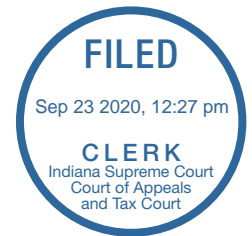


In the Indiana Supreme Court

Permanent Authorization to Broadcast
Uncontested Adoption Proceedings

Supreme Court Case No.
20S-MS-564



Order

In November, courts across the country celebrate adoptions. Indiana trial courts are part of that proud tradition by joining in the public celebration of National Adoption Day. With hopeful faces of families being united filling courthouses across the state, judges often refer to Adoption Day celebrations as “the happiest day in court.”

Rule 2.17 of the Indiana Code of Judicial Conduct requires judges to prohibit broadcasting, televising, recording, or taking photographs in the courtroom and areas immediately adjacent during court sessions or recesses. The rule, however, allows for an exception with Supreme Court approval.

Since 2012, this Court has authorized video and audio coverage of certain uncontested adoptions on or near National Adoption Day. The official court proceedings are celebrations—with efforts from Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), Department of Child Services (DCS), the Children’s Bureau, and the Indiana Heart Gallery to make the day memorable for the community’s newest families. Media and families capture and share videos and photographs of the official court proceeding, and each year the celebrations have grown. Over the past eight years, over 1,300 children have been a part of a proceeding where the newly minted family could take and share pictures and video of the joyous event. The November occasions raise awareness about the urgent need for loving families to adopt children in foster care.

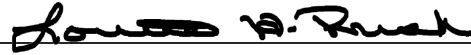
This Court recognizes that the ability to showcase Indiana children uniting with their permanent families can extend beyond the month of November. Also, given the health and safety measures implemented to combat COVID-19, we must ensure that families can socially distance, while also encouraging the community to celebrate, welcome, and congratulate children and their families.

Therefore, being duly advised, the Court **ORDERS** as follows, effective **until further order of the Court**:

1. All Indiana trial courts are authorized, at their discretion, to allow year-round still photography, video, and audio coverage of uncontested adoption proceedings, whether in-person or remote. Families may use, share, and distribute the photographs, video, and audio; and the media may use the same for news purposes.
2. Courts shall secure the required consent as mandated by Rule 2.17(3)(b) of the Indiana Code of Judicial Conduct.

3. Courts shall comply with the provisions of Indiana Code section 31-19-19-1, including, but not limited to, maintaining the confidentiality requirements for adoption histories and other adoption records.

Done at Indianapolis, Indiana, on 9/23/2020.



Loretta H. Rush
Chief Justice of Indiana