

NOVEMBER 2019

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WEDNESDAY
NOVEMBER 4

LIFE OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM: DICKINSON LAW STUDENTS PRACTICE SKILLS WHILE GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY

November 4, 2015 — Penn State’s Dickinson Law students provided pro bono services to those who give their lives to serve the community. On Saturday, October 31, law students volunteered their time to create end-of-life documents for first responders and their families at the Cumberland County 911 Center in Carlisle as part of a Wills for Heroes event.

Wills for Heroes is a national nonprofit organization that provides free end-of-life documents, including wills, living wills and powers of attorney, to police officers, firefighters, paramedics and other first responders.

Sixteen Dickinson Law students and three recent Dickinson Law alumni joined students from Widener University School of Law, attorneys, notary publics and other community members to draft and process about 65 sets of documents in five hours for Cumberland County first responders. The documents can typically cost several hundred dollars to create.



“First responders who attend the event leave with end-of-life documents including a will, living will, and power of attorney if desired, all of which are now ready and available when necessary,” said Dickinson Law Professor Megan Riesmeyer, who is also the director of the community law clinic.

The law students who participated observed legal work in action, engaged with clients, interacted with licensed attorneys, and saw how end-of-life documents come to fruition.

“They are learning the benefit of goodwill and volunteerism outside of the classroom, and that is a huge lesson to learn in law school where they are very focused on their studies,” noted Riesmeyer.

Second-year law student and Public Interest Law Fund Service Chair Laura Lopez participated for the first time. She served as a volunteer recruiter, and reached out to the school community to secure volunteers to work one-on-one with attorneys and serve as witnesses.

“I enjoyed watching the students interact with first responders,” said Lopez. “Their engagement at Wills for Heroes affirms that there is a real need for extending pro bono services—in all areas of law—and that both students and attorneys are willing meet the community’s needs.”

Dickinson Law students have participated in seven Wills for Heroes events over the last six years. This year’s event was supported by a partnership of the Cumberland County Bar Association, Dickinson Law, the Cumberland County Department of Public Safety, and the Cumberland County Register of Wills.