

Summer 2019



Points of Interest

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

One million dollars – with MUCH more to come

The Foundation is delighted to award the first 12 grants, totaling \$1,122,735, from the Tennessee Legal Initiatives Fund — or “TLIF” — whose corpus came from a consumer relief settlement between the Department of Justice and Bank of America Corporation. Under this settlement, funds were donated to IOLTA programs nationwide, with the amount based on federal poverty census data.

Each state’s IOLTA program accepted funds (Tennessee received **\$8,500,000**) and set out to grant those monies utilizing the (very) few words of the settlement, “...for the sole purpose of providing funds to legal aid organizations in the state of Tennessee to be used for foreclosure prevention legal assistance and community redevelopment legal assistance...” No further direction was given. There was no time frame or definition of the terms. There was no higher authority to which to appeal for clarification. Each state was on its own to decide to which organizations the funds should be granted, for what purpose, in what amount and over what peri-

od of time.

Given the amount of money and those significant decisions, the Foundation’s Board of Trustees gathered a separate, broad-based committee to make recommendations. Seventeen people were asked to serve and responded enthusiastically to the invitation (see next page). The law practice and experience of members were diverse, including “tall building” and “court square” lawyers, three members of the bench, an assistant district attorney, a chief clerk to a bankruptcy

ed that the money would be used to explore ways to broaden the capacity of organizations to break the cycle of poverty and barriers to justice using civil legal aid and education to increase productivity and success for vulnerable populations. The work toward these lofty goals would be centered on innovation, coupled with durable and life-changing initiatives, in an effort to redevelop communities.

TLIF will make funding decisions in two phases. The Discovery Phase began in July 2018 with the



announcement that at least \$1,000,000 would be awarded in mid-2019 to organizations that propose work to meet TLIF’s goals. Thirty-three applications were received by the January 2019 deadline, from varied organizations across the state.

judge, a former mayor, two corporate counsel, a deputy attorney general and university counsel. The committee was guided by consultant, Kim Carpenter Drake.

Meetings were held to consider the state’s legal needs, the potential uses of the fund and the latest trends and successes in philanthropy. The committee, with assent from the Board of Trustees, concluded

TLIF made its selection and award announcements in May (see next page).

Once the recipients have completed approximately one year of activity, TLIF’s second phase, “Implementation,” will evaluate the results. It is a sincere hope that these pilot projects will flourish and show that system-level change may come through scale or replication. Armed with the

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One million dollars — with MUCH more to come

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outcomes of these projects, plans for the distribution of the remaining \$7,500,000 will be made at that time.

Foundation Chair N. Houston Parks, of Columbia, sat in on the committee's last meeting, as recommendations were finalized for the Board of Trustees, and noted, "TLIF's 'found money' will provide appropriate

legal assistance to vulnerable populations and is a potential game-changer. These new initiatives are the way forward for many communities. We are exceedingly lucky to have the funds to explore them." ■

— *Barri Bernstein*

TLIF (Tennessee Legal Initiatives Fund) Grant Awards

Organization (or Lead Organization)	Project Name	Award	Project Description
Choosing Justice Initiative	All Around Justice	\$100,000	Implement wraparound program to pay court-appointed, criminal defense lawyers to handle client civil legal needs.
Community Legal Center	Remote Immigrant Initiative	\$62,000	Use technology and collaborative services to coordinate representation at Memphis Immigration Court for clients from Middle/East Tennessee.
Dismas House, Inc.	Pro Se Legal Workshop for Reentry Clients	\$100,000	Train reentry clients to overcome obstacles, pro se or with counsel, to obtain a driver's license and other necessities for life post-incarceration.
Legal Aid of East Tennessee	Mental Health Law Partnership	\$91,991	Establish partnership to provide on-site legal help to clients of Helen Ross McNabb Center who suffer from mental illness, addiction or social challenge.
Memphis Bar Foundation	One Stop Legal Help Portal	\$70,000	Create online portal for appropriate referral of potential clients to Community Legal Center or Memphis Area Legal Services.
Nashville Conflict Resolution Center	Mediation Access Tennessee	\$99,728	Provide access to mediation through conferencing technology that links rural and underserved populations with community mediation centers.
Tennessee Alliance for Legal Services	Increased Access to Workers' Compensation Resources	\$100,000	Implement data-driven resources for injured workers, including online assistance for preparation of pro se worker compensation claims.
Tennessee Justice Center, Inc.	General Sessions GPS	\$100,000	Develop educational resources and train volunteers to assist General Sessions Court litigants who cannot afford an attorney.
Tennessee Justice Center, Inc.	Independence	\$100,000	Reform systemic policies and procedures surrounding long term services and supports portion of the TennCare program, known as CHOICES.
Tennessee Justice for Our Neighbors	Families Together	\$99,016	Provide classroom education and pro bono legal services for immigrant families.
The Justice Initiative	Holistic Legal Incubator Program	\$100,000	Train new lawyers and social workers, interested in an interdisciplinary approach to law practice, through a wraparound program.
University of Tennessee College of Law — Legal Clinic	ExpungeTN	\$100,000	Assist rural East Tennesseans, with prior criminal justice interaction, to get various types of relief without an attorney.

TLIF Committee

(convened July 2017)

Carl Q. Carter	Memphis	Angelia M. Nystrom	Knoxville
S. Dawn Coppock*	Strawberry Plains	Harry P. Ogden	Knoxville
Jacqueline B. Dixon	Nashville	Paul B. Plant*	Lawrenceburg
Alan B. Easterly	Chattanooga	William P. Purcell III	Nashville
David M. Eldridge*	Knoxville	Fran M. Riley*	Memphis
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Charles M. Key	Memphis	Irma Merrill Stratton	Memphis
P. Danielle Nellis	Nashville	D. Kelly Thomas, Jr.	Maryville
Paul C. Ney, Jr.*	Nashville		

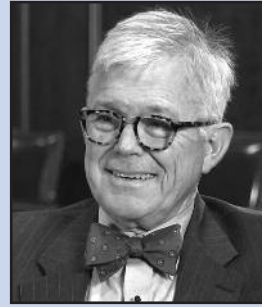
**Participated only in program design.*

Legal History Project

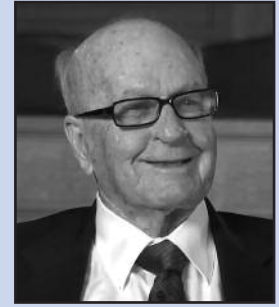
These interviews were recently added to the Project's growing collection. ALL interviews may be viewed online on YouTube, linked through the Foundation's website, www.tnbarfoundation.org/legal-history-project/



SENATOR LAMAR ALEXANDER, MARYVILLE, *Interviewed by Judge Robert L. Echols*



JUDGE EDWARD G. BRYANT, JACKSON, *Interviewed by W. Lewis Jenkins*



J. POLK COOLEY, ROCKWOOD, *Interviewed by Justice Sharon G. Lee*



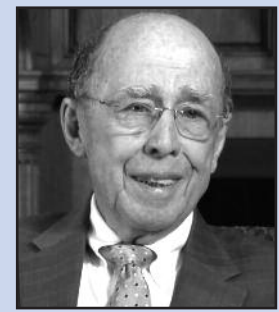
JUSTICE JANICE M. HOLDER, MEMPHIS, *Interviewed by William H. Haltom, Jr.*



MILLARD OAKLEY, LIVINGSTON, *Interviewed by Charles W. Bone*



JUDGE MURIEL J. ROBINSON, NASHVILLE, *Interviewed by Judge Carol L. McCoy*



DON C. STANSBERRY, JR., HUNTSVILLE, *Interviewed by Judge Thomas W. Phillips*

Tennessee IOLTA Grant Recipients & Awards 2019

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

Bristol

Abuse Alternatives, Inc. – \$5,000

Clinton

Community Mediation Services – \$6,000

Columbia

Center of Hope – \$3,000
The Mediation Center – \$5,000

Crossville

Avalon Center – \$5,000
VORP/Community Mediation Center, Inc. – \$6,800

Jackson

West Tennessee Legal Services, Inc. – \$25,415

Knoxville

Catholic Charities, Office of Immigrant Services – \$2,000
Legal Aid of East Tennessee – \$90,983
YWCA Knoxville and the Tennessee Valley – \$4,200

Memphis

Community Legal Center – \$16,800
Kindred Place – \$7,500
Memphis Area Legal Services, Inc. – \$56,610

Morristown

CEASE Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, Inc. – \$5,000

Murfreesboro

Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Center – \$7,000
Tennessee CASA Association, Inc. – \$20,000

Nashville

AGAPE – \$5,500
Arts & Business Council of Greater Nashville – \$5,000
Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the
Cumberlands – \$113,192
Tennessee Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual
Violence – \$13,000
Tennessee Justice Center – \$97,000

Total Awarded: \$500,000



Points of Interest

The Tennessee Bar Foundation publishes *Points of Interest*.

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Red Shoe Gala raises funds for CASA

By Deborah Peterson, adapted with permission from the *Kingsport Times News*

When Dorothy wanted to leave Oz and return home, all she had to do was click together her ruby red slippers. Unfortunately for many children in the real world, going home is not always that easy. In recognition of that trope, many Tennessee CASA programs hold a “Red Shoe Gala” where guests are encouraged to wear their favorite red shoes and to raise funds for the organization.

Nationwide, nearly 700,000 children are abused or neglected and more than 400,000 are in foster care on any given day. While the ideal situation is for children to be at home with their parents, it is not always possible. Factors such as alcoholism, drug use, violence and neglect create an unsafe environment and often make it necessary to remove a child from the home.

While a judge is the final decision maker regarding the placement of a child, CASA for Kids, Inc., (one of many CASAs across the state) helps to give the judge a better understanding of the child’s needs. A non-profit, CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) for Kids, Inc., serves Sullivan and Hawkins counties, in East Tennessee.

“Our primary goal is to give a voice to children who don’t have a voice,” said Mary Kilpatrick, executive director. “One judge calls us his ‘eyes and ears’ because we see what is going on and report back, which helps him make a decision regarding the child’s placement,” Kilpatrick explained. The organization assisted 318 children during 2018. Volunteers meet with the child’s parents or guardian, schedule visits to the home, determine if the child’s needs are being met and make recommendations. “The judges want as much information as they can

get in order to make a good decision,” she added.

Being a volunteer with CASA for Kids, Inc. is both challenging and rewarding, according to Kilpatrick. “This is not a volunteer opportunity for everybody. You often go into difficult situations,” she said. But making a difference in a child’s life makes it worthwhile, to both the volunteers and the small staff of six that work at the offices in Kingsport, Bristol and Rogersville. “The staff has a passion for these children. Without passion, people would come and go.”

Kilpatrick explained that although the organization is assigned cases by the juvenile court system, CASA for Kids, Inc., is not a government agency. It depends on donations from local businesses, individuals, congregations, several community chests and organizations such as the United Way of Greater Kingsport, the United Way of Bristol and the Hawkins County United Way. In addition, fundraising events, such as the Red Shoe Gala, provide a major portion of their funding.

The Red Shoe Gala is named after the red shoes that Dorothy wore in “The Wizard of Oz.” Because truly, as Dorothy said, “There’s no place like home.” ■

Editor’s note: CASA for Kids, Inc., is one of 31 local CASA organizations that serve 54 Tennessee counties. The Tennessee CASA Association assists in the development of new programs and serves the statewide network by providing training and technical support. Since 2014, the Association has received IOLTA grants that total \$129,000.

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