



POETIC JUSTICE

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STORIES OF PHILANTHROPY AND HOPE FROM THE LEGAL AID SOCIETY OF CLEVELAND

THIS IS MY LEGAL AID STORY

*Special guest column by Darrell Clay, Esq.,
President of the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association*

As a transplant who now calls Cleveland home, I am grateful for the opportunity to serve the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association as its 2017-2018 President. In this decennial year, we are forging CMBA's coming history through a new strategic plan that concentrates our efforts on increasing membership and enhancing engagement, building our sections into invaluable member resources, nurturing bar leadership, and impacting issues affecting law and justice — most importantly, the seemingly insatiable need for legal aid.

The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland has been a critical ally in conquering CMBA's strategic goals, and we're proud our partnership is among the strongest in the country. Legal Aid's mission to help people stop legal issues from escalating dovetails perfectly with the CMBA's strategy focusing on the intersection of law and justice, and how our profession helps ensure that Northeast Ohio's renaissance becomes a shared reality for all. With this mutual vision, we have partnered with Legal Aid to pilot The Legal Clinics at Cleveland Metropolitan School District, in which CMBA *pro bono* volunteers and Legal Aid staff provide advice to families on bankruptcy, custody, child support,

evictions, and other legal issues that bear directly on the quality of a student's educational experience.

The Legal Clinics are just one point where the CMBA's and Legal Aid's endeavors coincide. For instance, our Women in Law section enthusiastically joined forces with Legal Aid to host clinics for women and children in crisis. Historically, Legal Aid staff members have supported CMBA leadership as board members. Through Legal Aid's many volunteer opportunities, CMBA members find deeply fulfilling *pro bono* work in fostering fairness, empowering individual clients, and meeting needs of families when and where they need civil legal counsel.

I'm Darrell Clay from the CMBA — and this is my Legal Aid Story.



JOIN THE CONVERSATION! #MYLEGALAIDSTORY
VISIT: WWW.MYLEGALAIDSTORY.ORG

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CONSTRUCTION ZONE WORKER UNJUSTLY FIRED, WINS COMPENSATION IN UNEMPLOYMENT HEARING

Between speeding traffic and the crunch and rumble of machinery, Celestine Gaters braved her job as a construction zone traffic flagger with grace. It could be harsh physical work for the nearly 60-year-old widow, but the pay was good and she'd already hung on three years.

One blustery February day, Ms. Gaters saw a gust of wind topple a traffic sign. When she bent down to retrieve it, her safety glasses slid off her face and she shoved them in her pocket. When she was done grappling with the cumbersome sign, she put the glasses back on.

But four days later, her supervisor called to fire her for safety violations.

evidence to the commission that showed her client was terminated without just cause and was owed unemployment compensation. After listening to Ms. Whatley's clear articulation of Ms. Gaters' actions and the employer's conduct, the hearing officer ruled in Ms. Gaters' favor.

She received enough unemployment compensation benefits to tide her over while she was applying for other positions.

Now Ms. Gaters has a new job with fewer physical demands and straightforward rules. She says she's eager to pay forward the kindness she received by telling everyone about the help she received from Legal Aid and Ms. Whatley: "I'm so thankful for Legal Aid. It's just nice to know that someone cares; they took a lot of worry off me!"

This and other success stories from Legal Aid's employment law practice are generously underwritten by The Deaconess Foundation.



Celestine Gaters gives a talk on how Legal Aid helped her gain financial security after losing her job.



Arcola Whatley, Esq.

"I thought, this is wrong!" Ms. Gaters said. "And I thought, I got a house and a car; I got bills. I was really scared to not have a job or the finances to pay my bills while looking for a new one."

Legal Aid staff attorney Arcola Whatley took her case, gathering details just days before the hearing before the Unemployment Compensation Review Commission. She presented

Thank you

THE LAW FIRM OF ULMER & BERNE RECENTLY ANNOUNCED A \$20,000 GIFT TO LEGAL AID FOR 2018

This gift extends Legal Aid's reach throughout Northeast Ohio to help more families living in poverty stop their civil legal issues from escalating.



DID YOU MAKE YOUR GIFT YET TO LEGAL AID IN 2017?
VISIT WWW.LASCLEV.ORG/DONATE TO MAKE A GIFT, OR USE THIS ENVELOPE TODAY TO MAKE YOUR GIFT TO LEGAL AID BY DECEMBER 31, 2017.



Congratulations TO THE 2017 VOLUNTEER LAWYERS PROGRAM

Each year, the Pro Bono Committee of Legal Aid’s Board of Directors recognizes those who have made significant contributions and com

The Legacy of Justice Award is presented to an individual, group or institution whose participation in *pro bono* efforts has been significant in terms of tenure and impact. The 2017 winner is:



Frank DeSantis: With his thoughtful demeanor, Mr. DeSantis has been the moving force throughout so much of the engagement, recruitment, and energy behind Legal Aid’s *pro*

bono work. He has leveraged his many leadership roles to promote *pro bono* work — as 2015 President of Legal Aid’s Board of Directors, as Pro Bono Committee member, as the inaugural ACT 2 Advisory Committee Chair, as 2010 President of the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Foundation, with The Lawyers Guild, as partner and Ethics Committee Chair at Thompson Hine, and as a leader in the community. Mr. DeSantis is an attorney whose *pro bono* work is woven into his professional DNA. He is both a leader and a volunteer at Legal Aid brief advice clinics and in extended representation cases. His words, influence, and reputation in the community have been critical to promoting Legal Aid’s mission. By representing what is good and noble about the legal profession, Mr. DeSantis is a role model to those at Legal Aid and to the legal community at large.

The Access to Justice Award is presented in recognition of significant contribution to advancing the mission of Legal Aid through *pro bono* commitment. This recognition is informed by number of hours, cases, or clinics. The 2017 awardees are:



Michael (Mike) Harvey: A solo practitioner, Mr. Harvey’s expertise is expansive. His *pro bono* focus has been on assisting homeowners

facing foreclosure. Logging 176 hours of *pro bono* service in the last 18 months, Mr. Harvey has assisted clients in negotiating loan modifications. When negotiations fail, he has guided clients through the end of the foreclosure process. Steadfast in his willingness to help Legal Aid clients, Mr. Harvey’s commitment advances Legal Aid’s mission.



Mark Wallach: As the go-to attorney for particularly complex *pro bono* cases, Mr. Wallach brings the expert litigation skills he uses for complex

business disputes at Thacker Robinson Zinz to resolve issues and get great results for his *pro bono* clients. In the last 18 months, Mr. Wallach accepted five new cases and continues work on a sixth — all of them “problematic and difficult to place.” Mr. Wallach also gives his time as a valuable and insightful member of Legal Aid’s Pro Bono Committee and ACT 2 Advisory Committee.



Anna Luczkow: Fresh out of law school and before landing her job at Buckingham, Doolittle & Burroughs, Ms. Luczkow logged an astounding

361 hours as an in-house volunteer working on Low Income Tax Clinic cases with staff attorney Dennis Dobos. Ms. Luczkow contacted clients, helped with appeals, conducted federal and state tax research, and processed tax documents. Not only was Ms. Luczkow a reliable and consistent *pro bono* attorney, but she was also concerned and energetic, bringing a great attitude to everything she did.



Gerald (Gerry) Meader: As a retired attorney, Mr. Meader walked in to Legal Aid in April 2016, and asked: “How can I help?”

As an in-house volunteer with Legal Aid’s ACT 2 program, Mr. Meader never hesitates to take on a new project. He brings the discipline and attention to detail of his military background, along with his expertise as an attorney, to each *pro bono* task: legal checkups for veterans; brief advice clinics, direct representation, or community presentations.

LEGAL AID IN THE N Legal Aid is there when and where



Inspired by these volunteers? Become a *pro bono* volunteer today – www.lasclev.org/volunteer

AM AWARD WINNERS!

Commitment to *pro bono* involvement.

The **Community Impact Award** is given to an individual or group who has made a mark in ensuring success for a client, client community, or project. The 2017 winners are:



Dworken & Bernstein: Associates and partners work together to create a

firm culture that supports *pro bono*. Along with boasting 100% participation in Legal Aid's fundraising campaign, attorneys assist at outreach clinics in Ashtabula County, veterans' clinics, Lake County *pro se* divorce clinics, and community presentations, and accept extended representation cases.



Judge Harry Field: A well-deserved retirement awaits Willoughby Municipal Court Judge Harry Field. During his time on the bench, Judge Field has supported *pro bono* work, most notably by welcoming more than 100 attorneys into his courtroom year after year for Legal Aid's CLE "Judicial Forum" held during Pro Bono Week. Judge Field leaves a lasting legacy, having built a culture of valuing *pro bono* involvement among attorneys and judges.

Thank you to all our volunteer attorneys!

NEIGHBORHOOD!

Where people need civil legal help



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2. Dan Natalie, Esq. (Legal Aid)
3. Dena Kobasic, Esq. (PolyOne Corporation)
4. Tom Scanlon, Esq. (Collins & Scanlon LLP)
5. Cindy Binns, Esq. (GraTech International)
6. Volunteer Attorneys from University Hospitals and Vorys at a Legal Aid brief advice clinic
7. Nathalie Dibo, Esq. (Moore Yourkvitch & Dibo)
8. M. Colette Gibbons, Esq. (Ice Miller LLP)

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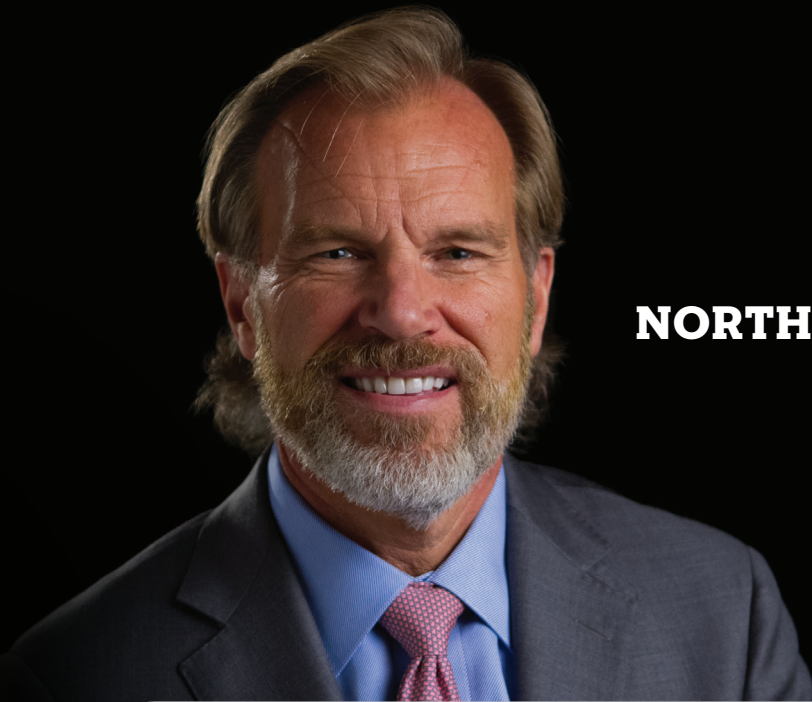
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**JUSTICE SERVED
FAMILIES STABILIZED
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AND DEMOCRACY THRIVES**

EQUAL JUSTICE UNDER THE LAW IS A RIGHT, NOT A PRIVILEGE.

However, legal representation in civil cases is NOT guaranteed by the United States Constitution. The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland helps families navigate the civil justice system, and that leads to positive outcomes across Northeast Ohio. **Democracy thrives.**

"Often when you volunteer at a Legal Aid clinic, you sit with someone and find that she is doing the right things in her family and her neighborhood, yet she stumbled into a legal problem. And it could have engulfed her and completely taken her down but for Legal Aid stepping in and helping her work through it. One person, one case, one time, but there are hundreds of those that happen."

-P. Kelly Tompkins Esq., Executive VP and COO, Cleveland-Cliffs Inc.

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