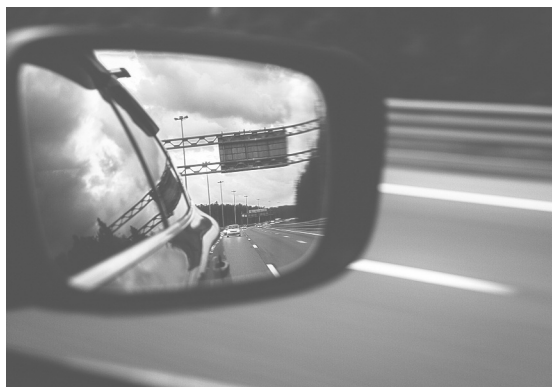


Spring 2017



Points of Interest

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



The road to critical legal help — Memphis to Johnson City

By Staff Attorney Emily Stotts, adapted from *Memphis Lawyer*, the magazine of the Memphis Bar Association

One fall morning I walked into the MIFA (Metropolitan Inter-Faith Association) building, site of the Community Legal Center (CLC) office for the past twenty years. The lobby was full of people seeking various services, including a panicked woman and her teenage son. Walk-ins are common, but CLC staff can rarely spare the time from our scheduled appointments to meet with them. None too eager to rush to the mountain of paperwork on my desk, I decided to go over and ask what they needed.

The woman had driven all night from Johnson City, about 500 miles, to see if we could help her teenage son, Jose. Like countless other teens I've encountered since joining CLC's Immigrant Justice Program (IJP), Jose crossed the U.S./Mexico border after fleeing death threats from Honduran gang members. He'd been captured by U.S. immigration officials and detained for one month, before being released to his mother.

She had herself fled Honduras several years earlier due to unrelenting domestic abuse. Jose had already been before the Immigration Judge twice without counsel. The judge had given him one more chance to find an attorney and file for immigration relief or she would deport him back to Honduras. His hearing was the very next week. They were desperate. So, I broke my no walk-in rule, and we sat down to see what, if anything, could be done.

During the meeting, it became apparent that Jose was a candidate for a form of immigration relief called Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS). If approved, that status would allow him to remain in the U.S. as a permanent resident. The problem was that SIJS requires a state court child custody order, which in Tennessee must be completed by the child's eighteenth birthday. Jose would be eighteen in two weeks. Further, I'd need to find an attorney at the opposite end of the

state, in Johnson City, to represent Jose's mother *pro bono* in state court, since neither the family nor CLC had the resources to pay anyone. I explained that we would try to make this happen, but, in truth, I held little hope that we would succeed.

I began firing off e-mails in search of a *pro bono* attorney in Johnson City willing to help. Late that night, I got a bite. Mark Fulks, a litigator at Baker Donelson, had been forwarded my plea. He responded, "I'm not exactly sure what you need to have done, but I'll be glad to help if I can." That's all it took. I walked Mark through the state court process, and the custody order was granted. Jose applied for and was approved for SIJS. He's now a permanent resident of the U.S., and both he and his mother are comforted by the fact that he will not have to go back to Honduras.

Mark Fulks is just one of many attorneys who have graciously vol-

Article continues on back page

Legal History Project goes viral

The Foundation's Legal History Project has a 19 year history, has conducted 99 interviews of senior lawyers and produced eleven *Tennessee Legal Traditions* video "collages" that gather the very best moments of those interviews with music and titles. What's next? Making each one of those priceless, individual interviews available with the click of a mouse.

The Board of Trustees will utilize members' Sustaining contributions, made to the Endowment and Board Directed Fund, to support the cost of uploading past and future interviews to the Foundation's YouTube channel (www.youtube.com; search: Tennessee Bar Foundation). Friends of the interviewees or historians researching a landmark lawsuit or event will no longer be required to borrow a DVD from the Foundation office or travel to the state's two libraries that hold the full interview collection. The candid perspectives of Tennessee's lawyers and judges about their grandparents, parents, childhood, education, professional choices and the resulting "life in the law" will be instantly viewable online.

Uploading this material is a large undertaking that should be

completed by mid-summer. Viewers will be able to watch each individual interview and, with the eventual addition of "tags," will also be able to search for groups of interviews such as "Knoxville lawyers" or "Vanderbilt Law School graduates" or "judges from Memphis."

While the internet upload is taking place, the Legal History Project marches on, scheduling interviews for this year. The 2016 interviewees (pictured below) include the longtime Chief Disciplinary Counsel of the Board of Professional Responsibility, a colorful litigator from Fayetteville, a labor lawyer who plied his trade throughout the country and a former chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

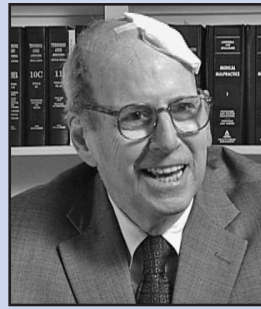
Finally, *Tennessee Legal Traditions 2017*, which includes the "best of" moments from the 2015 and 2016 interviewees, may be viewed from the Foundation's website or may be borrowed or purchased on DVD (along with any individual interview). The 30-minute run time of this entertainment collage makes it a perfect program for a local bar association or civic group meeting. Contact Foundation staff to make arrangements. ■



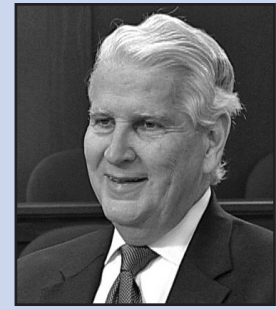
LANCE B. BRACY,
JOELTON, *Interviewed by*
Laura L. Chastain



RAYMOND W. FRALEY, JR.,
FAYETTEVILLE, *Interviewed by*
John T. Bobo



D. BRUCE SHINE,
KINGSPORT, *Interviewed by*
Howard H. Vogel



JUSTICE GARY R. WADE,
SEVIERVILLE, *Interviewed by*
Justice William M. Barker

Access to Justice — over lunch

Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland has recently partnered with Clarksville's First Presbyterian Church to create the Presbyterian Legal Assistance Network (PLAN). Staff attorneys from Legal Aid Society's local office provide a free legal clinic during the "Loaves and Fishes" meal program which operates out of the church six days per week.

Ann Waddle, a church volunteer, began to recognize a need for professional advice when meal attendees shared their legal problems over the lunch sessions. She conferred with church members Judge Jill Ayers and Judge Ross Hicks, who suggested that she contact legal aid.

Kevin Fowler, the Legal Aid Society's Clarksville managing attorney, readily provided informational brochures to be handed out at the church and stated that visits to the office, only two blocks away, were welcomed. But, even as their legal problems continued or multiplied, the luncheon guests never seemed to take that short trek. Fowler finally determined that his staff needed to make that walk. Legal Aid Society attorneys now provide free, civil legal advice twice per month at the church to coincide with Loaves and Fishes. On Saturdays, members of the local bar join in. During that time, individuals often seek guidance on social security, family issues, housing and landlord disputes, health care and other problems.

"We were hearing about a lot of similar dilemmas and knew that Legal Aid Society could help, if only people knew how to access the resource," said Waddle. "Now this partnership assists many of the people who rely on our food service to resolve their troubling legal difficulties and find more stability in their lives."

"PLAN allows us to meet individuals where they are," said Fowler. "Our collaboration with First Presbyterian means legal help is available when a meal is served. Obstacles that often stand in the way of access — lack of transportation, time or awareness that free legal assistance might be an option — are avoided. The Legal Aid Society is reaching a segment of the community eligible for our help and in need of our help. It just took us a bit to realize that the two-block walk was much longer for them than it was for us." ■

Editor's note: *Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland (LASMTC) has a 49-year record of providing free legal assistance to low-income individuals in civil matters. Its vast service area of 48 counties requires that it handle needs in both urban and rural settings. While LASMTC staffs eight offices and administers a Volunteer Lawyers Program, the organization is always open to new ways to connect with clients, as described in the adjacent article. Since 1988, LASMTC has received IOLTA grant awards in excess of \$4,000,000.*

Tennessee IOLTA Grant Recipients & Awards 2017

(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. – \$2,500
Southeast Tennessee Legal Services (merged with Legal Aid of East Tennessee)

Clinton

Community Mediation Services – \$2,500

Columbia

Center of Hope – \$3,000
The Mediation Center – \$1,500

Cookeville

Aging Services for the Upper Cumberland, Inc. – \$7,000

Crossville

Avalon Center – \$3,500
VORP/Community Mediation Center, Inc. – \$4,800

Hohenwald

Mid South Mediation Services – \$5,550

Jackson

West Tennessee Legal Services, Inc. – \$24,793

Knoxville

Catholic Charities, Office of Immigrant Services – \$3,000
Legal Aid of East Tennessee – \$91,258
YWCA Knoxville – Victim Advocacy Program – \$4,200

Lawrenceburg

Kid's Place/A Child Advocacy Center – \$2,000

Madison

Morning Star Sanctuary – \$3,750

McMinnville

Families in Crisis, Inc. – \$4,000

Memphis

Community Legal Center – \$13,800
Exchange Club Family Center of the Mid-South, Inc. – \$6,500
Memphis Area Legal Services, Inc. – \$55,226
YWCA of Greater Memphis, Immigrant Women's Services – \$1,500

Morristown

CEASE Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, Inc. – \$2,500

Murfreesboro

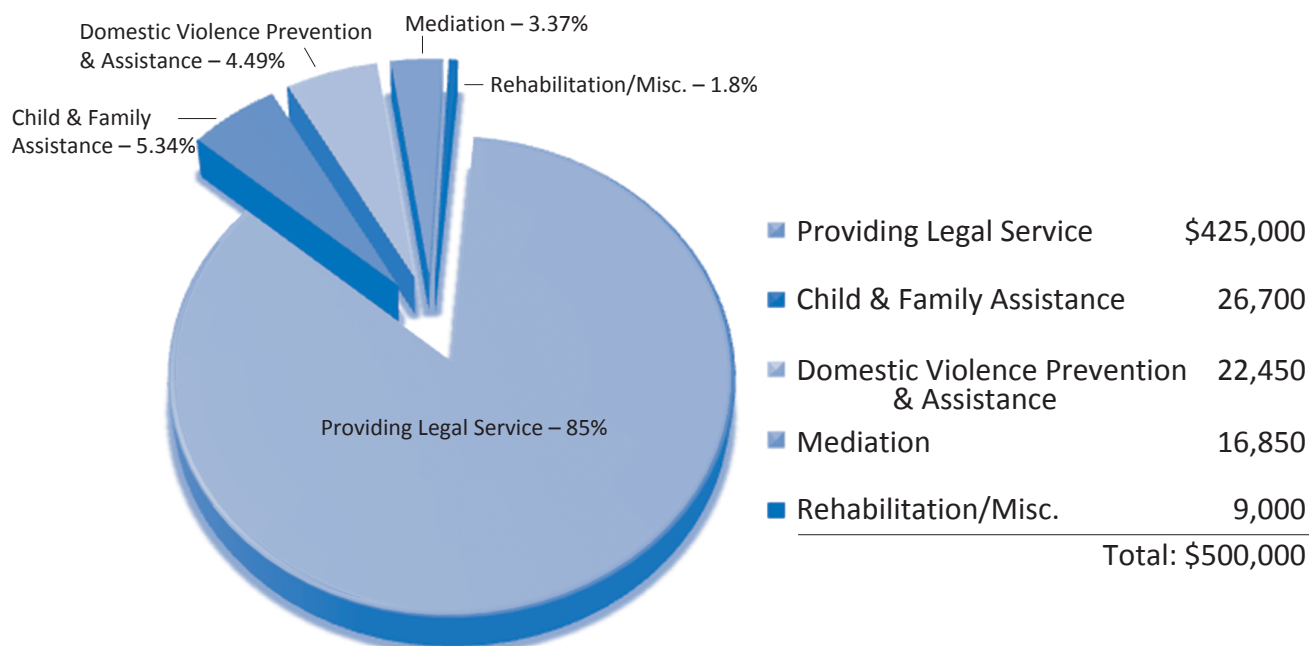
Domestic Violence Program & Sexual Assault Services – \$4,750
Tennessee CASA Association, Inc. – \$18,200

Nashville

Guardianship & Trusts Corp. – \$3,000
Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland – \$110,423
Tennessee Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence – \$13,000
Tennessee Justice Center – \$100,000
Tennessee Justice for Our Neighbors – \$4,750

Total Awarded: \$500,000

2017 IOLTA Grants





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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The road to critical legal help

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unteered to assist our clients over the years. Since its inception in 2006, CLC’s IJP has relied on the private bar to help meet the ever-increasing need for *pro bono* representation of non-citizens in the mid-South. Whether it’s volunteering for an afternoon to teach a “Know Your Rights” workshop, assisting with a custody proceeding for an SIJS-eligible child, or representing a woman in filing a claim for asylum, *pro bono* attorneys allow IJP staff to leverage our resources and provide access to justice to more individuals than we can alone.

I encourage each of you to reach out to us and offer a helping hand. No immigration knowledge or experience is required; CLC now has an Immigration *Pro Bono* Coordinator who will see that you receive the necessary training. If needed, we will arrange for a practicing immigration attorney to work with you. And, although I don’t have enough space here for individual names, I would like to send out a heart-felt thank you to everyone who has agreed to do what they can over the past decade. You have forever changed the lives of many, and we’re so grateful to call you our friends and colleagues. ■

“Pro bono attorneys allow IJP staff to leverage our resources and provide access to justice to more individuals than we can alone.”

Editor’s note: *Community Legal Center (CLC) provides legal aid in Shelby County to people of limited means, often called the “working poor.” Its programs include assistance with general, civil legal matters (provided by a staff attorney or a cadre of volunteer attorneys); an ongoing pro se divorce clinic; a suite of services to victims of elder abuse and the Immigrant Justice Program, which provides pro bono legal assistance to low-income immigrants whose cases are within the jurisdiction of the Memphis Immigration Court. Since 1994, CLC has received \$424,000 in IOLTA grant awards to support all facets of its work.*

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