PROFESSIONAL PROFILE OF THE MONTH

DTI Global  
Greg Mahoney Dispels the Myths That  
All Litigation Support Services are the same

Don't Lose Your Shirt When Raising Your Fees

Frederick J. Esposito, Jr.

# RESTORING HOPE

*Brett R. Wishart helps individuals to move through adjustments in their families with compassion, clear expectations, civility in practice and years of expertise focusing exclusively on family law*

by Jennifer Hadley

“I didn’t fall into the practice of family law because that’s what came in my door. I opened my door and hung out my shingle to do this very job. I attended law school knowing that family law was all that I would ever practice,” says Brett Wishart, Founder of The Law Offices of Brett R. Wishart in Irvine, CA.

“Many attorneys have a natural aversion to family law cases because they can be so emotionally charged. They do not want to get involved in the pain and heartache associated with the break-up of family relationships, and I understand that,” he adds. However, Wishart is precisely the type of attorney who is well equipped for this type of work. In fact, serving others—particularly when they are at their lowest—has been his goal not only as an attorney, but in all aspects of his life.

“As a family law attorney, I help individuals who are going through some of life’s most difficult challenges. I try to ease burdens, to calm fears and to restore hope by providing my clients with good advice, a clear understanding of what they can expect of me, and of the legal process they are going through. I help them make decisions that have a lasting impact on their families and their children. While I can’t save their marriages, or restore to them what they once had, I can guide them through the legal process so that they can move on with their lives,” he says.

## FAMILY FOUNDATION

“From as early as I can remember my parents ingrained in me a desire to attend college and become a professional of some kind. As I grew older, my father would occasionally invite me to go to court with him,” he says of his father, Barry J. Wishart Esq., who began practicing family law in Orange County in 1981. “I watched him work with others, and saw how he helped his clients. I admired him greatly and wanted to do what he did. As it turned out, he wanted me to come work with him. Going to law school therefore seemed like the perfect fit for me,” Wishart recalls.

Born and raised in Orange County, Wishart served a two-year mission trip for his church in Boston before attending Brigham Young University for his undergraduate degree. He also married his wife Lisa, and secured a substantial scholarship to attend Western State University College of Law, in Fullerton, California. Before attending law school, he’d also become a father.

“When I started law school, Lisa and I had been married for two years and we had three children—our first son Tanner, and our twins Brendon and Conner. My law classes began just a few weeks after the twins were born. Lisa worked full-time as an emergency room nurse at St. Joseph’s hospital, and absolutely



The business team, from left to right: Patty Barragan, Steve Amata, Me, David N. Booth, Esq., and Holly Quintana  
Not pictured, Peggy Stewart.



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supported our family. Most law students aren't married, and even fewer are parents," Wishart says.

Continuing, he recalls, "While most parents know the joys, challenges and adjustments that come with bringing home a new baby, few families are fortunate enough to have 3 little ones at the same time. Likewise, only those who have attended law school are familiar with the many pressures and demands imposed on students. In many respects, law school and parenthood require similar sacrifices. I learned that the pattern for success for both was the same: hard work, diligence and patience."

"In many ways I was more fortunate than many of my peers as I had a loving and supportive spouse and a young family that provided me with all of the motivation I needed to keep going. I could not fail, nor could I settle for mediocrity. In reality, the only difference between me and my fellow students was that I went on more dates, I changed diapers in between briefing cases, and often held a baby in my arms with a bottle as I studied. I wouldn't change a thing if I had to do it again," he says with a smile.

After his first semester, Wishart began working part-time for his father, who had practiced family law exclusively at his firm in Brea, The Law Offices of Wishart & Garland. "I followed my dad everywhere, and watched what he did. I had the good fortune to learn from him what they don't teach you in law school, which is how to practice law. I participated in numerous client interviews, depositions, trials and law and motion hearings. By the time I had graduated and passed the

Bar, I had been to nearly every court house in Orange, Los Angeles, San Bernardino and Riverside Counties. I knew the family law judicial officers as well as many of the experienced family law practitioners," Wishart says.

As such, as soon as Wishart was sworn in, he was very busy. "Many of the cases I had worked on in law school became my cases and I took them over. I inherited a substantial caseload almost instantly and was immediately immersed in trial work," he says of the early years of his career.

## COMPASSION FOR CLIENTS, CIVILITY IN PRACTICE

Wishart's passion for helping those going through family turmoil is, frankly, palpable. "In my opinion, there is no more important area of the law than family law. It concerns areas and issues that matter most in life. Much of the practice of law deals with paperwork. Family law deals with people and their children, not just paper. It also requires knowledge of many other areas of the law, ranging from criminal, tax, real estate, bankruptcy, estate planning, contracts, etc.," Wishart says.

"I love practicing family law because I get to work with many different people who are really struggling and in need of help. I treat them with kindness, patience and love. I want the best for them and their children. I help to restore hope," he says. To that end, he adds, "I try to be professional, calm and kind. My clients are already emotionally worked up. If I do not stay

composed and level-headed, I will not be of much use to them.”

In addition to helping his clients directly, Wishart seeks to serve as a resource to the legal community as a whole. By way of example, in 2006, just one year after being admitted to the Bar, Wishart was elected and appointed to the Executive Committee of the Orange County Bar Association’s Family Law Section. He was the only member that had practiced for less than five years at that time, and consequently he represented the young family lawyers of the Bar. Wishart served in that position until 2009. By 2013, he had also been appointed as a member of the Orange County Standing Committee of the State Bar Family Law Section Executive Committee (FLEXCOMM) where he remains a member today.

Wishart also seeks to help others through volunteering his time as an expert for the Divorce Support Center ([divorcesupportcenter.org](http://divorcesupportcenter.org)), a non-profit organization that helps individuals and families in crisis. Wishart also dedicates time to answering various questions posed on the legal website Avvo, where he is not only a top contributor, but has been awarded the Client’s Choice Award 2013-2015, and maintains a rating of 10.0 Superb. Similarly, Wishart contributes articles on the subject of family law to the website LaFamily.com.

Wishart’s sincere desire to do what is in his clients’ best interests lends itself well to working in what he calls an overwhelmingly “friendly” group of fellow family law attorneys in Orange County. “It only helps our clients when the attorneys get along. We can both save our clients money and it is much easier to do our jobs

as attorneys when we are civil with our opposing counsel,” he says.

In fact, many attorneys who have served as opposing counsel have publicly acknowledged Wishart’s strengths in this arena by endorsing him on Avvo. Attorney Gerald Anthony Maggio writes: “I have been the opposing counsel on cases with Brett Wishart and his firm and I have found he and his firm to be very prepared, professional and knowledgeable. Moreover, he is very reputable and not underhanded in ways that end up causing his clients (or mine) to spend unnecessary legal fees. He has the ability to both advocate for his client’s interests and still work reasonably with opposing counsel.”

Similarly, Attorney Shakeb Ahmad Razai writes, “I had the pleasure of working with Brett in the past on a somewhat highly emotional case (from the clients’ perspectives). He was very reasonable, ethical and just a great person to work with. I look forward to working with him in the future. He is always prepared, highly respected, and well educated in the family law arena.”

## NEW BRANCH ON FAMILY LAW TREE

After several years working with his father and his brother, Ben, who ultimately joined the family firm Wishart and Associates, LLP, Wishart became the senior trial attorney for the firm. He personally tried hundreds of contested cases involving a variety of complex family law matters. A few years later, he took over as Managing Partner, where he was responsible for training and supervising several other associate attorneys and legal assistants.

The Wishart family. Front row from left to right: Brendon (age 13), Courtney (age 5), Alyssa (age 3), Joshua (age 2), Conner (age 13) and Kaitlyn (age 11). Back row from left to right: Tanner (age 14), Brett, Lisa and Micah (age 8).



But by 2014, Wishart says that the time was finally right to fulfill his longstanding desire to launch his own firm, and he did so by opening his practice in Irvine. That same year he was named one of Orange County's Top Attorneys by *OC Metro*. He was also named one of the "10 Best Attorneys" in California by the *America Institute of Family Law Attorneys* in the area of client satisfaction 2014-2015.

Yet Wishart is quick to point out that none of his successes would have been possible without the support of his own family. "My parents really guided me, and gave me a great opportunity. And my wife Lisa deserves so much credit. She has believed in me, and put up with me throughout this whole adventure," Wishart says. He also says that his faith has everything to do with his desire to help others. "We are very involved and active in our church. Together Lisa and I teach a marriage and family course each Sunday. I really want to help and serve my fellows however I can," he says.

Wishart is also dedicated to working as hard for his own family as he is for his clients. "Outside of work, my time is largely devoted to my children, who are great students and are involved in various extra-curricular activities. I'm also the second of five children, and family means so much to me."

After a decade of exclusive practice in the field of family law, Wishart's satisfied clients have come from virtually every walk of life. Whether they are self-made millionaire business men and women, celebrities, professional athletes, physicians, fellow attorneys, marriage and family therapists, or stay-at-home parents, Wishart says that no matter their unique circumstances, they all have one underlying trait in common.

"They all have an adjustment in their family relationships that they need guidance on. Some are preparing for marriage, while others are going through a divorce, legal separation, or annulment. They have children and are in need of child custody or visitation orders, or need child or spousal support. Some have addiction issues, or domestic violence has occurred and restraining orders are necessary. All of them are seeking help to improve their quality of life and to have a measure of peace and certainty in their family relationships. I work hard to be a conduit for them to achieve that." ■

#### Contact:

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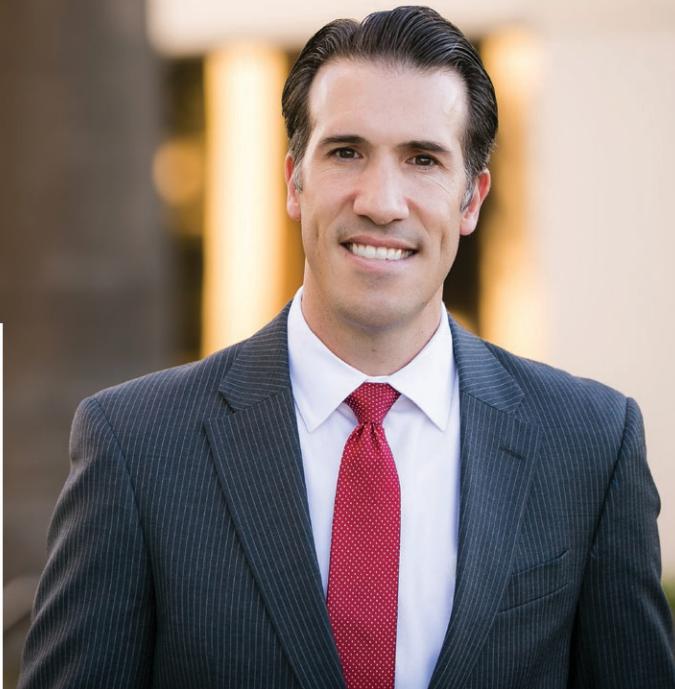
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## EXPERIENCE



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### » EDUCATION

- Graduated from Brigham Young University with a Bachelor of Arts Degree. Major: History, Minor: English—2000
- Graduated from Western State University College of Law with a Juris Doctor Degree and award for "Scholarly Merit:" 2004

### » EXPERIENCE

- Elected and appointed to the Executive Committee of the Orange County Bar Association's Family Law Section: 2006—2009.
- Appointed as a member of the State Bar Family Law Section Executive Committee (FLEXCOMM), Orange County Standing Committee: 2013—Present
- Authored several articles on the subject of family law which have been published at [lafamily.com](http://lafamily.com), an online magazine or e-zine.
- Featured "Expert" and volunteer at the "Divorce Support Center" ([divorcesupportcenter.org](http://divorcesupportcenter.org)), a non-profit organization that helps individuals and families in crisis.

### » AWARDS

- Orange County's "Top Attorneys" featured in the September edition: 2014
- Named as one of "10 Best" Attorneys in California by the American Institute of Family Law Attorneys in the area of "Client Satisfaction:" 2014—2015
- Avvo.com Rating: 10.0 Excellent: 2013, Superb: 2014-2015
- Client Choice Award 2013-2015
- Client Distinction Award 2015