

Spring 2009



# Points of Interest

POINTS OF INTEREST is the newsletter of the Tennessee Bar Foundation and IOLTA program (Interest On Lawyers' Trust Accounts)

## Memphis Area Legal Services partners with congregations to provide free legal clinics

Adapted with permission from an article in the *Memphis Conference United Methodist Reporter* by Cathy Farmer, Director of Communications



Memphis lawyer Robert L. Green, of Allen, Summers, Simpson, Lillie & Gresham, offers advice during the clinic.

*Editor's note: Among the annual grant awards from Tennessee IOLTA are those that support the provision of free legal assistance to qualified individuals and groups through organized "pro bono" programs. Directors of those programs know the benefit of designing varied opportunities for lawyers, law students and even paralegals to offer their services. One of those methods, promoted by the ABA Center for Pro Bono, involves the faith-based community in the provision of free legal clinics. Memphis Area Legal Services, which fields both staff attorneys and an organized pro bono component (a recipient of \$150,295 in 2009 for all its programs and over \$2,000,000 in IOLTA grants over 22 years), has made great progress in this arena. Fifteen congregation-sponsored clinics have been held in Memphis, suburban Millington and more rural Bolivar, with as many as 60 applicants assisted at one time. The story below indicates that a single Saturday morning event can be a success for all — the congregation, the providers of advice and those in need.*

One of the goals of Scenic Hills United Methodist Church is "to be a church in the community for the community" as often as possible. Its leaders thought that offering a free legal clinic would be a great way to reach out to the neighborhood. Staffed by volunteer attorneys, paralegals and law students, a clinic would afford the opportunity to ask a legal question or just get some quick advice.

Scenic Hills is located in the economically diverse Raleigh-Frayser area of Memphis. Nineteen percent of the population is below the poverty line. Forty-six percent of the community consists of single parent households. By contrast, the national average of single parent households is only 23%.

Scenic Hills first learned about the program through a news story. Acting on that information, the Rev. Joe Moseley, the church's pastor, called his long-time friend, Linda Warren Seely, the attorney who serves as the Director of Pro Bono Projects for Memphis Area Legal Services.

"The clinics began in October 2007 and are quite popular with congregations. When I called Linda in early February

2008, the first available date we could schedule at Scenic Hills was a Saturday in November," Moseley said.

Seely said the full schedule was a result of the great publicity they received after the first clinic was held. "Churches started contacting me, wanting to sponsor the clinics," she said. "Churches are great to work with. I love it. The ministers are so wonderful and helpful, and the facilities are comfortable for the people. It's a great partnership when the community comes in."

Seely said she helped provide the free clinics because, "It's part of my job to recruit and train attorneys to do pro bono work for legal services. We need to create an opportunity for attorneys to give back. We want to work with the faith-based community, because they have the facilities and contacts to allow us to reach people most in need. We felt it would be a good partnership."

Moseley agreed. "Many in our neighborhood couldn't afford to pay a normal consulting fee, so I felt this would be a wonderful way to meet the needs of the Scenic Hills area."

*Article continues on back page.*

# Legal History Project adds to collective memory

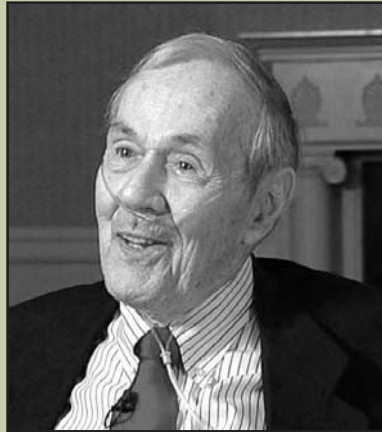
**T**he Legal History Project traveled to three locations across the state in 2008 to add to its store of recorded memories. One-on-one interviews were conducted with Tennessee senior lawyers in Greeneville, Nashville and Memphis (see adjacent photos). The Project now includes 60 of these individual question and answer sessions that preserve each lawyer's personal history, experiences in the legal community and reminiscences of people and places.

In addition to the specific interviews, the Project completed its fifth "collage," a 30 minute entertainment video, with music and titles, of the best stories, viewpoints and advice as told by the 12 interviewees of the last two years.

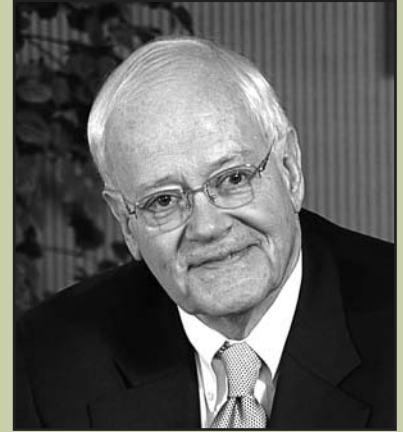
*Tennessee Legal Traditions 2009* includes the thoughts of a retired member of the Supreme Court on participating in executions, the memories of a young naval officer who landed at Nagasaki after the atomic bomb explosion of World War II and, on a lighter note, the thanks an interviewee expressed to his interviewer for asking questions "on direct rather than cross examination."

Copies of the Legal History Project's individual interviews (listed on the Foundation's website [www.tnbarfoundation.org](http://www.tnbarfoundation.org)), as well as any of the collages, may be borrowed or purchased from the Foundation. The entire collection may be viewed at the Regional History and Genealogy Center of the Germantown Community Library ([www.germantown-library.org](http://www.germantown-library.org)). A selected number are also available from the Massey Library at Vanderbilt University Law School ([law.vanderbilt.edu/library/index.aspx](http://law.vanderbilt.edu/library/index.aspx)). ■

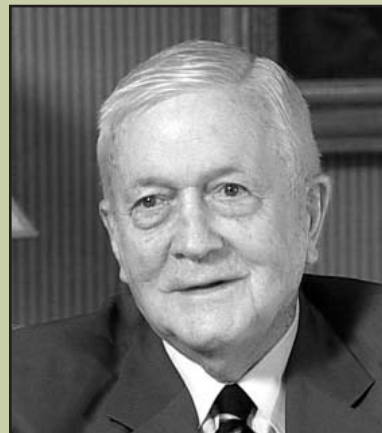
— *Barri Bernstein*



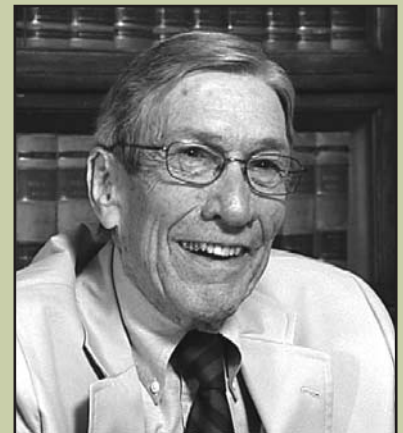
**R. LEE WINCHESTER**  
MEMPHIS  
*Interviewed by*  
*David F. Leake*



**GILBERT R. CAMPBELL, JR.**  
NASHVILLE  
*Interviewed by*  
*Judge J. Daniel Breen*



**MACLIN P. DAVIS, JR.**  
NASHVILLE  
*Interviewed by*  
*Lew Conner*



**NATHANIEL R. (NAT) COLEMAN, JR.**  
GREENEVILLE  
*Interviewed by*  
*Jeffrey M. Ward*

## 2009 Interviewees (Scheduled)

- T. Maxfield Bahner, Chattanooga
- George E. Barrett, Nashville
- Leo Bearman, Jr., Memphis
- Judge Martha Craig Daughtrey, Nashville
- Judge Julian P. Guinn, Paris

# Tennessee IOLTA Grant Recipients & Awards 2009

Arranged by main office location.

## WEST TENNESSEE

- Jackson, Center for Court Involved Children, Inc. — **\$10,000**
- Jackson, Jackson-Madison County Bar Association — **\$4,800**
- Jackson, West Tennessee Legal Services, Inc. — **\$72,204**
- Memphis, CASA of Memphis and Shelby County, Inc. — **\$9,000**
- Memphis, Community Legal Center — **\$36,000**
- Memphis, Exchange Club Family Center of the Mid-South, Inc. — **\$10,000**
- Memphis, Memphis Area Legal Services, Inc. — **\$150,295**
- Memphis, University of Memphis School of Law/Scholarship — **\$3,000**
- Memphis, YWCA of Greater Memphis — **\$12,000**

## EAST TENNESSEE

- Athens, CASA Corridor of East Tennessee — **\$5,000**
- Athens, The H.O.P.E. Center, Inc. — **\$5,000**
- Bristol, Abuse Alternatives, Inc. — **\$5,000**
- Chattanooga, Community Reconciliation, Inc. — **\$7,500**
- Chattanooga, Southeast Tennessee Legal Services — **\$5,000**
- Crossville, Avalon Center — **\$11,000**
- Crossville, VORP/Community Mediation Center, Inc. — **\$15,000**
- Jacksboro, CASA of Campbell County, Inc. — **\$6,000**
- Johnson City, CASA of Northeast Tennessee — **\$5,000**
- Kingsport, CASA for Kids, Inc. — **\$10,000**
- Knoxville, Catholic Charities of East Tennessee, Inc. Office of Immigrant Services — **\$5,000**  
Parent Place — **\$13,000**
- Knoxville, Knoxville Family Justice Center — **\$11,000**
- Knoxville, Legal Aid of East Tennessee — **\$211,875**
- Knoxville, Safe Haven — **\$10,000**
- Knoxville, University of Tennessee College of Law/Scholarship — **\$3,000**
- Knoxville, YWCA Knoxville — **\$12,000**
- Madisonville, CASA Monroe County — **\$3,000**
- Madisonville, Monroe County Health Council — **\$6,000**

- Morristown, CEASE Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, Inc. — **\$6,365**
- Oak Ridge, CASA of the Tennessee Heartland, Inc. — **\$14,000**
- Oak Ridge, Community Mediation Services — **\$6,000**

## MIDDLE TENNESSEE

- Columbia, CASA of Maury County, Inc. — **\$10,000**
- Columbia, Hope House — **\$10,000**
- Columbia, The Mediation Center — **\$4,000**
- Cookeville, Aging Services for the Upper Cumberlands, Inc. — **\$12,000**
- Cookeville, Dismas House of the Upper Cumberland — **\$12,500**
- Cookeville, Genesis House, Inc. — **\$10,000**
- Cookeville, Mediation Services of Putnam County — **\$12,000**
- Cookeville, Putnam County CASA — **\$3,000**
- Franklin, Williamson County CASA, Inc. — **\$4,000**
- Gallatin, Sumner County CASA — **\$3,000**
- Gallatin, VORP of Sumner County, Inc. — **\$5,000**
- Hohenwald, Mid South Mediation Services — **\$8,000**
- Lebanon, Wilson County CASA — **\$7,000**
- Livingston, Stephens Center for the Prevention of Child Abuse — **\$3,000**
- Madison, Morning Star Sanctuary — **\$8,000**
- McMinnville, Families In Crisis, Inc. — New Beginnings — **\$4,000**
- Murfreesboro, CASA of Rutherford County — **\$7,000**
- Murfreesboro, Domestic Violence Program, Inc. — **\$15,800**
- Nashville, CASA, Inc. of Nashville — **\$6,000**
- Nashville, Dismas House of Nashville — **\$5,000**
- Nashville, Exchange Club Family Center, Inc. — **\$10,000**
- Nashville, Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberlands — **\$242,326**
- Nashville, Reconciliation, Inc. — **\$10,500**
- Nashville, Tenn. Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence — **\$25,000**
- Nashville, Tennessee Justice Center — **\$270,200**
- Shelbyville, CASA of the Center for Family Development — **\$10,000**

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**Total: \$1,400,365**



**The Tennessee Bar Foundation publishes *Points of Interest*.**

Letters, comments or questions should be addressed to: Tennessee Bar Foundation, 618 Church Street, Suite 120, Nashville, Tennessee 37219-2456  
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info@tnbarfoundation.org

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## MALS partners with congregations

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In preparation, the church sent out press releases to community newspapers and flyers to all the churches in Raleigh-Frayser. Church signs were posted with the following message: "Need Legal Advice? Free Legal Clinic — Saturday, November 8 from 9-Noon."

"No one will be turned away as long as they arrive before 11:45 a.m.," Seely told the planners, but quickly added, "We have had as many as 130 applicants on any one Saturday, so you may want to advise people to come early."

At 8 a.m. on Nov. 8, paralegals and volunteer law students along with participating attorneys assembled and prepared to meet with the people of the community.

The first client arrived around 8:35 that morning and steady flow continued until about 10:30 when it began to slow down, Moseley said.

Seely said most of the legal questions at the clinics are similar. The clients ask for basic information such as how to collect child support or what to do if you're being sued for credit card debt.

"We tell them how to set up a plan to pay the debt over time," she explained. "If the debt is being paid in that manner, judgment creditors will not garnish wages. It's just basic, simple, legal information."

At Scenic Hills that morning, most of the questions posed could be answered in 10 to 15 minutes, but one lawyer spent almost an hour assisting a couple with their situation. By the end of the morning, 16 individuals or couples were served.

Seely reported later to the Memphis Bar

Association, "I want to quote from the Client Satisfaction Surveys we received. These always make my day." She read:

*"I am very grateful to receive this free legal advice. It will help me to make the right decision and move forward to begin my healing process."*

*"It was very helpful. He [the attorney] informed me not to worry, it will be taken care of. A million thanks for the clinic."*

*"My attorney was very helpful in explaining what needed to take place in order to assist me. He was very professional, very kind."*

*"This is an amazing thing. The advice given in this clinic helped me tremendously. Please keep this legal clinic going."*

*"This was so helpful. The people are very nice and didn't make me feel uncomfortable as I thought I would."*

*"Mr. Green is a very nice, respectful gentleman who is very knowledgeable — he's a blessing! Really liked it."*

*"All of my questions were answered in a clear and concise manner. The counsel I received was more than I expected. The attorney was extremely knowledgeable in the area of my concern."*

Seely concluded, "Thank you so very much to the many attorneys, paralegals, law students, congregations, bar associations and others who make these clinics possible. It is truly an honor and privilege to work with all of them."

More of the events are scheduled in the Memphis area. Seely said her hope is to spread this service throughout West Tennessee. ■

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