



**ARKANSAS PRO BONO
PARTNERSHIP**

**Pro Bono Recognition
2009**

The Arkansas Pro Bono Partnership

In 2004, the Arkansas Bar Association recognized THE ARKANSAS PRO BONO PARTNERSHIP in order to accomplish five tasks.

1. Expand pro bono volunteerism by establishing a statewide coordinating mechanism - THE ARKANSAS PRO BONO PARTNERSHIP – to enhance the visibility and effectiveness of the efforts already underway by the Equal Access to Justice Panel, River Valley Volunteer Attorney Project, Volunteer Organization of Center for Arkansas Legal Services, and Arkansas Volunteer Lawyers for the Elderly.
2. Strengthen and unify these pro bono systems so they can better match needs with volunteers.
3. Expand statewide tools and practices.
4. Recognize Pro Bono volunteers.
5. Plan for sustained efforts.

Since its establishment, THE PARTNERSHIP has acted to fulfill these five goals. Among other accomplishments, it has:

- Produced a monthly E-Newsletter allowing pro bono volunteers to review and select client cases on line.
- Produced Partnership materials, both print and on line, used for recruitment and registration which have a consistent and familiar look.
- Featured pro bono volunteer accomplishments in the joint annual report of both legal aid organizations in the state: Center for Arkansas Legal Services and Legal Aid of Arkansas.
- Annually report awards of federal funds secured by attorneys in successful SS and SSI cases in addition to an in-kind monetary calculation of pro bono volunteer time.
- Provided on line resources and tools to help pro bono attorneys on issues of poverty law on the website www.arlegalservices.org
- Provided recognition of volunteers every June at the Arkansas Bar Association meetings.
- Conducted CLE training on Model Rule 6.1 and the on line support available to pro bono volunteers.

**Arkansas Volunteer Lawyers
for the Elderly**

**Equal Access
to Justice Panel**

**River Valley
Volunteer Attorney Project**

**Volunteer Organization of the
Center for Arkansas Legal Services**

Important Foundations of Justice: The Oath and Rule

When each attorney takes the Arkansas Attorney Oath, he or she declares --
“I will not reject, from any consideration personal to myself, the cause of the impoverished, the defenseless, or the oppressed.”

A few sentences later the attorney states --

“I will endeavor always to advance the cause of justice.”

These are the commitments each attorney makes to the profession, to them self and to their communities.

Additionally, the Rules of Professional Conduct Rule 6.1 states: ***“Every lawyer has a professional responsibility to provide legal services to those unable to pay. A lawyer should aspire to render at least (50) hours of pro bono publico legal services per year.... In addition, a lawyer should voluntarily contribute financial support to organizations that provide legal services to persons of limited means.”***

Pursuing the Promise of Justice

The ARKANSAS PRO BONO PARTNERSHIP this year has an important colleague in our efforts - The Arkansas Access to Justice Commission. The Commission conducted the first statewide Promise of Justice Campaign to address both aspects of Model Rule 6.1 – recruiting more attorneys to do pro bono work and seeking financial support for the two legal aid organizations. This new partnership has afforded an opportunity to expand the focus on pro bono efforts. Accordingly, this year the usual PRO BONO PARTNERSHIP winter insert into, *The Arkansas Lawyer*, as you see here, is exclusively focused on award winning leaders in pro bono services throughout the state. One of these regional leaders has been selected the PRO BONO PARTNERSHIP ATTORNEY OF THE YEAR - 2009.

The Commission insert in the spring edition will list all those who have taken or signed on to take pro bono cases this past year along with all contributions to the Promise of Justice Campaign. The ARKANSAS PRO BONO PARTNERSHIP is pleased to be working along side the Arkansas Access to Justice Commission in such a new way that we can lift up in this insert those exceptional volunteers reflected on the following pages who are role models and truly live out both the Attorney Oath and Model Rule 6.1.

Kristin Pawlik 2009 Arkansas Pro Bono Partnership Attorney of the Year



KRISTIN PAWLIK has been named the “Arkansas Pro Bono Partnership Attorney of the Year for 2009.” This award is given by the Partnership each year to an attorney in the state who best exemplifies a commitment to *pro bono publico* and the principle of equal justice for all. Indeed Ms. Pawlik has worked tirelessly to help low income Arkansans with their legal problems as both an advocate for them and a fund raiser for Legal Aid of Arkansas and the Promise of Justice Campaign.

Pro Bono Commitment

Ms. Pawlik donated over 125 hours of pro bono services to low income clients during the year as a member of the Equal Access to Justice Panel (EAJP). EAJP is a cooperative effort with the Benton County Bar Association to provide free civil legal services to residents in Benton County. Pawlik has served on the Equal Access to Justice Panel since 2003. She handles family law, criminal defense, and employment law cases. When asked what motivates her to volunteer she stated: “Each client deserves to be represented in such a manner that no one else in that courtroom would suspect that the work is being done ‘for free’. This is about Equal Access to Justice, not ‘some’ or ‘merely adequate’ access to justice.” Ms. Pawlik’s efforts alone amounted to 19% of the total hours donated by attorneys in Benton County in 2008. Her donation has a conservative value of over \$18,700 to the community.

Professional Commitments

Along with Ms. Pawlik’s volunteer pro bono efforts and her work as a partner in Keith, Miller, Butler, Schneider & Pawlik, she is actively engaged in other aspects of community life. Ms. Pawlik is the immediate Past President of the Benton County Bar Association and believes one of the more important functions of the bar association is to provide networking opportunities outside the courthouse to share ideas and experiences especially the opportunities between young and established lawyers and among practitioners in single member firms and large firms. She also reaches out in other ways to expand access to justice. During the 2009 legislative session, she contacted members of the House Judiciary Committee deliberating the bill that would provide funding for civil legal aid. Additionally, she called and encouraged other bar members to call and email their local Representatives and Senators to ask them to vote for this legislation to benefit access to justice by low-income Arkansans.

She is a member of the Arkansas Bar Association, the Arkansas Trial Lawyers Association and the Arkansas Association of Criminal Defense lawyers. She is also a member of the W.B. Putman Inn of Court and serves on the Arkansas Bar Association’s House of Delegates, Legal Services Committee, and the Legislative Task Force. She was the program chair for the Arkansas Bar’s 33rd Annual Labor Law and Employment Law Conference. Ms. Pawlik is also a member of the Junior League of Northwest Arkansas and a volunteer for Habitat for Humanity.

Education

Ms. Pawlik was raised in Bentonville, is a graduate of Bentonville High School, and holds a B.A. in Journalism from the University of Arkansas with an emphasis in public relations. She attended the Uof A School of Law, received her Juris Doctor in 1999, and then attended the National Criminal Defense College at Mercer Law School in Macon, Georgia, later serving as Chief Public Defender for Benton County before joining Keith, Miller, Butler, Schneider, and Pawlik in October of 2003. She became a partner in 2008. Ms. Paulik and her husband Aaron Holmes have two sons - Jackson 5 and Spencer I.

Pro Bono Attorney Honorees 2009



Debra Brown is the 2009 VOCALS Attorney of the Year in Pulaski County. Since joining the Pro Bono panel in 2004, she has worked on family law cases involving domestic violence, custody disputes, and complicated property settlements all of which have accounted for 231.7 hours of pro bono work. She is a member of the Shults Law Firm. Ms. Brown is also one of only fifteen attorneys who continue to accept pro bono referrals as well as contribute financially to VOCALS. Her actions like those of other individuals who have accepted the challenge of supporting low income Arkansans through service and financial support is a ringing reminder of the highest traditions of the legal profession.

Joel Bud Bryant is the 2009 Pro Bono Attorney of the Year for Jefferson County and has practiced law in Pine Bluff for 35 years. He became a member of Jefferson County VOCALS in 2002. He has fulfilled his commitments in excellent fashion accepting domestic abuse, divorce, guardianship and adoption case referrals. Upon being named Pro Bono Attorney of the Year, he stated "Over the years I have been privileged to receive a number of awards for service on different boards or commissions, but this award is the most meaningful as it is a reminder of what each one of us are called to do, and that is to serve others." Mr. Bryant received a BA in Business Administration from UA-Monticello and a J D from the University of Memphis School of Law in 1975.



Joanne McCracken is the Legal Aid of Arkansas Outstanding Service Award winner for 2009, donating over 250 hours of pro bono services to low income clients in Benton County during the year. McCracken graduated from the University of Arkansas School of Law in 2001. While in law school, she worked at Legal Aid of Arkansas, providing services to victims of domestic abuse. Her practice with Joshua Meister is largely in the areas of bankruptcy, Social Security Disability, criminal and family law. She is also the City Attorney in Garfield.

Jim O'Hern is the Pro Bono Attorney of the Year Award recipient of the River Valley Volunteer Attorney Project. He devoted 83 hours of pro bono representation to low income clients in Crawford County and Sebastian County during 2009. He has been for many years an active pro bono volunteer and has accepted a wide range of cases on behalf of clients including those senior citizens who meet the needs requirements of the Arkansas Volunteer Lawyers for the Elderly project. Mr. O'Hern also contributes both his time and legal expertise as a member of the Board of Directors of the Center for Arkansas Legal Services, which provides legal aid to low income Arkansas in forty-four counties. O'Hern received his B.A. from the College of Charleston and his law degree from the University of Arkansas School of Law in Fayetteville in 1980.



Pro Bono Stories

Mr. S was a sixty year-old man who had an impediment in communicating due to a mental disability. He contacted the Center for Arkansas Legal Services in April 2005 for assistance in probating his late mother's estate. The client also had two sisters from whom he was estranged and his mother had left no will determining how she wished her property to be divided.

In May Mr. S was referred to an attorney at Anderson, Murphy & Hopkins but this attorney eventually left private practice and the case was picked up by another attorney at the firm -- Mindy Pipkin. Ms. Pipkin accepted the case with the understanding that the need was to probate the estate of the deceased mother. However, what she encountered required much more than filing the petition and notifying the necessary parties. The circumstances of the case required that she eventually litigate the matter. Ms. Pipkin's persistence, patience, and genuine concern for her client over the space of nearly four years resulted in providing him his fair share of his mother's property. He would not have received that justice had it not been for Ms. Pipkin's exceptionally competent representation of the client. Mr. S is now the owner of a one-third share of his late mother's estate.



Mindy D. Pipkin joined the VOCALS program in June 2005 and is a member of Anderson, Murphy & Hopkins. She has provided her service on Wills and Estates matters for the elderly. Ms. Pipkin is currently an associate at Anderson, Murphy & Hopkins, LLP. Her areas of practice include nursing home defense, property/casualty defense, professional malpractice law, medical malpractice defense, premise liability defense, and general litigation. In addition to her membership in VOCALS, she is a member of the American Bar Association, Arkansas Bar Association, Pulaski County Bar Association, Arkansas Association of Women Lawyers, and Defense Research Institute.

Thanks to Mindy Pipkin

Early in 2009, Mrs. P was concerned about her lack of visitation rights with the grand children she had raised. She was referred by the Arkansas Volunteer Lawyers for the Elderly [AVLE] to Jeffrey Puryear and he agreed to take her case though he knew it was a difficult one. In his pro bono work with AVLE, Mr. Puryear serves clients needing advice about their rights as grandparents, about long-term nursing care, wills, and guardianship matters. Despite the challenges of assisting this population, he continues to be committed to serving these clients. He spent sixty hours on this case including filing an action and representing her in court. Because of his efforts, Mrs. P received limited visitation with her great granddaughter. Now, she is able to see the child periodically and provide her with emotional support that the ten-year-old hasn't had for some time.

Mr. Puryear says about his commitment to pro bono work, "Through the contributions of many others, I was very fortunate to become an attorney. It is only fitting to give back to those in need of legal advice and who do not have necessary resources. Through these programs, I have the opportunity to help those who want so badly to believe in our court system and seek justice."

Jeffrey W. Puryear is a partner with the Jonesboro firm of Womack, Landis, Phelps & McNeill, P.A. He graduated from Arkansas State University in 1990 and the University of Arkansas School of Law in 1993, with honors. In 2000, he was awarded the W.A. Eldredge, Jr. Outstanding Young Trial Lawyer Award and was selected in 2008 as one of the Mid-South Super Lawyers. His practice focuses on areas of commercial litigation, products liability, personal injury, and insurance disputes.



Thanks to Jeffrey W. Puryear

Early in 2009, Mrs. M needed to obtain a guardianship of her mentally ill brother. She was afraid this might take several months since she had no funds to hire an attorney. She contacted Legal Aid of Arkansas and was quickly put in touch with Marshall Wright who agreed to help her with the guardianship. "I expected things to take a long time," Mrs. M said, "but Mr. Wright didn't waste any time after I saw him." After she was granted the guardianship, she was able to help her brother obtain money from their father's estate. "My brother is doing great now," she says. "Mr. Wright helped us out a lot."

Wright says, "Volunteering for Legal Aid of Arkansas offers me the opportunity to take my profession to the next level and personally touch the lives of those who need legal services. A person like Mrs. M was able to get the same rights as other citizens because of Legal Aid." In 2008 and 2009, Wright volunteered more than twenty five hours and he feels that doing pro bono work makes the justice system available to everyone and improves the perception of the legal system in the community.



Marshall Wright, a partner in the firm of Sharpe, Beavers, Cline & Wright, grew up in Foreman and now lives in Forrest City. He was recognized as St. Francis County Outstanding Volunteer Attorney of the Year for 2008-2009. His practice focuses on corporate litigation, civil litigation, and bankruptcy. He also serves as a part-time public defender for the First Judicial District and is a 2001 graduate of the University of Arkansas School of Law.

Thanks to Marshall Wright

Late in 2008, Mrs. L wanted to apply for a guardianship of her 73 year-old husband in a local nursing home. She was not well herself and felt alone and confused. Pro bono attorney Mr. George Butler met with her and agreed to take her case. He was unable to find a doctor willing to work with him on a guardianship. Instead, Mr. Butler established that the husband was capable of signing a power of attorney. Then Mrs. L was able to handle the financial matters she was worried about and more adequately see to her husband's care in the nursing home. She commented afterward, "Mr. Butler really put my mind at ease. Legal Aid was a life saver for us."

In 2009, Butler volunteered fifty hours of pro bono for Legal Aid of Arkansas. Even though his primary work is in government he has always done pro bono work including advising individuals in the adult education program in Fayetteville and helping county employees that may not have funds for an attorney. He says, "Every attorney should step up and serve in this way. Unless the legal community helps with pro bono, the justice system in the community doesn't function as it should."

George E. Butler, Jr. is a Memphis native who has served as Washington County Attorney since 1999. He graduated from the University of Arkansas School of Law and been in private practice in Fayetteville since 1981. He also serves as Legal Counsel for Habitat for Humanity of Fayetteville and on the Arkansas Bar Association's Continuing Legal Education Committee.



Thanks to George Butler, Jr.

Ms. R is a single mom with three children and two jobs. In addition, she is a full-time student on-line in a degree program in counseling. In 2008, she needed to obtain a guardianship of her nephew because her mother, who had legal custody of him, had died and her brother was unable to take care of the nephew. Ms. R did not have resources to hire an attorney, so asked for help from Legal Aid of Arkansas. Jay Scurlock agreed to help her obtain the guardianship. "Things went fairly smoothly," Ms. R recalls. "Mr. Scurlock went to court twice and I didn't have to attend the second time and miss work." Early in 2009, the guardianship was granted. "I am ecstatic and feel very blessed," she says. "Mr. Scurlock was very prompt in helping me and getting my case finished. I thank him so much." Her nephew, who is now fourteen, is doing well, "He has adjusted to his new situation."

Mr. Scurlock volunteered 22 hours of pro bono work in 2009. "While pro bono work is an obligation, it is a rewarding way to give back to those in need. Legal Aid of Arkansas is a great avenue to do that," Scurlock says. "In Arkansas, we are very fortunate to have Legal Aid and the people who work for the organization. When folks don't know where to go, Legal Aid is there for them."



Jay Scurlock is a partner in the firm of Hamilton, Colbert & Scurlock, LLP. in Paragould. His practice is focused on estate planning, probate, real estate, business and tax law. Most of his pro bono work is in the areas of guardianship and estate planning. He graduated from the University of Arkansas School of Law in 1999 and received a master's degree in tax law in 2000 from the University of Missouri-Kansas City. He serves in the House of Delegates and on the Legislation Committee of the Arkansas Bar Association.

Thanks to Jay Scurlock

Ms. B was seeking guardianship of three minor nieces and nephews and was put in touch with pro bono volunteer attorney R. Ray Fulmer. Following and initial interview a Petition for Guardianship was filed while almost simultaneously DHS filed action to take the children away from Ms. B. and place them in foster care pending an investigation. Mr. Fulmer met with his client and DHS and consolidated the guardianship request with DHS's action. At an initial hearing the judge directed DHS to develop a plan that would reunite Ms. B with the children. The plan placed many strenuous costs and burdens on her. With the fulfillment of each of the court's requirements however, Ms. B was granted increasing rights and responsibilities with the three children. After many months, Mr. B was appointed Guardian for the children. Mr. Fulmer spent between 60 and 70 hours on this case which he described as "all worthwhile.... In short, the system worked to what I believe is the best interest of the children."

Ray Fulmer of Fort Smith joined the River Valley Volunteer Attorney Project [V.A.P.] in March of 1990, and was appointed to the V.A.P. advisory board in 1994, where he currently serves as its Chairman. Mr. Fulmer had previously been named V.A.P. Attorney of the Year in 2002. Mr. Fulmer is a partner at Ledbetter, Cogbill, Arnold, and Harrison, LLP, and his areas of practice include bankruptcy, wills, probate, corporate law, banking, and taxation. In addition to his involvement in V.A. P., Mr. Fulmer is also a member of the Sebastian County Bar Association and the Arkansas Bar Association.



Thanks to Ray Fulmer

Arkansas Pro Bono Partnership™

VOLUNTEER REGISTRATION

New Volunteer

Update

CONTACT INFORMATION

NAME: _____

LAW FIRM: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____

EMAIL: _____

COUNTY: _____

AR SUPREME COURT #: _____

MEMBERSHIP OPTION A

I HEREBY JOIN THE PRO BONO PARTNERSHIP. I AGREE TO REPRESENT UP TO THREE LOW INCOME-QUALIFIED CLIENTS EACH YEAR FREE OF CHARGE. I MAY REQUIRE PAYMENT OF NECESSARY COSTS.

Indicate the panel(s) from which you will accept cases.

Equal Access to Justice Panel

Volunteer Organization of Center for Arkansas Legal Services – VOCALS

River Valley Volunteer Attorney Project(s)

Arkansas Volunteer Lawyers for the Elderly – AVLE

*Volunteers of AVLE & any other panel must only agree to accept (2) cases from each project instead of three.

Please specify the types of cases you prefer to take as a volunteer. The Pro Bono Partnership will make every effort to refer cases you prefer, however, when needed, you may be asked to accept other types of cases. _____

In what counties will you accept pro bono cases? _____

MEMBERSHIP OPTION B

I hereby join the Pro Bono partnership. In lieu of accepting referrals, I agree to make a tax-deductible contribution in the amount of \$400 to help provide free legal services to low income Arkansans who cannot afford an attorney in civil cases.

Enclosed in my check made payable to:

Center for Arkansas Legal Services for

VOCALS River Valley Volunteer Attorney Project(s)

Legal Aid of Arkansas for Equal Access to Justice Panel

Arkansas Volunteer Lawyers for the Elderly – AVLE

Signature of Attorney

Please Return This Form To

Arkansas Pro Bono Partnership
303 West Capitol Avenue, Suite 200
Little Rock, AR 72201
PH. 501.376.3423 | FAX 501.376.3664

Arkansas Pro Bono Partnership™

AVLE

Arkansas Volunteer Lawyers for the Elderly

Provides pro bono service for the elderly in all Arkansas counties except ---
Clark Faulkner Garland Hot Spring Jefferson Lonoke Pulaski Saline

Catherine Edwards, Director

501.376.9263

avleprog@yahoo.com

Equal Access to Justice Panel

A project of Legal Aid of Arkansas, Inc.

Baxter Benton Boone Carroll Clay Cleburne Craighead Crittenden Cross Fulton Green
Independence IZard Jackson Lawrence Lee Madison Marion Mississippi Monroe Newton Phillips
Poinsett Randolph St.Francis Searcy Sharp Stone Van Buren Washington Woodruff

Susan Purtle, Pro Bono Manager/Senior Attorney

479.442.0600

spurtle@arlegalaid.org

River Valley Volunteer Attorney Project

A project of the Center for Arkansas Legal Services

Conway Crawford Franklin Johnson Logan Pope Scott Sebastian Yell

Janet B. Dyer, Managing Attorney/Pro Bono Manager

479.785.5211

jdyer@arlegalservices.org

VOCALS

Volunteer Organization of the Center for Arkansas Legal Services

Arkansas Ashley Bradley Calhoun Chicot Clark Cleveland Columbia Dallas Desha Drew
Faulkner Garland Grant Hempstead Hot Spring Howard Jefferson Lafayette Lincoln Little
River Lonoke Miller Montgomery Nevada Ouachita Perry Pike Polk Prairie Pulaski Saline
Sevier Union White

Angie Moore, Pro Bono Coordinator

501.376.3423

amoore@arlegalservices.org

For more information or to register online visit:

www.arlegalservices.org

Or complete the following form and mail to:

Arkansas Pro Bono Partnership
303 West Capitol Avenue/Suite 200
Little Rock, AR 72201