



## Lawyer adopts family-friendly practice

**GEORGANN YARA**  
SPECIAL TO THE ABG

Not many lawyers have stories about leaving a courtroom covered in sparkles. But adoption attorney Kathryn A. Pidgeon is thrilled that she does.

It was a foster adoption case. The little girls being adopted wore sparkly dresses and the glitter came off, dusted

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the chairs and ended up on everyone's clothing. When Pidgeon apologized to the judge, he smiled and said something to the effect of, "It's all in a day's work of building families."

Pidgeon excitedly recalled that moment, which underscores why she has dedicated the last 25 years to this special field of law.

"Finalizing an adoption for a foster child is one of the most exciting privileges I've had. To see the magic of it all

**Kathryn A. Pidgeon, PC**

**Where:** 4742 N. 24th St. Suite 300, Phoenix

**Employees:** Five

**Interesting stat:** Of the forms of adoption pursued by families in the U.S., 38 percent is private domestic adoption, 37 percent foster care and 25 percent international, according to adoption agency Angel Adoption, Inc.

**Details:** 602 522-8700, adoptaz.com.

## Lawyer

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come together..." said Pidgeon, who started the Phoenix firm that bears her name in 1991 CQ.

It all started when Pidgeon's doctor referred her to the pregnant young girl who gave birth to the boy – whose photo is still affixed to her office wall – who was her first adoption case. Decades later, Pidgeon exudes the enthusiasm of a rookie when talking about helping children find their forever families.

"Seeing the smiles and how happy they are... to know you were a small part of that is really amazing," she said. "To see a family that's created, it's an emotion that you can't put into words."

Pidgeon said she has handled more than 2,500 adoptions via private and foster adoption methods. In 2015, Pidgeon did 213 adoptions and along with her associate, Tiffany Hill, the firm averages 200 a year.

When Pidgeon started her practice,

computers and cell phones weren't part of the workplace. Adoption law as a specialty was little-known. In its early years, if the firm finalized 25-50 adoptions, it was considered a stellar year.

Word-of-mouth and referrals generate clientele. Birth mothers seek Pidgeon on the advice of their physicians or relatives or friends who have gotten pregnant and chose adoption. Adoptive parents come to Pidgeon when they wish to add to their family. The firm also handles relative and step-parent adoption.

According to her firm's website, costs relating to a typical in-state private adoption range from \$7,000 to \$17,000.

Pidgeon has become a crucial force in the adoption arena as a fellow of the American Academy of Adoption Attorneys, involvement with the annual Maricopa County Adoption Day, which takes place in November, and being instrumental in the formation of the nonprofit Maricopa County National Adoption Day Foundation. She is the recipient of the 2004 Angel in Adoption Award, a Congressional honor given for exceptional efforts.

When Pidgeon started, there were



CHARLIE KAUO/THE REPUBLIC  
Associate attorney Tiffany Hill from Scottsdale and founder and principle attorney Kathryn Pidgeon from Paradise Valley pose for a portrait in Pidgeon's law firm.

6,000 kids in foster care. Today, there are 19,000, she said.

Kris Jacober, executive director for the Arizona Friends of Foster Children Foundation, said Pidgeon's experience, knowledge and passion for connecting adoptive children with their families has been valuable to those she has assisted.

"Kathy participates at a point where their lives are changing and a families are being made and it's just awesome. It's magical," Jacober said. "I don't think

you can be successful in this work without being able to connect with kids and families who are at a really vulnerable time in their life without this kind of passion and knowledge."

Maxine Arrington's family is eight members stronger thanks to Pidgeon's efforts over the last nine years. The Mesa mom and husband, Mathew, parent eight adopted children ages 9-14, in addition to their 18-year-old biological son.

After having their son, the Arringtons were unable to have more children. They didn't want to raise an only child so they would foster 50 kids over the years. When they sought their first adoption in 2007, Pidgeon's name was the first mentioned by many. They fell in love with her immediately and now consider Pidgeon part of their family.

"I've never met anyone at all like Kathy who truly puts their heart 100 percent into children. She's like a magnet. Kids love her and she loves them," Arrington said.

A native of Queens, N.Y., Pidgeon graduated from the University of Miami School of Law and moved to Arizona the day after graduating.