

ATJ PRO BONO CHAMPION



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RONALD "NED" DENNIS

*Sole practitioner, Marshall
State Bar of Texas Pro Bono College 20-year member*

The Texas Bar Journal sat down with Ned Dennis to discuss his commitment to pro bono work and how he believes sole practitioners can make an impact on the legal aid landscape.



What type of pro bono work do you do?

I'm involved with nearly every type that you can imagine in a rural county with only 70,000 residents. I take whatever walks through my door — family law, wills, and estates are probably the bulk of it. I get a lot of referrals from Lone Star Legal Aid and participate in Harrison County's legal aid clinic.

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How did you become involved in pro bono work?

When I first started practicing law, the court appointed me in criminal cases. After that, I started accepting referrals. Now, I take projects on a case-by-case basis. I don't distinguish between regular and pro bono cases — I just take whoever walks in the door during the normal course of business. It's just part of living in a small town.

How can sole or small firm practitioners make time for pro bono work?

There is a sacrifice involved, but, for me, it's also part of the responsibility of being an attorney. Sometimes it's difficult because small firm lawyers or sole practitioners don't always have the same support system or resources that big firms lawyers have for doing pro bono work. I make the time when people walk in my door. Small town lawyers can make a huge difference in people's lives. ☺