



SEMINOLE COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION
LEGAL AID SOCIETY

“Can there be justice if it is not equal? Can there be a just society when some do not have justice? Equality, equal treatment, is perhaps the most fundamental element of justice.”

Justice Scalia

Providing Access to Justice Since 1975

2017 ANNUAL REPORT

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MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



The phrase “with liberty and justice for all” in the U.S. Pledge of Allegiance represents the idea that justice should be accessible to everyone. In criminal cases, legal assistance is a right. However, there is no right to counsel in civil matters, and most low-income Americans are forced to go it alone without legal representation.

The Legal Service Corporation in 2017 commissioned a study assessing the size of the gap between civil legal needs and the resources available to address these needs. Key findings of the report find that 71% of low income households have experienced a civil legal problem in the past year. The rate is higher for households with survivors of domestic violence or sexual assault (97%), with parent/guardians of kids under 18 (80%) and with disabled persons (80%). 7 in 10 low income Americans with recent personal experience of a civil legal problem say a problem has significantly affected their lives. 86% of the civil legal problems reported by low-income Americans received inadequate or no legal help.

Our not for profit organization helps reduce this widening gulf in the Justice Gap. Since 1975, we provide access to justice to low-income residents of Seminole County to address their civil legal issues. This fiscal year, we have assisted 727 families with 1,019 children with their legal needs; obtained court orders for child support and arrears in the amount of \$585,136 and performed significant community outreach and services. Our volunteer attorney donated legal services valued at \$174,762 and contributed over \$28,000 in support for our program.

We aid the most vulnerable, foster children, the elderly, the poor, the disabled, abused women and children with free legal assistance and provide legal education to participants of organizations such as Goodwill and Habitat for Humanities.

Our accomplishments are not possible without the dedication of our devoted staff, outstanding volunteer attorneys, a committed board of directors, remarkable volunteer students and generous donors. I particularly thank, Attorney Michael A. Sasso, our board president, who has contributed his time and talents to lead our organization this year.

We dedicate our fundraiser this year to the “**Groovy Seventies**”, the decade in which our organization was established and started to fulfil America’s promise “Equal Justice for All.”

Silvia McLain

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Mission and Achievements

The goal of SCBALAS has remained steadfast for 42 years. To provide free, quality legal advocacy to economically disadvantaged residents of Seminole County and improve their quality of life while enhancing their self-sufficiency and improving our neighborhoods. We are proud to continue this mission as we head into our 43rd year of service to the community.

Seminole county residents with incomes at or below 125% of the Federal Poverty Level are financially eligible for our legal services. Priority is given to financially eligible residents who have an urgent legal problem. This can include but is not limited to, safeguarding victims of domestic violence and their families, helping someone keep their home and prevent foreclosure, and other matters in family law which could put the family in financial peril.

These services are provided through the unified efforts of pro bono attorneys who give generously of their time, experienced staff attorneys, devoted and compassionate support staff, volunteer law and college students and laypersons, and strong leadership of a dedicated board of directors. As a result of this collaboration, we are able to provide legal assistance in various areas of the law such as family, housing, employment, bankruptcy, guardianship of the disabled and incapacitated, immigration, juvenile, elder, foreclosure and consumer.

This past fiscal year, our volunteer and staff attorneys served 727 families, which included 1,019 children with their legal needs. We obtained \$585,136 in child support and arrears to sustain needy families. Volunteer attorneys donated pro bono legal services valued at an estimated \$174,762 and contributed \$28,319 in lieu of service donations. We helped foster youths with education issues, helped families with disabled children, helped families with seriously ill children, helped foster youth obtain benefits from Agency with Persons with Disability, and helped victims of the hurricane. We commenced a monthly Advance Directives Legal clinic at the Winter Springs Community Center. With the assistance of the Attorney General we held a seminar on Identity Fraud Prevention. Our volunteer attorneys have assisted the Florida Department of Probation with Justice Learning.

We invite you to review our achievements and special projects on the following pages. Our successes are possible with your continued support and donations. We strive to provide vital access to the legal system to improve the quality of life of residents in our community.

Pro Bono Project—Volunteer Attorneys making a Difference.....

In times of crisis and need, our outstanding volunteer attorneys step forward to make a difference in the lives of vulnerable members of our community.



In June of 2017, a disgruntle employee returned to his former place of employment and killed five of his coworkers including a 47 year old Seminole County resident. His widow did not have the financial resources to handle the probate of her husband’s estate. Without hesitation, **Attorney David Barden** accepted the pro bono referral. He generously donated his time and talents to help her. The year before, he volunteered to help an orphan, who just turned 18, handle his parents’ estate. **Volunteer Attorney Barden embodies the spirit of the members of our pro bono panel....generous, dedicated and professional.**



Attorney Stephanie Vollrath conducts a legal presentation to future homeowners participating in Habitat for Humanity program



Office of attorney general staff member teaches elderly group identify theft prevention techniques.

Last fiscal year our pro bono attorneys assisted 81 indigent clients donating legal services with a value of \$174,762 to help our fellow residents in need. Attorneys made monetary contributions in the amount of \$28,319 to support our program. The volunteer attorneys provided 9 legal presentations to community groups and participated in monthly veteran legal advice clinics.

Community Lawyering

Our staff attorneys and paralegals contribute their legal knowledges and skills to support initiatives that are identified by the community and enhance the community's power. For example:

Attorney Selsky attends the monthly Veterans Legal Advice Clinic at the Casselberry library where our American Heroes obtain free legal advice. She also participates in the Mission United Veteran's outreach and advance directives events, as well as participated in special on Child Support for Local 6 television station.

Staff Attorney Alonso attends the monthly Domestic Violence Prevention taskforce, assists in Advance Directive Project and participates in community outreach projects.

Attorney McLain attends quarterly meetings of the executive council of Heart of Florida United Way and Central Florida College Network Access. She also serves on the advisory board of the legal studies program at Seminole State College and assists in the Advance Directive Project and other community outreach events

Paralegal Renee Martinez serves on Seminole County Child Abuse Prevention Taskforce and helps organize many community events.



Staff attorney Alonso helps a senior at the Winter Springs Senior Center.



Staff Attorney Alonso and staff paralegal Martinez attend the "Hope of Light" event to combat child abuse and neglect



Staff Attorney Alonso participates in the "Food Drop" event in Sanford which helped feed hungry families.

Serving Victims of Hurricane Irma.....

The legal aid program was without electricity, phones and internet for 8 business days after Hurricane Irma hit Seminole County. Many Seminole County residents suffered property damage and had many questions concerning housing and insurance matters. Our staff assisted at the Disaster Recovery Center held at the Casselberry Public Library for almost 3 weeks along side with Seminole County Emergency Management, FEMA, Seminole County Community Services, and many other agencies. Our staff took applications for legal assistance and staff attorneys answered legal question and provided information and referrals.



Paralegal Martinez helping a hurricane victim at the Disaster Recover Center in Casselberry Library

Honoring our American Heroes



Every month, we hold a free legal advice clinic at the Casselberry Public Library to serve our American Heroes, our Veterans. They can obtain free advice concerning housing, family, probate or consumer problems. Veterans are able to obtain the legal assistance from dedicated volunteer attorneys and staff attorneys. This fiscal year, we assisted 66 Veterans at the clinic. The services are provided by a very dedicated group of pro bono attorneys and Staff Attorney Sue Selsky, who contribute free legal services to veterans. All veterans are assisted who participate at the clinic.

Helping families seek protection from physical abuse.....

Shawna was referred to our office immediately after filing her Petition for an Injunction for Protection against Domestic Violence. After suffering nearly a year of both physical and verbal abuse by her husband, Shawna had suffered enough upon being forced to kneel and bow to her husband while referring him to as Allah. Just a few months prior to that incident Shawna's husband struck her in the face leaving her with a bruised and blackened eye, followed by him discharging a shot gun in their shared residence and in the presence of the minor children. Upon meeting with Shawna, we immediately offered her representation during the injunction return hearing; during which, Shawna received a Final Judgment of Injunction until further order of the court. The Court also refused to provide her now estranged husband with contact or timesharing with the minor children and was further ordered to attend a batter's intervention program.

Last fiscal year, Seminole County Legal Aid assisted 86 adult victims, including 115 children, with advice or representation in domestic violence injunctions. In addition to these services, we also helped many low income individuals and families in other family matters including dissolution of marriage, paternity, timesharing, relocation and child support. In fiscal year 2016-2017, our staff program was able to get court ordered child support and arrears totaling \$585,136.





Helping families with housing issues

Karl and his roommate were employed full time, but briefly fell on some hard times as his work hours were cut. As he tried desperately to find a second job, he fell behind in his rent. He came to our office to see if we could help him stay in his apartment and work something out with the landlord. Karl had been served eviction papers, and although he had been a good tenant and always paid his rent on time for three years at this residence, he understood the landlord had the right to evict him because he fell behind. He was very frightened that he would be homeless, and have nowhere to go if the eviction went through. He said that he just found another job, but wouldn't have any money from that job for two weeks. So he could pay the rent that he owed, although he could not do it right away or all at once. However, if something could be worked out with the landlord, perhaps he could remain where he lived.

The staff attorney contacted the landlord and after several conversations, was able to finally negotiate a settlement where Karl would make rent payments throughout October and November and bring himself current with all the rent. In return, the landlord agreed to stop the eviction process. Karl was very appreciative for Legal Aid's help, and with the knowledge that he would be allowed to continue to live in the place he has called home for several years.

In last fiscal year, Seminole County Legal Aid was able to render legal assistance to 113 families concerning housing matters. Our goal is to maintain stable housing for our client . Hasty relocation disrupts our client's employment and their children's education resulting in instability and homelessness.

Legal Project to help our low income seniors

Every month, we hold a free advance directive legal clinic at the Winter Springs Community Center. We help low income seniors prepare living wills, designation of health care surrogate and durable power of attorneys. Deputy Mayor Pam Carroll assisted our program to secure the use of the location. We also provide assistance to seniors in family, housing and other legal matters. Last fiscal year, we assisted 87 low income senior citizens



Families with disabled children find legal help

Sonia is a beautiful young eighteen year old woman. You would never suspect she has a disability that hinders her independence and safety. She loves to sing and has won a special singing contest at her local high school and went on to win the state contest, as well. Unfortunately, in her teen age years, she suffered a traumatic brain injury, which has resulted in cognitive losses. She needs her mother to help with her medication and medical needs. She needs her mother to assist her with daily activities. Her estranged father disputed her disability and attempted to prevent the mother from declaring their daughter in need of a guardianship. Our staff attorney assisted the mother in the highly contested dispute and was able to prevail in the case. Sonia is now protected and her mother has the authority to make decision on her behalf.

Last fiscal year, we helped 95 families in obtaining guardianship over their disabled child or filed an annual report on their behalf.

Attorneys participating in the 2017 Pro Bono Panel

J. Manuel Acevedo, Esq.
Dana Anderson, Esq.
A. Bryant Applegate, Esq.
Aaron Baghdadi, Esq.
Steven Barcus, Esq.
Honorable Carmine Bravo
Nadine Brown, Esq.
Carsandra Buie, Esq.
Karl Burgunder, Esq.
Andrew Chmelir, Esq.
Stephen Coover, Esq.
Clarence Counts, Esq.
Vanessa Crisostomo, Esq.
Catherine Davey, Esq.
Vicki Eskin, Esq.
Karen Estry, Esq.
Deborah Ferwerra, Esq.
Robert Fisher, Esq.
Jennifer Frank, Esq.
John Gihon, Esq.
Ann Marie Gilden, Esq.
Donna Goerner, Esq.
Erin Greene, Esq.
Rachel Gorenflo, Esq.
Adam Haba, Esq.

Heidi Hillyer, Esq.
John Iriye, Esq.
Amanda Jacobson, Esq.
Christina Kepner, Esq.
Lan Kennedy–Davis, Esq.
Steven Kramer, Esq.
Sherry Lambson–Eisele, Esq.
Steven Laurence, Esq.
Jennifer Lawson, Esq.
Ruth Lee, Esq.
Richard Leigh, Esq.
Norman Levin, Esq.
Darryl E. Longlee, Esq.
Carmen Love, Esq.
Richard Mamele, Esq.
Winston McClean, Esq.
Christi McCullars, Esq.
Robert McIntosh, Esq.
Susan Michele, Esq.
Donald Morrell Jr., Esq.
Justin Munizzi, Esq.
Deborah O'Brien, Esq.
William Scott Orth, Esq.
James Partlow, Esq.
Lynnette Paolucci, Esq.

Shivon Patel, Esq.
Mandy Pavlakos, Esq.
Thomas Peppler, Esq.
Robert Pflueger, Esq.
Linda Phipps, Esq.
Michael Presutti, Esq.
Derreck Quarles, Esq.
Dean Reed, Esq.
Kevin Ross–Andino, Esq.
Taras Rudnitsky, Esq.
Megan Sladek, Esq.
Christopher Sprysenski, Esq.
Rania Soliman, Esq.
Patricia Sigman, Esq.
Marsha Summersill, Esq.
Leslie S. Stewart, Esq.
Joseph Stella, Esq.
Ric Stanley Jr., Esq.
Melissa Stockham, Esq.
Jonathan Torres, Esq.
Sharon Vollrath, Esq.
Stephanie Vollrath, Esq.
Deborah Warner, Esq.
Justin York, Esq.
Ben Zaeri, Esq.

Attorneys who Contributed in Lieu of Service donation

Gary Abriola, Esq.
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Matthews Barks, Esq.
Serita D. Beamon, Esq.
David Beers, Esq.
Paul Bernardini, Esq.
Brett Bevis, Esq.
Joseph E. Blicht, Esq.
Brian Bolton, Esq.
Michael Brehne, Esq.
Kevin Scott Cannon, Esq.
Tracy Duda Chapman, Esq.
Paul Chipok, Esq.
Katherine Christy, Esq.
Richard Copeland, Esq.
Michael De Filippo, Esq.
Carina De La Torre, Esq.
Harris Dvores, Esq.
Maria Espinosa, Esq.
Justin Falatek, Esq.
Debra Fields, Esq.
Robert Fisher, Esq.
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Thomas Freeman, Esq.
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Kellye Shoemaker, Esq.
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Craig A. Sonner, Esq.
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Louis Vendittelli, Esq.
James Vickaryous, Esq.
Berry Walker Jr., Esq.
Deborah Warner, Esq.
Scot Warner, Esq.
David Webster, Esq.

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Presenting Sponsor



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James E. Harper

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Claudia Jimenez



Brianna Jones



Neal Kapoor



Natalie Ramos



Christian Triay



Dallan Vecchio



Nathaniel Yerby



Bella Watson



We love our volunteers. Their dedication, enthusiasm and impact makes our organization shine. Thank You!

2017 Award Recipients

ADVOCATES OF THE YEAR : Veteran's Legal Clinic Team

Honorable Carmine Michael Bravo



Retired Judge Carmine M. Bravo Served as a County Court Judge in Seminole County Florida from 1997 -2012. He was admitted to the Florida Bar in 1969. While on the bench he served as the administrative judge for the county court and Chairman of the Education Committee for the Coalition for Awareness of Domestic Violence. He headed the Video and Related Technology Committee for the Seminole County Court System and was instrumental in the activating of several technology achievements in the Seminole

County court system. He has served in the capacity of Chairman of the Board of advisors for the Barry School of Law in Orlando, Florida as well as adjunct professor at Barry. He and his wife Maureen are parents of 6 children and grandparents of 15 grandchildren.

But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. – Matthew

Sherry Lambson– Eisele



Sherry Lambson Eisele is a Partner at South Milhausen, P.A. She is a commercial litigator with extensive experience in contract disputes, business torts and other business disputes, construction litigation, and property litigation matters. Sherry is a Florida native that attended UCF as an undergraduate and the University of Miami School of Law for law school. She lives in Seminole County with her Husband, Frank, and kids, Jake and Brae.

Easy doesn't do it." Al Bernstein

Karen Kay Estry



Karen Estry was born and raised in Seminole County, Florida, and has spent the majority of her life residing in the Central Florida area. In 1985, she served as a missionary and served in Venezuela, S.A., for twelve years. She is the proud mother of five children, two sons who both served in the military, and three daughters. Her eldest son was buried with military honors. Karen is managing partner of the Alper & Estry law firm. Karen's focus in her practice is to help individuals through difficult times, including family law matters, estate planning, and probate cases. Karen enjoys taking part in the SCLA Veteran

workshops as well as assisting veterans in her office outside of the workshop because the military is near and dear to her own family.

"Success is not final, failure is not fatal, it is the courage to continue that counts." – Sir Winston Churchill

ADVOCATES OF THE YEAR : Veteran's Legal Clinic Team

Donald R. Morrell Jr.



Don focuses on Personal Injury and Workers Compensation, and Veterans Benefits. Don was a career enlisted aviator in both the Navy and Air Force. Don is an attorney that was shaped by hard-work, the places he has been, and the people he has met. Don is a veteran of Desert Storm and Operation Enduring Freedom During his 29-year military career, Don earned an A.S. in Aviation Operations, a B.S. in Organizational Management, an M.B.A. in Accounting. After retiring as an Air Force Chief Master Sergeant (E9), Don completed his Juris Doctorate at Barry University Dwayne O. Andreas School of Law.

Don serves on the Board of Directors for the Florida Association of Veteran Owned Businesses Outside the office, Don likes to spend his free time with his family, especially his two precious grandsons. When not playing with his grandsons, he enjoys hiking, riding his motorcycle and playing bagpipes. Something special that Don was able to experience was on Saint Patrick's Day in 2011 when he had the honor of playing at the Capital and White House with the Air Force Reserve Pipe Band.

“ Do not let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do.” – John Wooden

Sue Selsky



Staff Attorney Sue Selsky was admitted to the Florida Bar in October of 2003, after graduating Cum Laude from Barry University School of Law in 2002. She started working for SCBALAS in January 2004. She also took the Connecticut bar and successfully passed that and was admitted to the Connecticut Bar in December 2004. Sue Selsky has been a past member of the Greater Orlando Human Trafficking Task Force, and is currently a member of the Seminole County Human Trafficking Task Force. She received the Guardian of Peace award for her contributions to assisting

victims of domestic violence from 2004-2010. She also received the Legal Justice Service Award in 2010 from Seminole County Legal Aid Society. She sits on two committees in the Florida Bar Family Law Section, the Domestic Violence Committee and the Children's Committee. She has been actively involved with the Florida Bar Family Law Section committees since 2010. In 2013 Ms. Selsky authored an article on child support and domestic violence injunctions which appeared in the Florida Bar Family Law Section quarterly magazine called the Commentator. In 2017 MS. Selsky was interviewed by Channel 6 WKMG News in Orlando and appeared on the evening news in July 2017, regarding pursuing unpaid child support, a/k/a dead beat parents. Ms. Selsky participates every month in the Veteran's Clinic held at the local library in town, assisting veterans with their legal issues.

“Make you the world a bit better or more beautiful because you have lived in it,” – Edward W. Bok

ADVOCATES OF THE YEAR : Veteran's Legal Clinic Team

Leslie S. Stewart



Leslie Stewart, President of Stewart Law Group, received her JD from Barry University School of Law in 2006. Leslie possesses a Bachelor's degree in Business Management from Valdosta State University. She is a member in good standing of the Florida Bar and Georgia Bar since 2007. Leslie is active in the local legal community, as a member of the Central Florida Association of Women Lawyers, a founding member of the Seminole County Young Lawyers Division, a member of the Seminole County Bar Association and the Seminole County Inns of Court. She also served the 18th Judicial Circuit as a member of the Florida Bar Young Lawyers Division Board of Governors. Beyond her roles as a successful business-woman and attorney, Leslie enjoys time at home with her husband Chris and their yorkie, Madam Mim.

"No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted." – Aesop

Deborah Gallagher Warner



Debbie Warner is a managing partner of Warner & Warner. She handles complex personal injury, auto accidents, wrongful death, medical malpractice and nursing home negligence/neglect cases. Debbie is a top rated and experienced trial lawyer, and she is committed to providing ethical and aggressive legal representation, while treating her clients with the compassion and respect they need and deserve. After graduating with honors from Florida State College of Law, Debbie joined a large, reputable Orlando insurance defense firm and spent years defending insurance companies, including a major automobile insurance carrier, corporations, nursing homes, and doctors in various lawsuits. After years of defending wrongdoers, Debbie realized her true passion was fighting for families victimized by negligence and medical malpractice—those who desperately need a committed, passionate and aggressive attorney to pursue their cause. Debbie graduated from the University of Florida in 1994 and from Florida State University College of Law in 1998. Debbie also served as an editor of the Florida State College of Law Environmental and Land Use and Transnational Law Journals. She has been a member of the Florida Bar since 1998. She is admitted to practice in the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Florida. Debbie is a member of the American Justice Association, Florida Justice Association, Central Florida Trial Lawyers Association, Orange County Bar Association, Seminole County Bar Association, and the Seminole County Inns of Court.

"Definiteness of purpose is the starting point of all achievement." –W. Clement Stone

Pro Bono Service Award

Jennifer C. Frank



Jennifer C. Frank is a Board Certified Marital and Family Law attorney, she is AV rated through Martindale Hubbell, and she is a Florida Bar Certified Family Law Mediator. Jennifer has been handling family law matters since 1994. She graduated from the University of Miami School of Law in 1994 and started her career as a family law attorney with Gulf coast Legal Services in St. Petersburg, Florida. She moved to Central Florida in 1996 where she handled family law cases at Drage, deBeaubien, *et al* until 2002 when she joined the firm of Wendy L. Aikin, P.A. In 2008 Jennifer opened Frank Family Law Practice, where she and her team handle the full gamut of family law related cases. In addition to her litigation work, she has an active Collaborative Family Law practice and an active Family Law Mediation practice. She is the 2014/2015 Past President for the Central Florida Family Law Inn of Court. She is a Board member for the State-wide Collaborative Family Law Council of Florida. She is an active member of the Collaborative Family Law Group of Central Florida. In 2007 she served as chair of the Florida Bar Association Grievance Committee and from 1999 to 2005 she served on the executive committee of the Orange County Bar Association, Family Law Section (serving as the chair and co-chair from 2003 to 2005). She is married and has a daughter in the 3rd grade. Jennifer studied music (piano performance) and political science in college. In addition to lawyer, wife, and mother, Jennifer is a pianist, a tennis player, a political junkie, and enjoys studying history.

“If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything.” — (maybe) Mark Twain

Heidi A. Hillyer



Heidi A. Hillyer graduated from Barry University School of Law in 2015 with magna cum laude honors. Shortly after becoming licensed to practice law in Florida in 2015, she founded the law firm Heidi A. Hillyer, P.A. She has dedicated her law practice to representing plaintiffs in personal injury claims. Ms. Hillyer is a member of the Florida Bar and the United States District Court, Middle District of Florida. She is also an active member of the Seminole County Bar Association, Orange County Bar Association, Central Florida Trial Lawyers Association, and the Florida Justice Association. Prior to practicing law, Ms. Hillyer held a successful career for over ten years as a project manager in the direct marketing industry in Atlanta, Georgia. Her success in direct marketing grew out of her strong commitment to her clients. Ms. Hillyer uses the same client-focused approach in her law practice. Attorney Hillyer has assisted the Seminole County Bar Association Legal Aid Society by developing and presenting Sealing and Expungement Workshops held monthly at the Goodwill Job Connection Center in Sanford, Florida.

“Fight for the things that you care about, but do it in a way that will lead others to join you.” ~ Ruth Bader Ginsburg

Pro Bono Service Award

William Scott Orth



William Orth was born in Zainesville, Ohio. William attended the University of Cincinnati where he graduated Magna Cum Laude with High Honors and was a member of Phi Beta Kappa National Honor Society. After graduation from the University of Cincinnati, William attended Case Western Reserve University School of Law and graduated in 1998. After graduation in 1998, William and his wife Kristie moved to Seminole County and he worked as a trial attorney for the Office of the State Attorney in Seminole County. He left the Office of the State Attorney in 2000 and opened the law firm of Bigney & Orth, P.A. serving as Partner and President. In 2009 William left Bigney & Orth, P.A. and opened the Law Office of William S. Orth, P.A. His practice remains limited to Family Law, Criminal Defense and Simple Wills. He is a member of The Florida Bar – Family Law Section, the Orange County Bar Association, the Seminole County Bar Association, the American Bar Association and the Seminole Inn of Court (President 2015–2016). William and his wife Kristie have two children, Grace and Tyler. He is Past President and Past Board Member of The Altamonte Springs Rotary Club (member since 2000, now a member of Lake Mary), volunteer attorney for the Child Protection Team at Kids House of Seminole Inc., Board Member at the J. Douglas Williams YMCA (Lake Mary) (Former Board Chair), graduate of Leadership Seminole Inc. and a Presidential Alumni member and member of Community Leaders and Elected Officials (CLEO).

“I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples.”— Mother Teresa

Community Partner Award

Deputy Mayor Pam Carroll



Pam Carroll is currently the Deputy Mayor of Winter Springs. Ms. Carroll was re-elected unopposed November 8, 2016. Deputy Mayor Carroll serves on the Board of Directors of the Seminole County Bar Association Legal Aid program. She has been instrumental in establishing the Advance Directives legal clinic for seniors at the Winter Springs Community Center. Ms. Carroll organized the grand opening of our Veterans legal advice clinic at the Casselberry Public Library. The Honorable John Mica attended the ceremony and presented a United States Flag previously over the Capitol at the event. The Veterans clinic is staffed with volunteer attorneys who donate their time to help American Heroes. Pam was born and raised in Massachusetts where she graduated with honors from Northeastern University. After a successful career in property management, she and her family relocated to Winter Springs in 1992. Since then she has been involved with SCPS and with community service including Take Stock in Children, and as President of the Tuscawilla Homeowners Association. At the city level she served on the Winter Springs Charter Ad Hoc Committee and other city boards.

“You give but little when you give of your possessions. It is when you give of yourself that you truly give.”

— Kahlil Gibran, The Prophet

18th Judicial Circuit Public Service Award

Honorable Melanie Chase



Melanie Chase is a Circuit Court Judge for the Eighteenth Judicial Circuit and currently assigned to the criminal division. She earned her J.D from University of Florida College of Law and her BA from Rollins College (Summa Cum Laude). Honorable Chase is on the board of directors of Seminole County Bar Association, Florida Council of Bar Association Presidents (Statewide) and Seminole County Inn of Court. She is a Florida Bar Foundation Fellow. She has received numerous awards and recognitions including the Florida Bar President's Pro Bono Service Award, Seminole County Bar Award for outstanding professionalism and the Edward C. Smith award for outstanding contributions to Pro Bono Project and general betterment of the community. Honorable Chase is Co-Chair of the Eighteenth Judicial Circuit Pro Bono Service Committee in Seminole County. The committee sponsored a free CLE concerning ethics at the Seminole State College and has numerous activities planned to encourage pro bono service in the Eighteenth Circuit.

Magistrate Tesha Ballou



Tesha Ballou has served as a General Magistrate for the Eighteenth Judicial Circuit in Sanford since November 2015 overseeing Dependency and Truancy matters. Magistrate Ballou began her career as an Assistant State Attorney, in both the Eighteenth and Fifth Judicial Circuits. After leaving the Office of the State Attorney, she joined the Disability and Accidental Death and Dismemberment sector at CNA Insurance as a Litigation Specialist. Magistrate Ballou served as General Counsel under Sheriff Donald Eslinger, for more than five years. Magistrate Ballou served as an Administrative Hearings Counsel in Boston, Massachusetts for the Division of Insurance. She was the Presiding Officer, and issued an affirmed decision on a controversial case of first impression regarding emergency license suspension for a convicted sexual offender. Magistrate Ballou is the Ethics Chair for the Seminole Inn of Court, and has been for three years, serves on the Board of Directors for the Seminole County Bar Association, and is a member of the Eighteenth Judicial Circuit Pro Bono Committee. Magistrate Ballou lives in Seminole County with her husband Scott, a retired Major who spent 32 years at the Seminole County Sheriff's Office serving our community, and their dog Max.

“This old world keeps changing for better or worse, and there’s no use in just standing still. You can’t always live your life in the valley, when you’ve got to feel the wind on the hill.”

President Award

Michael A. Sasso



Attorney Sasso graduated from the University of Florida in 2007 with his bachelor degree and then received his J.D from Barry University School of Law in 2011. He currently works at Sasso & Sasso, P.A. while also serving on the Young Lawyers Board of Governors, Seminole County Bar Association Board of Directors and the Board of Trustees for the Fred R. Wilson Memorial Law Library. Michael A. Sasso is the current president of our Board of Directors of Seminole County Bar Association Legal Aid. He has worked diligently this year to increase pro bono participation to assist residents of Seminole County gain access to the justice system despite their economic circumstances.



The Legal Aid program is housed in a historical building located in downtown Longwood. Through frugal management and strong leadership from the Board of Directors, the mortgage on our building was retired and the majority of funds are dedicated to direct legal services to assist the disadvantaged in our community.

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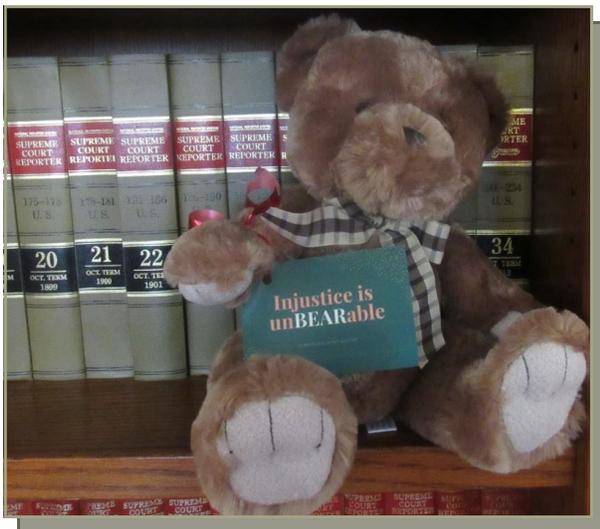
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“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.”

— Mahatma Gandhi



Legal Aid Applicants are interviewed by office primarily furnished by a donation from Attorney Steve Kramer and his wife, Amber, in the Fall of 2017. Staff and Applicants enjoy the new surroundings.



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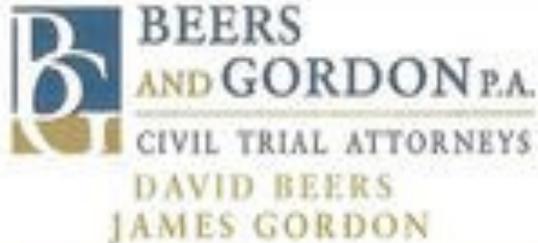
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