



2011 PRO BONO AND LEGAL SERVICES AWARDS

BY ELLEN CARNES AND PATRICIA L. GARCIA

Each year, the State Bar Committee on Legal Services to the Poor in Civil Matters selects the winners of the Pro Bono and Legal Services Awards, which are presented at the Annual Meeting. Following are the profiles of the 2011 award winners, who enthusiastically provide access to justice for low-income Texans.

You can help increase access to civil legal services by making a contribution to the State Bar of Texas Access to Justice Fund, which supports programs that provide free civil legal services to the poor in Texas. Attorneys can include a contribution with their annual dues statement or contribute through MyBarPage (texasbar.com/mybarpage).

2011 PRO BONO AND LEGAL SERVICES AWARDS
PRO BONO COORDINATOR

If there is anything that **Ellyn Haikin Josef** knew when she younger, it was that she wanted to help people. She was not quite sure how, until she graduated from Tufts University in Boston, Mass. “I decided to be a lawyer,” says Josef, pro bono counsel to Vinson & Elkins, L.L.P. in Houston. “As pro bono counsel, I feel incredibly fortunate to get to do a job that I love that allows me to help people. I feel like I am making a difference in the lives of so many.”

Josef credits her firm with what she calls a progressive step. Prior to Josef’s arrival at Vinson & Elkins, the firm did not have an attorney who was dedicated full-time to the administration and management of the firm’s pro bono program — the firm instead relied on its Pro Bono Committee, which was composed of partners from each of the firm’s offices, to oversee the program. “I am very proud of Vinson & Elkins — what they did was incredible.” Josef is charged with the responsibility for managing and coordinating the firm-wide pro bono program — that’s more than 700 foreign and domestic attorney volunteers — including the daily coordination of all pro bono activities and committees, the substantive supervision of pro bono matters, the development of firm-wide or local pro bono projects, the presentation of pro bono information both internally and externally, and the guidance of the pro bono program’s strategic planning.

Vinson & Elkins attorneys are not required to do pro bono work, but Josef says the firm’s attorneys simply want to do pro

bono work. The benefit is not just billable credit for pro bono work, but enhancing one’s professional work. “We really go at it from a few different angles,” Josef says. “We try to provide a variety of opportunities that make it as easy as possible to participate. I try to make it strategic and look for ways to supplement our attorneys’ work.”

In addition to its full-time pro bono program, the firm also engages in pro bono work as part of its Summer Associate Program, where summer associates provide research assistance to legal aid programs. This summer, the firm will fill 30 research opportunities.

Josef’s commitment to pro bono work has garnered her the Pro Bono Coordinator Award, which honors an individual who has made an exceptional contribution to the delivery of, and access to, legal services to 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. David M. Mandell, executive director of Houston Volunteer Lawyers Program, Inc., says Josef brings a

high level of energy and enthusiasm to her work. “She is to be lauded for her efforts in the legal community,” he says. “She energizes a global law firm with her effervescent personality, tireless work ethic, and heart of gold, which is sprinkled with fairy dust to work magic on behalf of low-income Harris County residents.” ✪



Ellyn Haikin Josef
Vinson & Elkins, L.L.P., Houston

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— David M. Mandell
*Executive Director,
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2011 PRO BONO AND LEGAL SERVICES AWARDS
FRANK J. SCURLOCK AWARD

Before **David Grenardo** could talk, he knew what he would be when he grew up. When he finally could talk, he referred to those in his future profession as “loyals.” “My mom always told me that I was going to be a lawyer and told my brother that he was going to be a doctor,” says Grenardo, a senior associate of King & Spalding, L.L.P. in Houston. “And, now I’m a lawyer and my brother is a doctor.”

Grenardo says his mother didn’t push the law on him, she just wanted the best for him. As immigrants, Grenardo’s parents taught their two children to dream and aim high. But more than that, Grenardo’s parents instilled in him a sense of generosity, which has carried over into Grenardo’s legal career. “As attorneys, we have an obligation to give,” he says. “We are privileged to be attorneys and we have a duty to use our skills to help those in need.”

Right out of law school, Grenardo made every effort to do pro bono work. He practiced in Los Angeles, Calif., and immediately got to work with the Los Angeles County Bar Association, and later the Alliance for Children’s Rights, the San Diego Volunteer Lawyer Program, Bet Tzedek, Public Counsel, and the Harriett Buhai Center for Family Law. After relocating to Texas, he quickly got on board with the Texas Civil Rights Project (TCRP) in Austin and now serves on its statewide board. Since he started working with the TCRP in 2008, Grenardo has provided more than 250 hours of pro bono work and service hours on its board to the organization, which includes spearheading

TCRP’s Pro Bono Program, where he recruits big firms for pro bono work.

Though Grenardo’s day job focuses on complex commercial litigation, he enjoys doing civil rights and First Amendment pro bono cases. Practicing in a vastly different area of law has been challenging and rewarding for Grenardo. “If you’re passionate about something, you’ll push through any difficulties because you’re helping to gain justice for someone,” he says.

For his work, Grenardo was named a 2011 Frank J. Scurlock Award recipient. Named for the first chair of the State Bar of Texas Legal Services to the Poor in Civil Matters Committee, the award honors an attorney who has provided outstanding pro bono work in the field of providing legal services to the poor. TexasBarBooks has provided Grenardo with a complimentary practice manual (up to a \$645 value) of his choice to help in his representation of pro bono clients.

Grenardo says he is appreciative of the award, but he says the real honor goes to those he represents and to the legal aid attorneys who help them on a daily basis. In one case, Grenardo represented a chaplain who volunteered at a county jail, ministering to inmates. The chaplain was banned from the prison for voicing concerns about the inmates’ conditions. “That case was different,” he says. “The chaplain ended up being the hero, because what she did every day gave those she ministered to hope. We were only a means to help her do that work and she was inspiring to us.” ❖



David Grenardo
Houston

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King & Spalding, L.L.P. (Houston)*

2011 PRO BONO AND LEGAL SERVICES AWARDS
FRANK J. SCURLOCK AWARD

The thought of children being raised where they feel like outsiders without real family to support them is very concerning to me,” says Marcy Hogan Greer, a partner in the Austin office of Fulbright & Jaworski L.L.P. “Growing up is hard enough without being moved from placement to placement and being largely forgotten in the foster system.”

Greer has devoted her time to help the state’s foster and at-risk youth. Over the past two years, she has served as lead pro bono partner on a Texas Appleseed research project requested by the Texas Supreme Court Permanent Judicial Commission on Children, Youth and Families (PJCCYF) aimed at improving the life outcomes of children in long-term foster care in Texas. The project found that the judicial system that oversees foster care needed many improvements to take better care of foster kids. For a youth who is in the foster care system for more than three years, they average 10 or more different placements — different homes, case workers, even attorneys — making it hard for the child to find any kind of stability, Greer says. “Too many of these children end up aging out and homeless, with substance abuse problems, in the criminal justice system, or having kids of their own in custody of Child Protective Services. Greer recruited 60 volunteer attorneys, who donated 587 pro bono hours to the project. In total, Greer donated about 500 hours to the project.

In addition to her work with Texas Appleseed, Greer is immediate past chair of the State Bar Appellate Section and was the program liaison to the Texas Supreme Court Pro Bono Pilot

Project. She helped implement the section’s Pro Bono Committee, which matches clients with appellate attorneys. More than 120 volunteers have participated in the committee’s programs.

Greer will soon design a Benchmark Hearing Pilot to test whether changes in the scope, frequency, and duration of placement review hearings will help expedite the transition into permanent homes.



Marcy Hogan Greer
Fulbright & Jaworski L.L.P., Austin

For her work, Greer was named a 2011 Frank J. Scurlock Award recipient. Named for the first chair of the State Bar of Texas Legal Services to the Poor in Civil Matters Committee, the award honors an attorney who has provided outstanding pro bono work in the field of providing legal services to the poor. TexasBarBooks has provided Greer with a complimentary practice manual (up to a \$645 value) of her choice to help in her representation of pro bono clients.

Greer’s efforts will ultimately help the state, says former Texas Supreme Court Justice Harriet O’Neill, who spearheaded the creation of and chaired the PJCCYF. “[Marcy’s] outstanding pro bono service will help improve the lives of thousands of Texas children in long-term foster care and to expedite the process of finding the safe, permanent homes they deserve.”

Greer says she has always had a passion for children. It’s important for all of us to help foster children grow up in homes that are stable and safe, she says. “These youths are our future. Do we want them to be happy, productive adults or incarcerated or homeless? We can — and need to — make a difference by shining a bright spotlight on the issues and getting more attention focused on solving the problems.” ❖

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— Harriet O’Neill

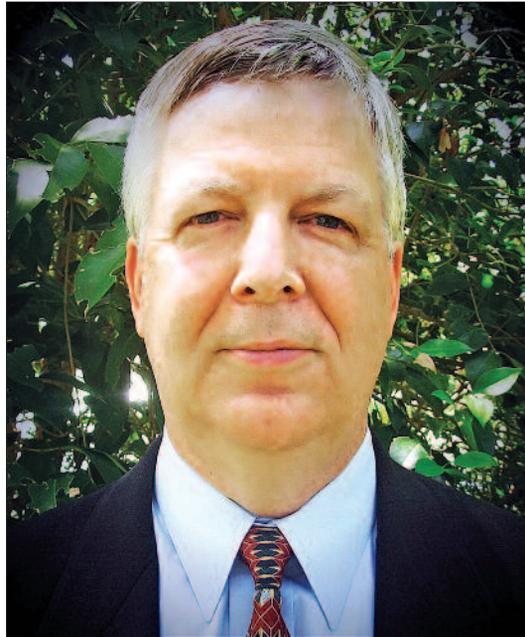
Former Justice, Texas Supreme Court

2011 PRO BONO AND LEGAL SERVICES AWARDS
J. CHRYS DOUGHERTY LEGAL SERVICES AWARD

The Watergate hearings prompted **Brian East** to become a lawyer. “I thought there were some prominent lawyers who had not done a good job upholding their obligations,” the Austin attorney says. “I thought that if I were an attorney, I would be truer to the profession.”

Indeed, East has upheld his duty to the legal profession. He has committed his legal career to public interest law. He also serves on the boards of the National Employment Lawyers Association and the Texas Employment Lawyers Association, serves on the Legal Advocacy Subcommittee of the American Diabetes Association, and in the past has served on boards and committees of the Travis County Bar Association, the Capitol Area AIDS Legal Project, and the National Disabilities Rights Network. He is also a frequent presenter on disability law issues. Currently a senior attorney at a non-profit public interest firm, Disability Rights Texas (formerly called Advocacy, Inc.), East mentors new staff attorneys while carrying a caseload.

“Brian is one in a million — an amazingly gifted lawyer who uses those talents in support of those who have physical and mental disabilities,” says Katherine Butler of Butler & Harris in Houston. “He is tireless in his efforts to move toward a day when all Americans will be judged on their abilities, rather than stereotyped because of a medical condition.”



Brian East
Disability Rights Texas

East was named a recipient of the 2011 State Bar J. Chrys Dougherty Legal Service Award, which 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.

East has been instrumental in many cases, helping protect and advocate for those with disabilities. East also worked on the 2008 amendments to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). In recent years, courts had restricted the ADA so that many persons with disabilities were not covered by it. “Fewer and fewer attorneys were taking on those cases, because they were so difficult,” he says. “It was worth going to Congress and asking if they could fix it. There are a lot of problems out there, and a lot of that is the result of ignorance.” After months of negotiations and the hard work of East and many others, the amendments to the Act were accepted.

East says another memorable case involved a girl who was sexually abused by a teacher. He helped successfully represent the girl, obtaining a settlement that would allow her to move forward with her life. “She received resolution and was able to move on and get therapy,” he says. “That case made it easy to see the importance of protecting our children and youth.” ❖

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— Katherine Butler
Butler & Harris, Houston

2011 PRO BONO AND LEGAL SERVICES AWARDS
J. CHRYS DOUGHERTY LEGAL SERVICES AWARD

Austin attorney **Nelson Mock** is an overachiever. He didn't just earn a few scouting badges; he became an Eagle Scout. He didn't just receive his J.D. from the University of Texas at Austin; he received a public policy degree as well. And he didn't just pass the bar; he passed the bar three weeks after the birth of his daughter.

Mock, who has brought this diligent approach to his public interest work, has been awarded the 2011 J. Chrys Dougherty Award for Legal Services, an accolade that recognizes an outstanding legal services staff attorney. The award comes with a \$1,500 stipend from the Texas Bar Foundation and the Texas Access to Justice Commission.

Mock, managing attorney for the housing for people with disabilities team and the landlord-tenant team at Texas RioGrande Legal Aid (TRLA), has always been passionate about helping others. He was raised by his mother, who is a musician, and his father, also a musician and one of the journalists who originally broke the *Gideon v. Wainwright* story in Florida, to be aware and conscious of the world around him. "My father listened to a shortwave radio every morning and would greet us with highlights of the news over breakfast," Mock says. "It was a great opportunity to discuss the news and current events, and to find out what was going on in the world."

After graduation from the Plan II Honors program at the University of Texas, Mock worked as a legal aid coordinator for El Rescate Legal Services in Los Angeles, Calif. After his graduation from law school, Mock clerked for U.S. District Judge William Wayne Justice, who he considers a wonderful mentor.

In 1999, Mock was awarded a Skadden Arps Fellowship to work at the Austin office of Legal Aid of Central Texas, which later became Texas RioGrande Legal Aid, where he has been ever since. "TRLA is a great place. I get to work with extraordinary people who are interesting, fun, and keep me challenged academically," Mock says.

Working with clients on a range of housing issues from tenant rights to foreclosure is extremely rewarding, he says. "Often, they come to us facing an extraordinary set of obstacles and to see them face these problems head-on is amazing. It's very rewarding that we can make a positive impact, that we can help someone to keep their house."

Mock first became interested in housing law through the mentorship of Fred Fuchs, a senior managing attorney at TRLA. Fuchs, now an adjunct professor at the University of Texas School of Law, is the first recipient of the J. Chrys Dougherty Legal Services Award. According to Sapna Aiyer, who worked with Mock during her TRLA clerkship, he has become an excellent mentor himself.

"He is patient and thoughtful and encourages questions," Aiyer, now a staff attorney with Lone Star Legal Aid, says. "After all of his time working at TRLA, he is still the hopeful, optimistic, energetic attorney, seeing each legal case as a possibility."

In addition to his work with TRLA, Mock is a founding chair of the State Bar of Texas Poverty Law Section. And — just to put us to shame — a devoted father of two and a gifted guitar player. 🎸



Nelson Mock

Texas RioGrande Legal Aid, Austin

He is patient and thoughtful and encourages questions. After all of his time working at TRLA, he is still the hopeful, optimistic, energetic attorney, seeing each legal case as a possibility.

— Sapna Aiyer
Staff Attorney, Lone Star Legal Aid

2011 PRO BONO AND LEGAL SERVICES AWARDS
PRO BONO AWARD

Since its inception in 1981, the **Houston Volunteer Lawyers Program (HVLP)** has grown to include more than 3,000 attorney volunteers. Created by the Houston Bar Association to provide free civil legal aid to low-income Houstonians, HVLP is engaging lawyers across the city in pro bono initiatives.

“It’s a different model,” explains Houston Bar Association president Denise Scofield. “It’s exactly what its name implies — a community of volunteer lawyers coming together to help indigent Houstonians.” In 2010, under the executive direction of David Mandell, HVLP volunteers donated 17,832 hours to helping fellow Houstonians access legal assistance.

The Houston Volunteer Lawyers Program has been named one of this year’s recipients of the Pro Bono Award, an honor in recognition of the program’s outstanding contribution to guaranteeing access to the legal system for low-income Texans.

Alistair Dawson, chair of HVLP, says that the most important shift in recent years has been the cases the organization handles. “We have always taken on a lot of family law cases, but recently we have seen a rise in cases involving veterans’ affairs, consumer issues, and wills and estate planning. As our volunteer base has increased, so have the types of issues we are equipped to handle. Now, we’re able to serve more Houstonians in more areas.”

The organization has also responded to crises like Hurricanes Katrina and Ike. “Our volunteers were able to mobilize to help people who were in desperate need,” Dawson says. HVLP has partnered with Lone Star Legal Aid and Boat People S.O.S. to provide legal assistance for low-income individuals who were still feeling the repercussions of Hurricane Ike. Between Feb. 1 and Sept. 30, 2010, the HVLP Crisis Response Team addressed more than 700 cases.

Other initiatives include Saturday Legal Advice Clinics, a free legal assistance clinic on the first Saturday of each month that takes place in three locations across Houston. This year, more than 1,400 clients were assisted through these clinics. HVLP is very involved in helping veterans. The State Bar’s *Texas Lawyers for Texas Veterans* program was modeled after HVLP’s successful Veteran’s Legal Initiative, which includes weekly advice clinics.

Getting involved is easy, Scofield says. Firms can commit to a certain number of volunteer hours for the next five years through the Houston Bar Association’s Access to Justice Champions Program. “Attorneys can always pick up the phone and call or send us an email,” Scofield adds. “Pro bono work is so important and because of funding cuts and recent economic conditions, the responsibility on all of us will be even greater going forward.” ❖



Opening Doors to Justice

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— Alistair Dawson
Chair, Houston Volunteer Lawyers Program

2011 PRO BONO AND LEGAL SERVICES AWARDS
W. FRANK NEWTON AWARD

In 2010, Fulbright & Jaworski L.L.P.'s Texas offices donated 46,524 hours of pro bono work. To put that in perspective, that's more than 1,938 days, more than 64 months, and more than five years. In other words: it's a lot.

In recognition of their exceptional work for legal aid, Fulbright & Jaworski is this year's recipient of the W. Frank Newton Award, an honor in recognition of the pro bono contribution of attorney groups whose members have made an outstanding contribution in the provision of, or access to, legal services to the poor. The award is named for W. Frank Newton, a former dean of Texas Tech University School of Law and a long-time pro bono advocate.

Ninety-two percent (452) of the lawyers in Fulbright & Jaworski's Texas offices participated in pro bono initiatives. Stewart Gagnon, a partner in the firm's Houston office and its pro bono coordinator, credits this high level of participation with the diversity of the firm's programs and with the personal involvement of the firm's management.

"Fulbright provides the opportunity to do something different. We have great diversity in our initiatives, and our attorneys have a lot of leeway to run with something they're passionate about," he says. "Our partners remain very engaged in our pro bono programs and lead by example."

From working with abandoned immigrant children to providing legal advice to veterans to educating pro se litigants, Fulbright and Jaworski's pro bono programs address a wide range of access to justice issues. Recent programs include the Houston Bar Foundation's Day of Giving, a program spearheaded by Gagnon that coordinated 10 legal advice clinics across Houston for low-income Texans that addressed more than 1,000 legal matters. The Day of Giving inspired the Houston Volunteer Lawyers Program, also a pro bono award winner this year, to expand on these legal advice clinics.

Fulbright & Jaworski frequently collaborates with other organizations. In Austin, the firm partnered with Dell to provide legal advice clinics to the parents of special-needs children, and with Texas Appleseed to produce a report, "Improving the Lives of Children in Long-Term Foster Care," which is being used to advocate for improvement in child protective services. The firm has also been instrumental in immediate past president and Fulbright & Jaworski partner Terry Tottenham's *Texas Lawyers for Texas Veterans* initiative.

"We're very honored by this award," Gagnon says. "We try to have an emphasis on leadership. We support our lawyers so they can support the community in which we all work and live in an effort to give back." ❁

FULBRIGHT
& Jaworski L.L.P.
Attorneys at Law

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— Stewart Gagnon
Partner and Pro Bono Coordinator,
Fulbright & Jaworski L.L.P.