



Community and Economic Development in North Carolina and Beyond Blog: Law Students Draft Wills for Low-Income Residents in Kinston

By CED Program Interns & Students

Article: <https://ced.sog.unc.edu/law-students-draft-wills-for-low-income-residents-in-kinston/>

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On March 6, 2012, twenty UNC Law students volunteered at the Kinston Business Enterprise Center to write wills and advanced directive documents for low-income residents of Lenoir County. This was the second consecutive year that students traveled to Kinston, bringing the total number of clients served in Lenoir County to forty-three and the total number of documents to over 130. The clinic was held during the law students' spring break, and is also co-sponsored by Legal Aid of North Carolina and the UNC Center for Civil Rights.

Students reflections on the trip are available here. For example, one second year law student wrote:

I greatly enjoyed the opportunity to join other UNC Law students in eastern NC for the Pro Bono wills trip. It provided the chance to apply the knowledge I have learned in my first two years and to see firsthand why attorneys should open themselves up to serve others who are unable to afford quality legal services. There are real problems to be addressed.

Attorneys need to realize that even their most basic skills are a scarce resource for those in the bottom income levels. They have the chance to spend a few hours helping someone work through a plan for devising his/her estate in a way that is best for their client's particular family and social context. They have the chance to treat with dignity those clients who may not be able to afford the typical legal fees, choosing to give their best, even if not for pay. That chance is an honor.

Beyond drafting wills, power of attorney, health care power of attorney, and living will documents, students went on a walking tour of Lincoln Heights, a low-wealth community just outside of Roanoke Rapids, with Ms. Florine Bell, a prominent civil rights advocate in the community. Evan Lewis spoke to students about the effects of natural disasters on the legal systems in eastern North Carolina, both past and present. Students were also able to enjoy several events during the day in Kinston, including sampling King's Bar-B-Que via a generous donation from Adrian King and Rob Bizzell of Kinston.

Students met with UNC Law Alum Jimbo Perry, who shared his views on the importance of public service in a legal career, regardless of whether one takes a position in public service law. Perry opened up his family farm for a dinner and reflection session for the students in the evening, and students met numerous other practicing attorneys in Kinston, as well as Superior Court Judge Paul Jones.



The students expressed a great interest in returning to Lenoir County and continuing their service for years to come. Before departing Kinston, students visited Mr. Harvey Beech's law office (background here), as well as the Old Well replica that was built to honor him. Students were provided a brief history of Mr. Beech's work to integrate the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and its law school.

