

“THE WAY TO
RIGHT WRONGS
IS TO TURN THE
LIGHT OF TRUTH
UPON THEM.”

Ida B. Wells



The
Legal Aid Society
of Cleveland
Since 1905

115TH ANNUAL MEETING & REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

Tuesday, December 8, 2020
Free livestream online @ 12:00 p.m.

Keynote remarks: The Honorable Goodwin Liu,
Associate Justice, Supreme Court of California



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THE LEGAL AID SOCIETY OF CLEVELAND'S
115TH ANNUAL REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

Tuesday, December 8, 2020 • free livestream online @ 12:00 p.m.

11:45 a.m.	Welcome Slides & Sponsor Recognition	watch at www.lasclev.org/2020Event or on Legal Aid's Facebook page or YouTube Channel
12:00 p.m.	Welcome	Colleen M. Cotter, Esq. <i>Executive Director</i> , The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland
	Change is Happening	a film produced by Goldfarb Weber Creative Media
	Recognition	
	<i>page 10</i>	Claude E. Clarke Award Tracy Ferron, Hilda Hernandez, Heather Lynch, and Laura Post
	<i>page 10</i>	Leadership Award Deborah Dallman, Esq.
	<i>page 7</i>	C. Lyonel Jones Lifetime Leadership Award Susan Stauffer, Esq.
	<i>page 16</i>	Community Impact Award Jason Dawicke, Esq. Donna Kolis, Esq. Betsy Rader, Esq. Christina Royer, Esq.
	<i>page 17</i>	Legacy of Justice Award Ann McGowan Porath, Esq. <i>Managing Attorney</i> , Intake and Volunteer Lawyers Program
	Legal Aid Update	Mike Ungar, Esq. Ulmer & Berne <i>President</i> , The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland
	Keynote Remarks	The Honorable Goodwin H. Liu <i>Associate Justice</i> , Supreme Court of California
	<i>music selections by:</i>	Isabel Trautwein (violin, Cleveland Orchestra) Ariel Clayton Karaś (violin, Opus 216)





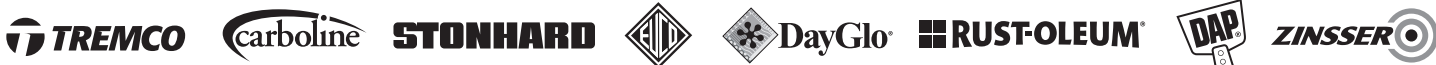
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Associate Justice Goodwin H. Liu



Justice Goodwin Liu is an Associate Justice of the California Supreme Court. Nominated by Governor Jerry Brown, Justice Liu was unanimously confirmed by the Commission on Judicial Appointments and sworn into office on September 1, 2011. He was retained by the electorate in 2014. Before joining the state’s highest court, Justice Liu was Professor of Law and Associate Dean at the UC Berkeley School of Law. His primary areas of expertise are constitutional law, education law and policy, and diversity in the legal profession.

The son of Taiwanese immigrants, Justice Liu grew up in Sacramento, where he attended public schools. He went to Stanford University and earned a bachelor’s degree in biology in 1991. He attended Oxford University on a Rhodes Scholarship and earned a masters degree in philosophy and physiology. Upon returning to the United States, he moved to Washington D.C. to help launch the AmeriCorps national service program and worked for two years as a senior program officer at the Corporation for National Service.

Justice Liu graduated from Yale Law School in 1998, becoming the first in his family to earn a law degree. He clerked for Judge David Tatel on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit and then worked as Special Assistant to the Deputy Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education. He went on to clerk at the U.S. Supreme Court for Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg during the October 2000 Term. From 2001 to 2003, he worked in the litigation practice of O’Melveny & Myers in Washington, D.C.

Justice Liu continues to teach constitutional law as a visiting professor at Harvard Law School and Stanford Law School. He is an elected member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the American Law Institute. He serves on the Council of the American Law Institute, on the Board of Directors of the James Irvine Foundation, and on the Yale University Council.

He has previously served on the California Commission on Access to Justice – which has a mission that aligns perfectly with the mission of The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland.

In appreciation of service to Legal Aid and work for justice

Thank you

Matt Nakon, Esq.

Andre Dowdy

Gladys Reed

The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland annually recognizes staff through this awards program funded by **Legal Aid’s Leadership Fund for Organizational Development**. The fund is supported by the **Allen Madorsky Memorial Fund, Alan Gressel Memorial Fund**, and numerous other individual gifts. If you would like to make a gift to support Legal Aid’s Leadership Fund, please call 216.861.5217.

C. LYONEL JONES LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

...for a career dedicated to The Legal Aid Society and its clients, and named in honor of C. Lyonel Jones (1932 – 2006), who himself dedicated his entire legal career to Legal Aid.



Susan Stauffer, Esq.

Senior Attorney, Cleveland Office, Family Group

In 2020 Susan celebrates her 50-year anniversary at Legal Aid! She began at Legal Aid as a law student, and never left. Susan built the Family Practice Group at a time when many legal aid organizations did not practice family law. Susan saw the need to represent clients as they experienced one of the most painful and vulnerable times of their lives; she wanted to ensure they were able to create safe, secure homes for themselves and their children, and attain economic security. Most importantly, Susan helps her clients find and use their voice.

Before the pandemic, nearly every Saturday morning Susan could be found advising clients and volunteer attorneys at one of Legal Aid’s Brief Advice Clinics, which the Volunteer Lawyers Program held at libraries and community centers. Susan is well-respected among her peers as an expert in Family Law. She is one of a limited number of attorneys in Ohio who are an authority on military benefits issues.

After 50 years of practicing law, Susan is as focused as ever on improving her already highly developed litigation, negotiation, and advocacy skills. She stays updated on every advancement in statutory and case law as well as changes in court practices. She engages in ferocious conversation with colleagues as she formulates strategies for individual cases and approaches to address systemic issues. Her intellectual curiosity combined with compassion for clients and their children make her a formidable advocate.

With a lifetime of service to her community, Susan has changed the lives of literally thousands of clients. What an achievement.

Benesch is proud to support the mission of
The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland.


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The Next Generation of Service

The Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Foundation congratulates The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland for 115 years of service to Northeast Ohio. As you work toward your next century of providing legal resources to those who need them, we salute you! You are a shining example of Next Generation leadership, adapting in times of crisis, with eyes always trained on the future.

Just like our partners at Legal Aid, our Bar is leaning into the future to ensure that our mission endures for another 100+ years.



To learn more about our Next Generation Campaign, visit CleMetroBar.org/Foundation.

The Claude E. Clarke Award

... recognizes staff members for outstanding service through professional performance and commitment to Legal Aid and its clients, and is named for Claude Clarke (1890 – 1975), who directed Legal Aid’s work for nearly four decades.



Tracy Ferron

Paralegal II, Jefferson Office, Family Group

With 23 years of experience at Legal Aid, Tracy demonstrates an extraordinary commitment to both our organization and our clients. She joined Legal Aid as a legal secretary and has continue to take on more responsibility over time. Tracy is a wonderful ambassador for Legal Aid in Ashtabula County, as she helps providers and the community learn about our services. She is fondly known as the ‘go-to’ person for anything that needs to be solved. Her combination of empathy and critical thinking skills make her a wonderful asset to Legal Aid. Tracy often works with survivors of domestic violence who have experienced trauma and difficult circumstances. Her kindness and professionalism build their confidence in the justice system. Tracy is a fantastic teammate. She is always cheerful and will always pitch in wherever she is needed.



Hilda Hernandez

Paralegal I, Cleveland Office, Health & Opportunity Group

Hilda joined Legal Aid more than six years ago. She began as an Intake Specialist, and excelled in that role with her warm and engaging personality, bilingual skills, ability to listen, and perceptiveness to spot legal issues. Last year, Hilda was promoted to paralegal with the Health & Opportunity group focusing on immigration work. Hilda plays a key role in maintaining communication with clients being held in ICE detention; these clients are often fearful of deportation and depressed due to isolation. Her patience and compassion help them build their case. Hilda gathers the necessary documents from clients and consulates alike, wading through complex immigration laws. Hilda is very active in her community and serves as an ambassador for Legal Aid, leveraging her contacts. Hilda’s partnerships with clients serve as a model for us all, and her generosity with colleagues is remarkable.



Heather Lynch

Intake Specialist II, Jefferson Office, Volunteer Lawyers Program/Intake Group

Heather has been at Legal Aid for 19 years. She is a leader among her colleagues. Her project management skills have ensured success of countless new initiatives. She works every day with a well-balanced combination of efficiency and effectiveness. She is always looking for (and usually finding) an opportunity to make a difference – for a client, a colleague, or the organization as a whole. Heather conveys kindness and thoughtfulness to clients experiencing trauma. She has developed and nurtured strong community partnerships and has taken the lead in supporting community outreach clinics in Ashtabula County. She is a proud ambassador for Legal Aid.



Laura Post

Intake Specialist II, Elyria Office, Volunteer Lawyers Program/ Intake Group

Laura joined Legal Aid 23 years ago. As an Intake Specialist, she focuses on one goal: exceptional client service. She relates well with clients and works hard to assist everyone she serves with finding a positive resolution to their problem. She naturally establishes an excellent rapport with our clients. Laura has true concern and care for the individuals with whom she interacts. Laura seeks out opportunities to impact the community by volunteering at outreach clinics in Lorain County. She is creative, and builds Legal Aid’s partnerships and presence in the community. As Office Manager, Laura also ensures the Elyria office functions effectively and efficiently.

Leadership Award

... to acknowledge outstanding staff leadership, tireless efforts for Legal Aid clients and vision for Legal Aid’s work.

The Leadership Award is presented to an individual who makes Legal Aid a better organization, helps others around them achieve more for Legal Aid clients, and creates a team for social justice.



Deborah Dallmann, Esq. *Senior Attorney, Elyria Office, Health & Opportunity Group*

Over the past 12 years, Deborah has focused her practice at Legal Aid on serving clients with very low income: individuals and families who need safety net programs (such as SNAP/food stamps, cash assistance, disability benefits, and veterans’ benefits) to survive. She removes individual obstacles to those benefits and builds partnerships to address systemic barriers. She has identified local and statewide barriers and delays to SNAP and other benefits, and successfully advocated to remove them, impacting countless families. She adeptly uses her skills in administrative hearings, litigation, work with

the media and partnership-building to create community change. Deborah’s leadership goes beyond her high-quality work on individual and systemic issues. She is co-chair of Legal Aid’s Vulnerable Populations Committee focused on Individuals with Disabilities, helping create a more inclusive culture at Legal Aid. Deborah’s leadership and advocacy sets an example for how best to spot systemic issues engage with community partners to create community change. And, she happily gives credit to others, even when she is in a leadership role. She is a leader whom others want to follow.

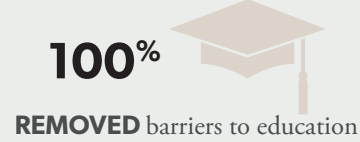


LAST YEAR, LEGAL AID IMPACTED **16,710** PEOPLE

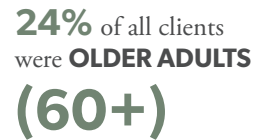
7,297 total cases handled, including 1,760 cases handled by volunteers
(5,911 cases handled & closed in 2019 + 1,386 cases continued into 2020)

Legal Aid helped thousands more through community legal education, outreach and other advocacy.

LEGAL AID increased assets and income and reduced debt for our clients by a total of over **\$13 million**



CLIENT DEMOGRAPHICS



STAFF & SUPPORTERS

Our Staff
51 attorneys / 38 support staff

Our Supporters
3,739 total volunteers, including 3,513 pro bono attorneys / 572 pro bono attorneys engaged / 16 in-house volunteers / 313 volunteer law students / 2,092 financial supporters

COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

106 neighborhood clinics

164 outreach events and educational presentations for community groups

137 educational presentations for social service providers

CLIENT RACE / ETHNICITY

54% Black

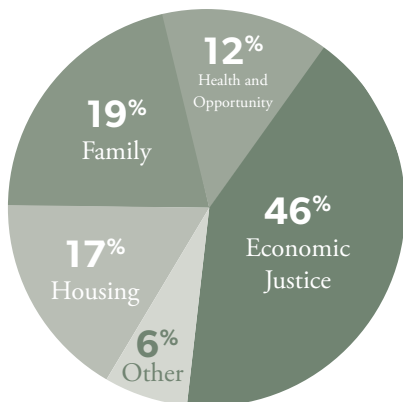
34% White

7% Hispanic

5% identified as other races/ethnicities



CASES BY PRACTICE



CASES BY COUNTY



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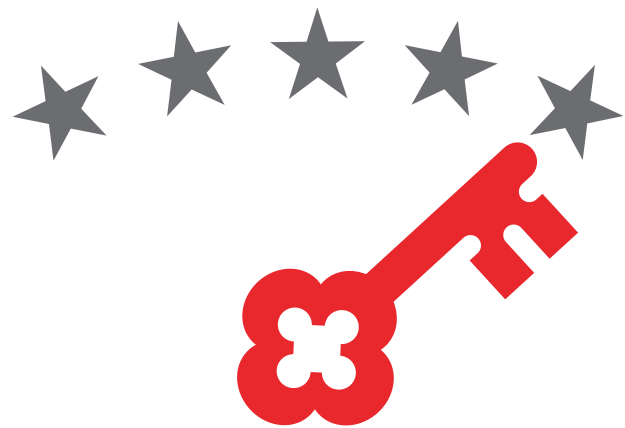
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Statistics current as of year-end 2019

We're grateful for all you do.



We can't express in just a few words how much we appreciate your dedication. Thanks to your efforts you've made a difference in our community and had a positive effect on us all. For that and more we're grateful.

KeyBank thanks The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland for making a difference.



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We salute those who work to
#ExtendJustice and #ChangelsHappening

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Volunteer Lawyers Program [vlp]

The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland cannot assist its many clients without relying on the great work of its volunteers. Last year, 20% of the people helped by Legal Aid were assisted by a *pro bono* attorney.

2020 COMMUNITY IMPACT AWARDS

This award is given to individuals, firms, groups, or other volunteers who have made a mark for outstanding participation, effort, or critical involvement that ensured success for a client, client community and/or project.

The 2020 Community Impact Awards focus on our legal community's response to the challenges faced by those who have lost employment during COVID-19. The response to our call for volunteers to staff a new weekly Virtual Advice Clinic focused on unemployment/employment issues was immediate.

Since the clinic's inception in mid-April 2020, four attorneys stand out among the 21 who have participated: together, this small group has helped more than 120 clients navigate the Unemployment Compensation system, providing advice and guidance and taking on extended involvement in client matters. Through their leadership, Legal Aid was able to successfully adapt our extensive network of Brief Advice Clinics to a virtual setting. The Virtual Advice Clinics continue to serve clients.

Beyond their volunteer legal work, these four stand-out volunteer attorneys also serve as mentors for other volunteers and collaborate with Legal Aid staff attorneys:



Jason Dawicke, Esq.



Donna Kolis, Esq.



Betsy Rader, Esq.



Christina Royer, Esq.

Congratulations to these Community Impact Award winners for outstanding participation, effort, and critical involvement to ensure the success of the Employment/Unemployment Virtual Advice Clinic to provide access to legal assistance in an unparalleled time of need.

2020 LEGACY OF JUSTICE AWARD

This award is given to an individual, group, or institution whose participation in pro bono or other volunteer efforts has been significant in terms of length and/or impact.



Ann McGowan Porath, Esq. *Managing Attorney, Volunteer Lawyers Program / Intake Group*

This year, the Legal Aid Board of Directors pro bono committee did something unconventional. They secretly and unanimously voted to present the Legacy of Justice Award to Legal Aid attorney Ann McGowan Porath.

Ann is retiring this year after an incredible 38-year career with Legal Aid. Ann started her career at Legal Aid as a Reginald Heber Smith Fellow and soon moved into leadership roles, including serving as manager of the Older Persons' Unit. In 2004, she was tapped to be the first Managing Attorney of the new Volunteer Lawyers Program and Intake Group.

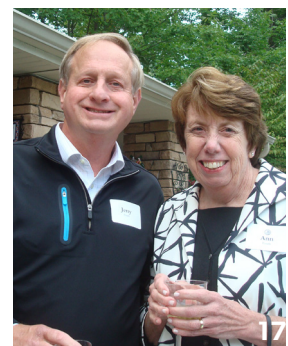
Ann nurtured the VLP over the past 16 years, and today, it is nationally recognized for its breadth, innovation, and quality. Ann has engaged, inspired, and mentored thousands of pro bono lawyers and law students who engage in Legal Aid's work. Ann's wide-ranging knowledge of substantive areas earned her a reputation among volunteers – if you don't know something, ask Ann. Ann built partnerships with numerous community centers and libraries, regularly bringing lawyers into the community through the VLP's signature Brief Advice Clinics. She spent most Saturday mornings at those clinics, serving clients and supporting volunteers.

Ann has earned the deepest admiration and respect from her colleagues. Her vision, compassion, and passion for justice are unmatched.

Because of Ann's leadership, Legal Aid volunteers have served more than 20,000 clients. And Ann cares deeply for those clients. She is equally dedicated to supporting her team of staff and volunteers. Ann has created a culture in which volunteers and staff work together, creating a partnership for justice.

Ann is recognized by state and national partners for her leadership, dedication, and creativity. She is regularly called upon to provide advice and guidance to colleagues across the country who aspire to follow her lead.

Legal Aid's Volunteer Lawyers Program, the clients it has served, the volunteers it has engaged, and a rich culture of engagement and partnership are Ann's Legacy of Justice.



A light of truth in our society.



Ulmer stands with the Legal Aid Society of Cleveland whose work to give a voice to the voiceless and right wrongs in our society provides a beacon of hope for our community's most vulnerable citizens.

A special thank you to Legal Aid's Board President and our colleague **Michael N. Ungar**, along with Legal Aid's Board of Directors, employees, and volunteers, for their vital work and dedication in securing access to justice for all.



Our business begins with you.®



The Diebold Nixdorf Foundation is proud to support the mission of The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland in securing justice and resolving fundamental problems for the most vulnerable members of society.



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We are proud to support the Legal Aid Society of Cleveland in its mission to secure legal solutions and justice for Northeast Ohio's vulnerable population.



The following attorney volunteers

helped Legal Aid clients over the past year,
both before and during the coronavirus pandemic!

Legal Aid is grateful to these volunteers
for their incredible commitment to Legal Aid's mission!

Scott Abell	Matthew Brady	Corrigan	Bryan Evans	Paula Goodwin	Allen Hufford	Ellen Kramer	Alvin Mathews	Kathleen Nitschke	Irene Rennillo	Allen Spike	David Uhlendorff
Madelyn Adami	Patricia Brandt	Jennifer Corso	Susan Evans	Andrew D.	Kevin Hulick	Kristen Kraus	Lawrence Mays	Kelly Noll	Glen Richardson	Emily Spivack	Kathleen Valdez
Emily A. Adams	Scott Bratton	Brandon Cox	Ronald Falconi	Gordon-Seifert	Zachary Humphrey	Trisha Krewson	Marcus Mazurowski	Mark Norris	Lawrence Roach	David Sporar	Jaelyn Vary
Stephanie Adams	Michael R. Briach	Dennis Coyne	Michael Farrell	Jennifer Gorman	Kyle Hutnick	Ryan Krisby	Jonathan McDonald	Jenifer Novak	Rita Rochford	Mark Stanton	Jason Veloso
Harlin Adelman	Susan Brooks	Stacy Cozart Martin	Ruth Fazio	Angela Gott	Bruce Hutton	Jared Kriwinsky	Robert McEvoy	Christina Novotny	Joseph Rodgers	Stacy Stefanik	Carmen Verhosek
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Ida B. Wells

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COMMITMENT TO
COMMUNITY



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