Young Lawyers Begin the Campaign Year at Ecotrust Party

Young lawyers gathered to launch the 2007 Annual Campaign September 11 on the terrace of the Ecotrust Building in northwest Portland. Associates and legal aid lawyers met and talked with the newest crop of young lawyers and law students about the work of legal aid and the importance of the Campaign for Equal Justice.

The reception, generously sponsored by the court reporting firm Beovich Walter and Friend Associates, aimed to energize young leaders in the legal community. Co-chair Amy Edwards thanked the gathering and said, “I know some of you out here are longtime supporters of the Campaign and some of you are brand new to it, but I want to encourage you all to get involved.”

Portland Litigators Train New Legal Aid Lawyers

Portland lawyer Bill Crow, a member of the Access to Justice Committee of the American College of Trial Lawyers, helped recruit colleagues for legal aid’s Trial Advocacy Training, which took place October 24th through the 26th. Twenty new legal aid lawyers with less than three years of trial experience attended. Tom Matsuda, Executive Director of Legal Aid Services of Oregon said, “The list of trainers read like a Who’s Who of Portland’s great trial lawyers.” The trainers included Dave Markowitz, Dave Miller, George Kirklin, Ken Renner, Paul Duden, Peter Glade, Rich Busse, Paul Fortino, Robert Stoll, Steve English, Elden Rosenthal, Garry Kahn, and Dan Skerritt.

The Campaign for Equal Justice

The Campaign for Equal Justice was established in 1991 and works to support statewide legal aid programs. Our mission is to champion access to justice for low-income Oregonians through education and by working to increase funding for legal aid through grants, foundation support, state and federal support, and direct fundraising from private lawyers. The Oregon legal community has responded generously, helping the Campaign to raise more than $13,000,000 over the last sixteen years. Despite the tremendous efforts of our volunteers and contributors, we are still meeting less than 20% of legal needs of the poor in Oregon. With your help we can do better than 20%!

• When you contribute to the Campaign, you are making an investment in our system of justice. It is also an investment in the lives of our clients.
• The Campaign’s efforts effectively double the value of your contribution by working for increases in federal and state funding, obtaining grants from government and private foundations, and operating an endowment to secure the future of legal aid.
• The Campaign educates lawyers, legislators and the public about the legal needs of the poor and what they can do to help legal aid.

We Could Use …
• A 6’ round table
• A letter folding machine
• A plain, safe, reliable used car for LASO’s Farmworker Program

Legal Aid Offices in Oregon

Where We Are

Legal Aid Services of Oregon
– Albany, Bend, Eugene, Hillsboro, Klamath Falls, Independence, McMinnville, Newport
Oregon City, Pendleton, Portland, Salem
St. Helens, Roseburg, Woodburn
Center for NonProfit Legal Services – Medford

Lane County Legal Aid & Advocacy Center – Eugene
Oregon Law Center – Coos Bay, Grants Pass, Ontario, Portland, Salem, Woodburn
Oregon Advocacy Center – Statewide
A New Legal Aid Office for Klamath and Lake Counties

The new legal team in Klamath Falls is making up for lost time by bringing much-needed legal assistance to this isolated area of south central Oregon. When officials gathered last May to celebrate the reopening of the Klamath Falls office of Legal Aid Services of Oregon, the LASO Board and administration experienced the pleasure of realizing a long-held goal—to restore service to this significantly underserved area of the state.

It takes a long time to get to Klamath Falls or Lakeview from other cities and in fact quite a long time to get from Klamath Falls to Lakeview. After the Klamath Falls office was closed in 1996 due to federal funding cuts, the nearest offices were in Bend and Medford. While staff time and effort have been devoted to this area in recent years by telephone hotlines and a lawyer traveling from Bend, the new local office will have the capacity to provide direct and timely representation in a way that is not possible at a distance.

Regional Director and attorney Marla Cummins, new attorney Staci Palin and office manager Tiffany Walton are working to assess community priorities while responding to a considerable pent-up demand for legal services in critical areas, such as family law and housing. Between July and early September, they took in 130 requests for legal help. When a fourth member, an intake specialist, completes the team, their aim is to assist 1,000 clients per year.

One More Family is Getting a Fresh Start

Karri thought she might lose custody of her children, Austin and Colleen. Although she had obtained a divorce from her abusive husband more than two years ago, he continued to visit the children, and those visits sometimes ended in violence against Karri. In an odd twist, Karri’s ex-husband accused her of physically attacking him. He filed for a restraining order and asked for full custody of Austin and Colleen.

Sharon Brown, a legal aid lawyer in Hillsboro, agreed to represent Karri at the restraining order hearing. Brown’s questioning at the hearing established that the ex-husband had no grounds for a restraining order and revealed facts that helped the District Attorney successfully prosecute him on criminal assault charges against Karri. He is now serving a two year prison sentence. Washington County District Attorney Gina Skinner said, “When a domestic violence victim goes into a civil hearing we can’t do anything to help them. I’m really glad legal aid is there to help.”

With the legal struggles behind her, Karri has now joined her children where they spent the summer with relatives. Karri has an offer of employment in her new location and is making a fresh start with her family.

Three Young Boys Find A Secure Home

Enrique, 12, Roberto, 11, and Gabriel, 7 months, needed caregivers and their grandparents, Jose and Alba, were willing to take them to their home in Honduras. The boys’ mother died shortly after Gabriel was born and their father was unable to care for them. Everyone agreed that the grandparents could give them the best chance for a secure future. Jose and Alba had traveled to Oregon to help with the children, but there were a number of complex legal barriers to getting the children to Honduras with their grandparents.

Since 1991 with the help of the Oregon Law Center, the law firm of Schwabe Williamson & Wyatt, has organized a biweekly pro bono law clinic in their offices that serves the low income and underserved area of the state.

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Fall 2007

Leaders celebrate the reopening of the Klamath Falls office: Attorney General Hardy Myers, Chief Justice Paul DeMuniz; Marla Cummins, Director of the Klamath Falls office; Tom Matsuda, Executive Director of Legal Aid Services of Oregon; Rick Yugler, incoming President of the Oregon State Bar; and Lisa LeSage, President of the Oregon Law Foundation.

Karri Layton with pictures of her children.

Judge Cameron Wogan welcomes guests to the reopening reception sponsored by Sterling Savings Bank.

Circuit Court Administrator Val Paulson signaled the project’s completion by filling in the second eye of a ‘Daruma’, a Japanese folk art tradition.

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NEW DIRECTOR FOR LANE COUNTY LASO
Erika Nordhaus has been appointed as the Regional Director for Lane County Legal Aid Services of Oregon to fill the position left by Laurence Hamblen who stepped down after 21 years of service. Erika was previously at the Albany LASO office for 3 years. She is a graduate of Syracuse College of Law, Syracuse, NY. “I’m glad to have the opportunity to work with the skilled and talented staff and to be a part of the Lane County community.”

ED HARNDEN RECEIVES PROFESSIONALISM AWARD
CEJ Board Chair Ed Harnden is the 2007 recipient of the Edwin J. Peterson Professionalism Award by the Joint Bench-Bar Commission on Professionalism.

NELSON, WADA, AND LE SAGE HONORED BY BAR
with the President’s Public Service Award. Hon. Adrienne Nelson, Mark Wada and Lisa LeSage are past and current presidents of the Oregon Law Foundation and have worked tirelessly with Oregon bankers to increase interest rates on IOLTA accounts. The interest is distributed by OLF to benefit public interest projects, including legal aid.

LARRY Rew HONORED FOR PRO BONO SERVICE
Pendleton lawyer Larry Rew, was honored with a 2007 Regional Oregon Governor’s Volunteer Award in Salem this September. Larry Rew has been a friend and supporter of the Campaign for Equal Justice and Pendleton legal aid for many years and regularly provides pro bono legal assistance and advice to clients in the region. This award, given by the State Commission for Voluntary Action and Service, “recognizes volunteers…that have demonstrated dedication, commitment, and determination in promoting and supporting volunteerism…and have worked to strengthen communities and improve the quality of life for Oregon residents through service.”

OCADSV RECOGNIZES WOMENS’ ADVOCATES
The Oregon Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence (OCADSV) awarded Oregon Law Center attorneys Robin Selig and Sybil Hebb, along with Denise Washington, former OCADSV director, now executive director of Colorado Coalition Against Domestic Violence, the Midori Hamilton Award. The award is “in recognition of their commitment, dedication, and leadership in service to women and children who have experienced violence in their lives and programs that provide support and advocacy to survivors.”

NEW STAFF ATTORNEYS: WHY I CHOSE TO BECOME A LEGAL AID LAWYER
RYAN FRIEBELE
HILLSBORO
As an individual who grew up in poverty, I understand how challenging it can be to see the light at the end of the tunnel. As a tax advocate, I can help low-income taxpayers towards financial security.

COURTNEY CROWE
OREGON CITY
I support LASO’s commitment to offering legal services to those who would not otherwise have access to them and I have the desire to serve diverse, low-income populations. There is never a dull moment. I love my job.

YESENIA GUTIERREZ
HILLSBORO
I chose to work for Legal Aid for selfish reasons. My work is full of glimpses of a variety of cultures, personalities, and experiences. Each time a client opens a part of their lives to me, I am changed.

STACI PALIN
KLAMATH FALLS
I grew up in an environment where a job was supposed to be more than a paycheck. I wanted to be intellectually challenged and also go home every night knowing that I had helped someone.

SARAH RADCLIFFE
PORTLAND
I chose to become a legal aid lawyer based on my experience working with people who, due to poverty, were trampled upon by those with more power and lacked the tools and resources to access justice.

MARY ROSS
ONTARIO
For me, working for legal aid is the best combination of using my legal skills and making a difference in people’s lives.

RECORD ATTENDANCE AT MARION COUNTY CAMPAIGN LUNCHEON
The annual Marion County Campaign for Equal Justice luncheon sponsored by Pioneer Trust Bank was held on October 11, 2007 at the Mission Mill. Chief Justice Paul DeMuniz delivered keynote remarks to more than 200 attendees. Brena Moyer Lopez, a Salem legal aid lawyer, also addressed the crowd. She told them about the most difficult part of her job—sending rejection letters to low-income Oregonians who have legitimate legal needs but who will not receive services due to a lack of resources in the legal aid office. Eric Lindauer followed up with a challenge to Marion county lawyers to help make that stack of rejection letters shrink. They answered the call by raising a record $41,000, nearly doubling the amount raised last year.

The Marion County Bar Association led the charge, donating a record $5100. When asked why the Marion County Bar Association supports the Campaign for Equal Justice, Todd McCann, President of the bar association said, “As lawyers we have a professional duty to assure that all people have access to justice.” This year’s fundraising goal for Marion County is $65,000 and, thanks to Salem area lawyers, we are well on our way!
LAF-OFF Back by Popular Demand

Laf-Off, a Legal Aid Fundraiser Originated by Fios and Friends, took the stage October 26th at McMenamin’s Mission Theater. Kerry Tymchuk graciously returned for his third time as Master of Ceremonies. Judges awarded the coveted rubber chicken awards as follows: in a split decision, Hon Jacob Tanzer and David Aman, Tonkon Torp, took the first show; and Lisa Ludwig, Attorney at Law, swept the second. By the time the lights went down, participants had given their all for legal aid programs in Oregon.

Contestants faced two panels of distinguished judges including Supreme Court Justice Thomas Balmer; Court of Appeals Judge Robert Wollheim; Multnomah Circuit Court Judges Julie Frantz and Adrienne Nelson; United States District Court Judge James Redden; and Craig Wessel, publisher of the Portland Business Journal.

Contestants included Sonia Montalbano, Elliot Ostrander & Preston; Greg Levinson, Elzinga & Associates; Mike Porter, Miller Nash; and Jeremy Aliason, of the Native American Project of Legal Services. Fios, Inc., electronic discovery service providers and the Multnomah Bar Association generously sponsored the event.

Dream Team Honored by MBA

The Multnomah Bar Association’s Pro Bono Award of Merit was presented to seven attorneys often called the ‘Dream Team’ for their distinguished credentials and devotion to the cause of legal services. The team includes Steve Walters, formerly of Stoel Rives, now of Allen Matkins, San Francisco; Michael Hallinan and Beverly Pearson of Stoel Rives; Don Marmaduke, Scott Seidman and Anna Sortun of Tonkon Torp; and Kent Thurber of Davis Wright Tremaine.

The team has worked since late 2005 on a lawsuit that challenges the restrictions the federal government places on legal aid programs that receive funding from the Legal Services Corporation (LSC). Don Marmaduke said in a recent speech, “The litigation challenges a seriously flawed, federally funded legal services delivery system—a system that we believe unconstitutionally prevents low-income people from receiving a full range of services…” The case has survived a motion to dismiss and is now in the discovery phase.

Other pro bono awardees at the September 19th luncheon include Hon Elizabeth Perris, honored for her leadership in establishing and assisting the Bankruptcy Clinic jointly sponsored by the OSB Debtor-Creditor Section and Legal Aid Services of Oregon; Peter Willcox-Jones, Cosgrave, Vergeer and Kester, for restoring his firm’s contribution to the Oregon Law Center Neighborhood Pro Bono Clinic; and David Gray, Swensen & Gray, for his exceptional service to seniors at the Neighborhood House Senior Law Project clinic. Legal aid programs provide crucial support to pro bono clinics including intake interviews, case assignments and on-site facilitation.

How Staff & Volunteers Leverage Your Investment in Access to Justice

2007 STATE AND FEDERAL FUNDING

During the 2007 legislative session, legal aid received a special grant of approximately $700,000 over the next two years from the general fund. “This is the first time we have received general fund money. We thank the leadership in the Oregon legislature for taking the time to understand the importance of funding civil legal aid for the poor,” says David Thornburgh, Director of Oregon Law Center. With strong support from our congressional delegation, federal funding is also expected to increase slightly in 2008.

GRANTS FOR OPERATIONS AND PROJECTS

The Campaign for Equal Justice has been instrumental in obtaining nearly $1 million in private foundation and corporate grants to support legal aid projects and programs during the past two years. Support from the Oregon Law Foundation has been vital to the reopening of the Klamath Falls office. In addition, the Oregon State Bar, the Oregon Law Foundation, the Jackson Foundation and the Rose Tucker Trust provide funds that support the work of the Campaign and legal aid programs.

USING THE CREATIVE FORCE OF VOLUNTEERS

The Campaign’s annual fund drive is supported by more than one hundred volunteers throughout the state who use their creative efforts to raise money and educate lawyers and the public about legal aid. This helps the Campaign stretch limited resources. A good example of these efforts is Justice Rocks, a project of the Salem law firm, Crowell Ing LLC. In celebration of the firm’s tenth anniversary they planned this rock ‘n roll concert held in Salem on October 27, with ticket proceeds going to the Campaign for Equal Justice.

A Call To Action

What You Can Do To Help Legal Aid In Your Community

> Understand how funding for legal aid works and support increased funding on both the state and federal level.

> Put your lawyer trust account funds with a bank that will maximize the rate of return on IOLTA money that goes to support legal aid. www.oregonlawfoundation.org

> Do pro bono work through your local legal aid office. Administration resources are often limited, so please be patient. In the Portland metro area and Bend sign up at: probonooregon-subscribe@mail.lawhelp.org.

> Give generously to the Campaign for Equal Justice. The best way to increase access is to create more legal aid staff attorney positions.

> Include the Endowment Fund in your estate plan to help build stable future support for Oregon’s legal programs. Contact Sandy Hansberger at (503) 295-8442 or sandy@cej-oregon.org.

> Understand how legal services are delivered in your community so that you can make appropriate referrals for low-income clients.

> Become involved in your local legal aid offices’ case priority setting.

> Take a legal aid lawyer to lunch. Get to know the lawyers and their work.

For more information go to www.cej-oregon.org, “A Call to Action”.

The Stoel Rives law firm, in celebration of their 100th anniversary, has chosen to ‘adopt’ several charitable organizations including the Campaign for Equal Justice. Stoel Rives employees will donate their time to projects of the Campaign. Their first assignment, on October 26th, was to welcome guests to Laf-Off at the Mission Theater.