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September 2025 Special Needs News

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"The Wilson Family Legacy"

I am a third-generation lawyer. My grandfather William S Wilson, my name's sake, attended Illinois Wesleyan undergraduate, and Illinois Wesleyan law school (The college had a law school back then.) As an undergraduate he was a national founder of the Tau Kappa Epsilon (TKE) in 1909. He started his law career as an assistant prosecutor of Livingston County and on to practice law in a private firm in Pontiac, Illinois. He joined the law firm of Kirkland and Ellis in Chicago in the 1920s where he was to be a senior partner concentrating in litigation and eminent domain. He was the head attorney for the Attorney General in condemning land for the Tollway system in the western suburbs.

My dad James T Wilson was born in 1920 and attended Lyons Township High School in 1938 as did his siblings, his wife, Mary Anne (1943), his kids and one of his grandchildren, Glenn. Dad attended Kenyon College and Northwestern University School of Law. After law school he worked for Lakeshore Bank and Washington National Insurance Company. In the early 60s Dad started his own and established The law Office of James T Wilson located above the old post office in Western Springs, Illinois and after a few years of practicing solo, he help established the law firm of Eiserman, Sheen, Wilson, Sheen and Graham in Lagrange Illinois. They were ahead of their time. The firm consisted of two Catholics, the Sheen brothers, both nephews of the popular Fulton J, Sheen, one of the Jewish faith, Abe Eiserman and a woman Mary Graham. Dad was active and President of the Chamber of Commerce and the Lyons Township Regular Republican Organization and a member of the District 101 Board of Education.

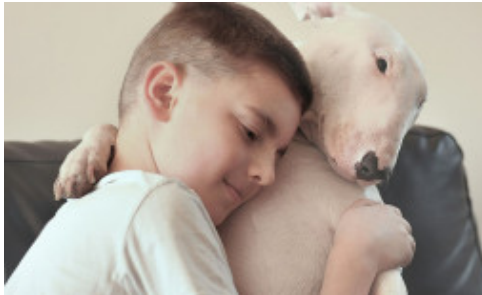
Finally, after the eight-year plan of undergraduate school and Northwestern School of Law, In 1983 joined my dad in the practice of law in LaGrange. Dad was practicing early day elder law assisting many older folks in estate planning, nursing home issues and estate administration. Meanwhile I was taking anything that came in the door whether it was divorce, defending drug dealers, DUIs, real estate and corporate issues and anything else I could get my hands on. Dad being the experienced sage always stated I must specialize in only a few areas of the law since the law had been too complicated to practice at a high level in my myriad areas of the practice. Listening to Dad, I morphed into being an estate planner and elder law attorney. I also learned Special Needs planning through being a guardian for a person with a disability that I had met at the Western Springs pool when I was 12 years old. Phil Myers was six years ahead of me and if we fast forward several years, his parents, thinking ahead asked me to be his guardian. and so in the early 90s, I considered and had to rapidly learn Special Needs law to fully execute my duties as guardian. He is seventy-six years old now and still rides his bike from LaGrange to Oak Park and back. He is a phenomenal friend. I always say I learn more about life from him rather than vice versa.



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