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2017 Pro Bono Excellence Awards

Frank J. Scurlock Award

This award honors an individual attorney, in good standing, who has provided outstanding pro bono work. The award is named for the late Frank J. Scurlock, the first chair of the Legal Services to the Poor in Civil Matters Committee. Scurlock was known for his tireless efforts to provide legal services to the poor.

Marilyn D. McGuire (Houston)

Marilyn McGuire has had an impressive career as a solo practitioner. McGuire actively volunteers her legal services in Houston, accepting pro bono referrals from Lone Star Legal Aid, Houston Volunteer Lawyers, and the bankruptcy court. The kinds of pro bono cases McGuire accepts reflect her passion for pro bono. She does not shy away from taking domestic violence cases, contested matters, or complicated issues. She advocates vigorously for each of her clients. The directing attorney for pro bono at Lone Star Legal Aid says of McGuire “she puts her heart and soul into her pro bono work, going above and beyond what the law requires to fully serve her clients’ needs.”

J. Chrys Dougherty Legal Services Award

This award recognizes an outstanding legal services staff attorney. The award is named for J. Chrys Dougherty, a private attorney and Bar leader, whose efforts helped to build a strong working partnership between the State Bar of Texas and legal services providers. The award includes a \$1,500 stipend from the Texas Bar Foundation and a contribution from Graves Dougherty Hearon & Moody.

Merrit Klapperich, Legal Aid of Northwest Texas (Fort Worth)

Merrit Klapperich is the Managing Attorney of the seven-county Fort Worth Office of Legal Aid of Northwest Texas. She is an exemplary advocate who gives selflessly of her time and talent to provide legal help to those who cannot not afford it. She develops and fosters relationships with community partners and area Bar associations to expand the delivery of legal services to those who need it most but can’t afford it.

Some of her many achievements on behalf of low-income Texans include working with the Tarrant County Volunteer Services to conduct a new kind of family law clinic, partnering with One Safe Place to assist victims of domestic violence in securing protective orders, custody rights, and other matters, developing a remote virtual clinic in coordination with Texas Legal Services Center to connect attorneys with rural clients, and establishing a new clinic in Northeast Fort Worth to focus on assisting persons in obtaining expunctions and non-disclosure orders so that they can obtain employment. Klapperich is committed not only to providing legal services to poor persons but helping them move out of poverty.

Judge Merrill Hartman Pro Bono Judge Award

This award honors a judge, sitting or retired, who has provided exemplary pro bono service, including: outreach to attorneys to increase the quantity and quality of pro bono representation; modifications to court processes to increase access to justice; advocacy on behalf of access to justice; or service as a volunteer judge for pro bono clinics or other pro bono proceedings. The award is named after the late Judge Merrill Hartman of Dallas, a tireless advocate for low-income communities’ access to justice.

Judge Ann Zaragoza, Texas RioGrande Legal Aid (San Antonio)

Judge Zaragoza was appointed by the City of San Antonio in 2008 and serves as a Municipal Court trial. As a lawyer, and as a judge, Judge Zaragoza has been deeply involved in the development, coordination, and operation of pro bono programs in San Antonio and across the state. In 2002, she worked with Justice Speedlin and Judge Pozza to design and create the first Community Justice Program (CJP) in San Antonio. The CJP model has been duplicated by many bar associations and legal aid offices across Texas. Initially, the CJP clinics assisted individuals with only uncontested

divorces; however, Judge Zaragoza worked with Justice Speedlin and Judge Pozza to expand to pro bono Bankruptcy clinics and later to create a monthly Veterans Legal Clinic as well. In addition to her work in creating, maintaining, and operating pro bono clinics in Bexar County, Judge Zaragoza has worked with bar leaders and judges in the Rio Grande Valley and Nueces, Kendall, and Tarrant Counties to create similar programs in those areas.

Pro Bono Award

This award honors a volunteer attorney organization that has made an outstanding contribution toward guaranteeing access to the legal system by the poor.

Grayson County Clinic Volunteers and Host Organization (Sherman)

This group of volunteers began their pro bono clinic thirty years ago, relying heavily on the generosity of the local church, Grace United Methodist Church, for hosting the clinic since its inception. The Grayson County Clinic Volunteers group is comprised of six solo practitioners, two legal assistants, and one librarian. These individuals are dedicated and generous with their time and talent. They give of their time because they understand that the need is great, and they believe that it is the right thing to do.

Pro Bono Coordinator Award

The Pro Bono Coordinator Award is presented to an individual who has made an exceptional contribution to the delivery of, and access to, legal services for the poor, while serving as the pro bono coordinator for a volunteer attorney organization or group, local bar association, law firm, law school, corporate legal office, governmental law department or legal services organization. Attorney and non-attorney pro bono coordinators are eligible and may self-nominate.

Michelle Alden, Dallas Volunteer Attorney Program (Dallas)

Michelle Alden has been the Managing Attorney for the Dallas Volunteer Attorney Program since 2007. DVAP, a joint program of the Dallas Bar Association and the Legal Aid of NorthWest Texas, is a unique and distinguished pro bono program that exemplifies the way to expand representation of poor Texans through cooperation of a bar association and a legal aid program. The breadth and scope of DVAP is astonishing, including more than 150 legal clinics each year, handling about 4,000 cases year, conducting CLE to train volunteer lawyers, holding a large volunteer recognition celebration annually, and raising more than \$1 million from private sources to support DVAP. Alden is at the forefront of all of the activities.

Alden promotes support for DVAP through outreach to the legal community, including presentations to law firms, programs at the DBA headquarters, and recognizing outstanding volunteers and supporters during the annual National Pro Bono Week. In addition to overseeing the day-to-day operations at DVAP, including the supervision of two attorneys, eight paralegals, and three staff members, Alden develops strategies to increase referrals to volunteer attorneys. She was also instrumental in developing DVAP's Veterans Clinics and Expunction Clinics. Alden is innovative with her continued efforts to provide legal help directly to the community, and her skills, diligence and diplomatic personality are reflected in how enthusiastic her volunteer lawyers continue to be.

W. Frank Newton Award

This award recognizes the pro bono efforts of attorney groups (e.g., law firm, corporate law department, government attorney office, law school faculty) whose members have made an outstanding contribution toward increasing access to legal services for the poor. The award is named for W. Frank Newton, former Dean of Texas Tech University School of Law and longtime pro bono advocate.

Jones Day (Dallas)

Jones Day has a long history of pro bono work in all the locations in which it practices, including Texas. Because of that commitment, as a Firm policy, pro bono matters undertaken by Jones Day are provided the same level of attention and professional dedication that it provides to matters undertaken on behalf of paying clients. Also, work performed on pro bono matters is given the same weight and consideration as client billable work for the purposes of evaluating lawyers. In addition to the Firm's long-standing relationships with several Dallas area legal aid programs, Jones Day has dedicated significant resources recently to a few projects which improve access to legal services for indigent populations. Those projects include the representation of unaccompanied children and mothers immigrating to the United States from Mexico and Central America and the development of VetLex, the first national and central resource allocated to legal service referrals for veterans.

Beginning in 2014, Jones Day undertook a major pro bono initiative to represent unaccompanied children and their mothers in their claims for asylum or in efforts to obtain Special Immigrant Juvenile ("SIJ") status for them. Jones Day sent teams of lawyers to military bases where immigrants were held and conducted "Know your Rights" presentations to help screen cases. The Firm also sent teams to detention facilities in New Mexico and Texas. Jones Day's commitment was made on an indefinite basis and continues. Since 2014, more than 200 Jones Day lawyers billed substantial time to the project. In 2016, the Jones Day Dallas office alone had 66 active cases. Since 2014, Jones Day has handled 130 cases involving almost 200 clients. To date, the Firm has obtained victory in 65 cases, including 20 asylum victories. Jones Day lawyers have successfully litigated these cases in the immigration courts in the Washington, D.C. area, Miami, Chicago, Dallas, San Francisco, Silicon Valley, and Los Angeles. Jones Day has also won another 45 cases for unaccompanied children seeking Special Immigrant Juvenile status. These cases involved contested evidentiary hearings before state court judges in the aforementioned cities and others, including Cleveland, Columbus, Atlanta, and New York.

In 2016, Jones Day developed VetLex, a national veterans assistance program to match indigent U.S. veterans and military families who need legal help with veteran service organizations and attorneys willing to offer their expertise pro bono. VetLex is the first national and central resource allocated to legal service referrals for veterans. Organizers are currently working to recruit hundreds of pro bono lawyers, as a full program—that will include training and certification provided by Jones Day—rolls out to legal service organizations, corporate legal departments, law firms, bar associations, and law schools. Once recruitment and training are complete, VetLex is expected to begin serving veterans this spring in pilot sites.

2017 INDIGENT DEFENSE AWARDS

Warren Burnett Award

Named for the late legendary Texas Attorney Warren Burnett, the award recognizes extraordinary contributions to improving the quality of criminal legal representation to indigents in Texas. The award honors either an individual or organization for their work in the courtroom, legislature, or in the public space.

2017 Recipient: Innocence Project of Texas

Over the last ten years, the Innocence Project of Texas (IPTX) has become the leading organization in Texas advocating for the exoneration of wrongly convicted Texas inmates. This advocacy work occurs in courts, the legislature, and the community, and has resulted in the exonerations of many wrongfully convicted persons, as well as significant legislation addressing the issues of wrongful convictions. Some of their recent significant achievements include the full exoneration of Sonia Cacy and the San Antonio Four and obtaining the nation's first posthumous pardon for Timothy Cole.

In addition to work on individual cases, IPTX has actively pursued legislation that both deals with the problem of wrongfully convicted persons still in prison, as well as avoiding wrongful convictions in the first place. IPTX is also actively involved in the criminal justice system and works collaboratively with the community to ensure the right decision is being reached at the end of the day.

Michael K. Moore Award for Excellence in Research or Writing in the Area of Indigent Criminal Defense

This award is named after Dr. Michael K. Moore for his pivotal role in several research and writing efforts that had a major effect on indigent defense in Texas. The award will be presented to an individual (including both private citizens and members of the Bar) or organization in recognition of exceptional research or writing that deals with indigent criminal defense and that represents a significant contribution to the knowledge and practices of the bench, bar, and scholarly communities.

2017 Recipient: Patrick Metze

In 2007, Professor Patrick Metze was hired by the Texas Tech University School of Law to run a criminal defense clinic in Lubbock County. Since then he has expanded his responsibilities to include Director of the Criminal Defense Clinic, Capital Punishment Clinic, and the Caprock Regional Public Defender Clinic as well as his newest clinic starting this year, the Innocence Clinic. In addition to his work in training law students, he has had the opportunity to conduct research and write several papers in the area of criminal defense.

Metze's latest publication, *The Attorney-Client Working Relationship: A Comparison of Inperson Versus Videoconferencing Modalities*, was a research project conducted by the Texas Tech University Psychology Department, which was proposed and supervised by Professor Metze to determine if videoconferencing had a negative effect on client representation. The study used Caprock Regional Public Defender Office (CRPDO) clients, as that organization covers an area that has been as big as sixteen counties and videoconferencing systems were used for day to day communication with the office's clients who were unable to travel. The videoconferencing systems were used in an effort to save both CRPDO travel time as well as increase judicial economy, while maintaining high levels of client contact and satisfaction. The study found that the clients were pleased with their representation using videoconferencing and there was no negative impact on the quality of their representation. This research and paper lays the groundwork for more extensive use of videoconferencing in the criminal justice system, an area of communication that is only now becoming one of the major communications platforms in our society.

Metze has not only researched and written articles published in six law reviews across the country that are impactful on indigent defense, he has also defended his articles in several speaking engagements. His research sheds light on some of the most well entrenched problems facing the practice of indigent defense.