

Spring 2015



Points of Interest

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



Editor's note: The Tennessee IOLTA program awards grants to organizations that provide direct civil legal assistance to the indigent or to those that work to improve the administration of justice. Happily, there are instances when agencies in the two categories collaborate. The article at right profiles the path taken by young lawyer Shayla Purifoy to providing direct legal assistance to a specific population: immigrant victims of domestic violence. She plies her trade at Memphis Area Legal Services (MALS), but she does so in conjunction with the Immigrant Women's Services (IWS) program at the YWCA of Greater Memphis.

MALS receives grants from the IOLTA program in the "civil legal assistance" category. Its awards began in 1988, the first year funds were available. Since then, the organization has received a total of \$2,090,621.

IWS is a recipient of IOLTA funds in the "improving the administration of justice" category. Since 1998, IWS has received \$88,125. IWS provides the services of non-lawyer "advocates," many of whom are bilingual. An advocate explains options, helps complete necessary forms and provides direction, guidance and moral support throughout the legal proceedings. The advocate assists the lawyer and also frees the lawyer to provide legal advice and courtroom representation.

As it turned out, this particular lawyer and the YWCA advocate with whom she worked shared much more than just a desire to assist and empower immigrants who have been the subject of domestic violence.

Purifoy's police aspirations evolve into legal career

By Richard J. Alley, adapted from the *Memphis Daily News*

Shayla Purifoy majored in Urban Studies – a mixture of history, political science and sociology – at Rhodes College in Memphis. Her senior seminar was on community policing.

"It was so much fun, it was so exciting," she said about her time spent shadowing police officers on the job. "They were helping people and they really were impacting the Madison Heights area."

With this experience, and the mentorship of Michael P. Kirby, her political science professor at Rhodes, a goal was realized.

"I decided that I was going to be a cop, and no one could tell me any differently," she said. "I started gun training, I started doing pushups and sit-ups, I was crawling over the wall at the police academy so I could run on their track to be prepared. And then I changed my mind."

She'd stopped along the way to the police academy long enough to take the LSAT, she said, "just in case." It would turn out that law school had a stronger pull than the police academy, and she found herself at the University of Memphis Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law. She took a course in social welfare and policy and participated in the general civil litigation

clinic working on domestic violence cases.

The clinic meets at the law school now but was held in the offices of Memphis Area Legal Services, Inc. (MALS) at that time. MALS is the primary provider of civil legal representation to low income clients in the West Tennessee counties of Shelby, Fayette, Tipton and Lauderdale.

"When MALS advertised an opening for a staff attorney, I was the only person who applied who had experience in the domestic violence arena. That's how I ended up with my job," she said.

These days she is working, in conjunction with the Immigrant Women's Services program at the YWCA of Greater Memphis, with clients who are victims of domestic violence.

"Not only am I assisting them with their domestic violence issues through order of protection hearings, but I can now help with divorces and other legal issues that come up," Purifoy said.

Her clients have difficulty accessing the legal system due to language barriers, and interpreters are necessary. "If you don't have a good interpreter, that can damage your whole case," she said. "There is a responsibility to provide access to everyone."

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Legal History Project

The Foundation's Legal History Project continues in its mission to interview senior Tennessee lawyers about their lives in (and out) of the legal profession. As of February 2015, 90 men and women have participated, with the most recent pictured below.

Each is encouraged to expound on why he/she chose the legal profession, how things have changed in the course of his/her life, how things *should* change in the future and to tell a few war stories.

Individual interview DVDs may be borrowed or purchased from the Foundation. The complete collection is also available (subject to each institution's circulation policy) at the Tennessee State Library and

Archives (www.tn.gov/tsla/index.htm) and at the Regional History and Genealogy Center of the Germantown Community Library (www.germantown-library.org). A selected number are available at the Massey Library at Vanderbilt University Law School (www.library.vanderbilt.edu/law/).

In addition to the individual interviews, nine, 30-minute entertainment collages are available to view from the Foundation's website, www.tnbarfoundation.org. They include music and titles and provide "best of" snippets from each of the 90 interviews. Watch them from the comfort of your desk! ■



CREED A. DANIEL,
RUTLEDGE
Interviewed by
Jacqueline B. Dixon



T. JAMES EMISON, JR.,
ALAMO
Interviewed by
J. Houston Gordon



JAMES S. GILLILAND,
MEMPHIS
Interviewed by
William H. Haltom, Jr.



A. B. GODDARD,
MARYVILLE
Interviewed by
Carl P. McDonald



THOMAS E. GRAY,
GALLATIN
Interviewed by
Carol L. McCoy



ALBERT C. HARVEY,
MEMPHIS
Interviewed by
William H. Haltom, Jr.



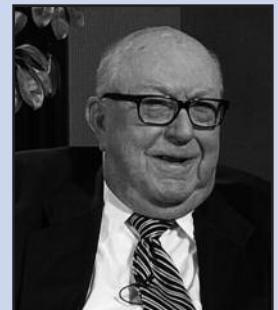
ANNA F. HINDS,
KNOXVILLE
Interviewed by
Charles W. Swanson



CLAUDIA S. JACK,
COLUMBIA
Interviewed by
Linda W. Knight



LOWRY F. KLINE,
CHATTANOOGA
Interviewed by
Roger W. Dickson



T. EDWARD LAWWELL,
COLUMBIA
Interviewed by
N. Houston Parks

Purifoy's police aspirations

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In the past, courtroom staff might have been inclined to do a double take as Purifoy was frequently teamed on cases with her identical twin sister, Lia Roemer, a non-lawyer advocate with the YWCA. The drive to help others is deeply ingrained in the look-alike sisters, as Roemer also serves as the Coordinator and System Advocacy Liaison for the Shelby County Blueprint Project for Safety.

Purifoy is a native Memphian. The Central High School graduate was first exposed to the legal profession through the high school "mock trial" competition sponsored by the Tennessee Bar Association Young Lawyers Division. Her involvement carried over into her time at Rhodes, where she continued to volunteer with that program. She is unapologetically immersed in the subculture of mock trial.

"I feel like at this point that mock trial is like *Star Trek*, in that some people get it and some people don't. There are people who become obsessed with mock trial, and I guess I'm

one of those."

Outside office hours, Purifoy continues the fight against child abuse, sexual assault and human trafficking, by sitting on the Shelby County Domestic Violence Council. She supports the legal profession by holding leadership positions in the Ben F. Jones Chapter of the National Bar Association and the Young Lawyers Division of the Memphis Bar Association.

She can attest that her work is rewarding, and her expertise and enthusiasm has received state-wide recognition. The Tennessee Alliance for Legal Services named her its "New Advocate of the Year" in 2011.

"I just feel good when I wake up in the morning. I don't have a dreading feeling about going to work that I'm sure some people have," she said. "I could not imagine getting up and thinking, 'I can't do one more hour of this.' I just enjoy helping people." ■

Tennessee IOLTA Grant Recipients & Awards 2015

(Arranged by location of recipient's *main* office. Many organizations serve a broader geographic area.)

Bristol

Abuse Alternatives, Inc. – \$3,000

Chattanooga

Community Reconciliation, Inc. – \$3,000
Southeast Tennessee Legal Services – \$2,500

Clinton

Community Mediation Services – \$4,162

Columbia

Center of Hope – \$3,000

Cookeville

Aging Services for the Upper Cumberland, Inc. – \$7,250

Crossville

Avalon Center – \$5,250
VORP/Community Mediation Center, Inc. – \$4,800

Hohenwald

Mid South Mediation Services – \$5,550

Jackson

West Tennessee Legal Services, Inc. – \$27,610

Knoxville

Legal Aid of East Tennessee – \$95,697
YWCA Knoxville – \$4,200

Madison

Morning Star Sanctuary – \$3,750

Madisonville

Monroe County Health Council – \$1,500

McMinnville

Families in Crisis, Inc. – \$4,500

Memphis

Community Legal Center – \$15,000
Exchange Club Family Center of the Mid-South, Inc. – \$7,500
Memphis Area Legal Services, Inc. – \$56,579
YWCA of Greater Memphis – \$5,625

Morristown

CEASE, Inc. – \$3,375

Murfreesboro

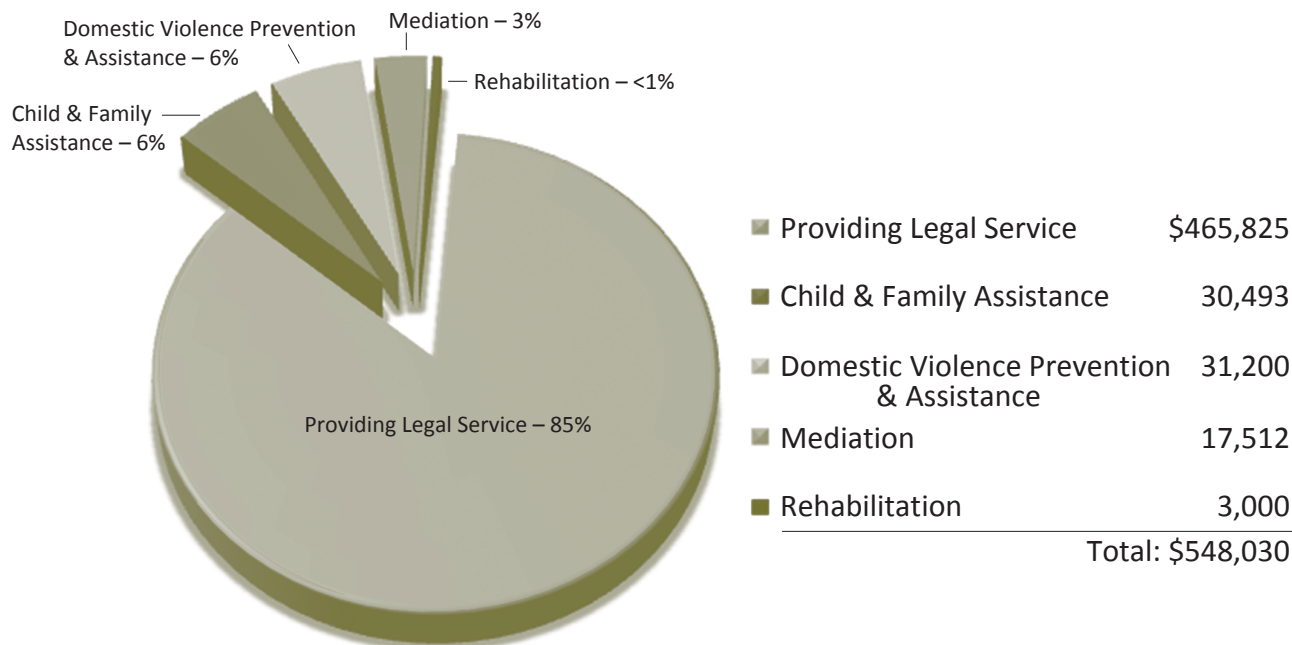
Tennessee CASA Association, Inc. – \$22,993
Domestic Violence Program, Inc. – \$5,000

Nashville

Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland – \$122,189
Tennessee Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence – \$14,000
Tennessee Justice Center – \$115,000
Tennessee Justice for Our Neighbors – \$5,000

Total Awarded: \$548,030

2015 IOLTA Grants





Points of Interest

The Tennessee Bar Foundation publishes *Points of Interest*.

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Grateful client ... with a suggestion

The handwritten note [below] was received by Steve Xanthopoulos, former executive director of West Tennessee Legal Services (WTLS). WTLS provides staff attorney and pro bono legal assistance to eligible clients in 17 counties in West Tennessee. Like Memphis Area Legal Services (cover story), WTLS received an IOLTA grant in 1988 and each subsequent year for a current total of \$1,005,463.

Ashley Holliday joined WTLS as an attorney in 2009. She excels in her staff work and in her other work – support of the profession. She received the 2014 Tennessee Bar Association Young Lawyers Division President’s Special Recognition Award and was just selected for the organization’s Leadership Law Class of 2015.

Ms. Holliday has many satisfied clients. One felt so strongly about the legal assistance she received that she took pen to paper. That she didn’t attempt to spell “Xanthopoulos” is no surprise, as Steve saw many iterations of his name in 29 years at WTLS. The correspondent praised Ms. Holliday’s work and also made a suggestion as to her compensation. ■

Dear Mr Steve (sorry I can't remember your last name)
 Just repeating myself again. Your employer Ashley Holliday is the best attorney you probably have. I know she worked really hard on my case. I couldn't have found any one any better. I couldn't have done without her. She needs a raise in salary. I thank God for sending her to me. If I ever have to have another attorney I would still want it to be her. I'm not good at words, but I express what in my heart. I hope you appreciate what your employees do & tell them about it. Thanks for listening to me.

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