IOLTA Grantee Spotlight…

The Juvenile Rights Project: Making a Difference in the Lives of Children in Oregon

by Ellen K. Jones and Angela Sherbo

Joey, age 13, had been suspended from school for disruptive behavior several times and was facing expulsion. Although teachers noted he was unable to sit still and constantly bothered other students, Joey had never been tested for special education services. Joey’s attorney from the Juvenile Rights Project, Inc. (JRP) noticed this pattern of behavior and suspected that Joey had a learning disability. As a result of the attorney’s advocacy, the school tested Joey and determined that his behavior was indeed the result of a learning disability. Joey was able to remain in his school with special education services in place.

Steven was a 16-year-old boy who called JRP’s Attorney of the Day Hotline for assistance after the state child welfare agency declined to remove him from his home. His mother had abandoned the family, and his alcoholic father, in addition to beating him almost daily, would routinely stand in Steven’s bedroom doorway and shoot guns into the wall over Steven’s head. At Steven’s request, JRP helped him file his own petition in juvenile court and, as a result, the court ordered the child welfare agency to remove Steven from the home.

For more than 25 years, children in Oregon like Joey and Steven have been served by the Juvenile Rights Project, Inc. JRP is Oregon’s only non-profit law firm devoted exclusively to advocating for children and young people, particularly those involved in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems. With an advocacy unit and a defense unit, JRP serves as both a civil legal services office and a public defender organization for Oregon’s youth.

Approximately 10,000 children were victims of abuse or neglect in Oregon last year. Children entering the child welfare system are often removed from their parents and siblings and placed with strangers in foster care, residential treatment centers or group home settings. Their lives are upended by these emergency placements, which take them away from their schools, their neighborhoods and their friends with little or no warning. Once caught up in “the system,” children risk lingering in foster care while their parents, caseworkers and judges determine their future.

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From the Chair...

by L. David Shear
Chair of the ABA
Commission on IOLTA

The past few months have been filled with news and developments throughout the IOLTA community. First, I was happy to learn about the decision of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals granting the petition for rehearing en banc of the January 10, 2001 decision by a three-judge panel of the court. That ruling held that the interest generated from IOLTA accounts in Washington State is client property and that a taking of that property by the IOLTA program had occurred. While no one can predict what the ultimate result of the en banc proceedings will be, it is certainly encouraging that the court has seen fit to address the takings question.

As this issue of Dialogue went to press, a hearing before the en banc panel was scheduled for June 21, 2001 in San Francisco. Attorneys from Perkins Coie LLP have served as pro bono counsel to the Washington IOLTA program throughout the case, and worked very hard on the request for rehearing en banc. I am confident they will continue to provide their excellent representation at the hearing in San Francisco.

In May, the Commission on IOLTA met in Salt Lake City for its spring meeting. After a very

New Hampshire Efforts Aim to Expand Resources for Legal Services

by Tina Abramson and Linda Sirak

Editor’s Note: The past decade has seen a variety of political and economic challenges to stable funding for legal services. IOLTA programs have not been immune to these challenges. While interest rates fluctuated throughout the decade, many programs saw bank yields on IOLTA accounts move in only one direction: down. These uncertainties have pushed many programs to seek new ways to ensure a stable and enduring flow of revenue. As one of many organizations charged with traditional bar foundation fund-raising responsibilities, the New Hampshire Bar Foundation found opportunities to diversify close to home.

Building on its traditional fund-raising efforts with initiatives to draw new financial support, the New Hampshire Bar Foundation (NHBF) has reinvented itself into a mission-driven philanthropy dedicated to expanding the pool of resources for equal justice in New Hampshire.

NHBF fund-raising programs not only raise needed monies for important legal services and justice programs, but also provide ways for members of the legal community to realize their highest ideals for the legal profession and justice system. Through fund-raising and grant-making, the NHBF actively promotes collaboration and a sense of shared responsibility for justice in New Hampshire with lawyers, the courts, community based agencies, legal service providers, the executive and legislative branches of government, the public schools and the law school.

In the early 1990s, the NHBF Board of Directors began to consider expanding its resources beyond IOLTA revenues and its small and exclusive Fellows Program. With John Brown Limited, a New Hampshire-based national consulting firm, the NHBF conducted a feasibility study for building an endowment through planned and major giving. The study revealed several facts—the most compelling being that contributions were made to the NHBF not through true philanthropic intentions, but by an obligatory tithe to the Fellows program. Further, this obligatory contribution system set a paradoxically low standard for giving—a $25 contribution on first association and a maximum gift of $100 annually. This finding fueled the decision to start the Justice Society, a planned and major gifts program, and to reinvent the current NHBF Fellows program.

The Justice Society: Building an Endowment
In 1995 the NHBF launched the Justice Society to build permanently restricted endowment funds to ensure the NHBF’s future grant-making ability. The Justice Society was also a way to recognize planned and major givers. Bar members had the opportunity to become charter

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Although these children often have court-appointed attorneys to represent them in their juvenile court proceedings, there are systemic issues that often affect these children—issues that are too complex for each individual child’s attorney to take on. In addition, these juvenile court attorneys often need specialized training or assistance to effectively advocate for their clients. JRP helps children by addressing system-wide issues that affect children in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, and helps attorneys and other professionals serving children by providing training and technical assistance on juvenile issues.

Originally founded as the Juvenile Law Center of Legal Aid Service of Multnomah County in 1975, JRP’s early work focused on class action litigation. In 1980, JRP became a division of Oregon Legal Services and continued its advocacy for children and young people. In 1985, JRP became an independent non-profit corporation. Today, JRP’s efforts are aided by IOLTA funding from the Oregon Law Foundation.

JRP Advocacy Unit
The Advocacy Unit functions much like a children’s legal services office. It is staffed by attorneys and a social worker in order to have a cross-disciplinary approach. The unit provides a variety of services including information and referral, advice, individual and class representation, administrative and legislative advocacy, technical assistance and training throughout the state. The Advocacy Unit also addresses system-wide issues that affect thousands of children throughout Oregon. For example, in 1995 JRP reached a settlement with Oregon's state child welfare agency that required the agency to establish a “needs-based” system of care regarding services for thousands of children in foster care and their families, emphasizing individualized flexible services to each foster child and family. The settlement received such widespread support among children’s advocates and is so identified with the work of JRP that it is often referred to throughout the state as the “JRP plan.” JRP continues to monitor implementation of the settlement and provide technical assistance to ensure the agency complies with the agreement.

IOLTA funding has helped JRP develop and staff two of its most effective advocacy projects: the Education Project and the Attorney of the Day Advice and Referral Hotline.

The Education Project
Through individual casework, JRP attorneys found that children involved in the child welfare system were disproportionately excluded from school, more likely to be suspended or expelled, and more likely to be in need of—but not receiving—special education services. These children are disproportionately poor and minority and frequently forced to change schools (and sometimes school districts) as a result of changes in foster care placements. Many come in to the child welfare system already behind grade level due to truancy, and are more likely to miss school because of foster placement changes and lapses between their foster care placements and enrollment in new schools. Due to multiple foster placements, their school records are more likely to be misplaced. These records often contain the results of special education testing and individual educational plans. Most notably, children in the child welfare system are more likely to lack an effective, consistent educational advocate who will ensure that their educational needs are met.

In response JRP launched its Education Project, which takes a three-pronged approach to educational advocacy:

Individual case advocacy: JRP provides individual case representation for indigent children who are excluded, unidentified or underserved in their educational setting. Attorneys represent clients in school suspension and expulsion hearings as well as at school special education meetings.

Training and education: JRP has developed a training protocol and provides training on educational issues to foster parents, child welfare agency caseworkers, juvenile court counselors, Court-Appointed Special Advocates,
community direct service providers and parent groups across Oregon. Training provides basic information about the suspension and expulsion process; how to request testing for a child who may be eligible for special education services; the individual education plan (IEP) process (from identification of eligibility through development of the child’s IEP and the right to a due process hearing); and tips on being an effective educational advocate for a child. Last year, JRP provided training to over 1,500 people.

Outreach and advocacy services: JRP attorneys regularly serve on statewide task forces regarding the unmet educational needs of youth in substitute care. JRP attorneys recently participated in a work group that drafted revisions to the Oregon Administrative Rules and Oregon Revised Statutes to bring them into compliance with current federal law and the 1997 amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

**Attorney of the Day Advice and Referral Hotline**

Each year, JRP receives hundreds of calls from throughout Oregon from children and adults concerned about children. Callers range from homeless teens seeking to find out how they can enroll in school without a parent’s permission, to indigent parents desperate to learn how to access appropriate mental health services for their child. The JRP Attorney of the Day Advice and Referral Hotline provides callers with basic legal and referral information about social service, legal or medical agencies that may be able to assist them. This Hotline is staffed by JRP’s social worker and a paraprofessional, who screen calls and refer legal questions to a staff attorney.

The Hotline is available during JRP’s regular business hours but callers can leave messages 24 hours a day. The Hotline also provides callers with free self-help materials developed by JRP staff attorneys, on issues such as emancipation, expunction and limited guardianships. Each year the Hotline responds to approximately 600 requests for assistance. Callers include children and youth, parents, relatives, foster parents, caseworkers, school personnel, doctors, therapists, police officers and other attorneys. Many of the most poignant calls are from older children and teenagers who have sought assistance from the system, only to be turned away because of their age. (Oregon child welfare and other officials have acknowledged that the state disproportionately excludes older children from services).

One way JRP attorneys assist these youth is to help them file their own juvenile court dependency petitions. For example, a homeless teen tired of living on the street could call JRP’s Hotline and request assistance. The teen would receive an appointment to meet with a JRP attorney to discuss the relevant rights and options. If the teen wanted to be placed in state foster care or wanted to receive state-funded services from the child welfare agency, the attorney would prepare a “petition” for the child, setting out the reasons for court intervention, file the petition, and set an initial hearing for the child to appear in court to request the court’s assistance. At that hearing, the court could appoint the child a court-appointed attorney for the remainder of the case.

**JRP Defense Unit**

Although it is not funded by IOLTA, the Defense Unit is a vital component of JRP and a natural complement to the Advocacy Unit. It functions much like a traditional public defender office for children. JRP provides individual case representation to children—from the age of one day to 18 years old—in Oregon’s Multnomah and Clatsop County Juvenile Courts. JRP attorneys represent children in dependency (abuse and neglect), delinquency, termination of parental rights cases and appeals. Last year, JRP handled over 4,300 such cases and is Oregon’s largest contractor for this service.

**Conclusion**

The Juvenile Rights Project combines the best of both worlds —quality individual representation with system-wide advocacy—to help improve the lives of children in Oregon’s child welfare and juvenile justice systems. Individual advocacy, no matter how good, can only do so much. To effect real, long-lasting change for children and youth, there must be systemic change. IOLTA funding has provided the critical base on which JRP’s Advocacy Unit has been built and ensures that JRP will be able to continue to help Oregon’s most vulnerable children.

**Ellen K. Jones** is an attorney and executive director for the Juvenile Rights Project.

**Angela Sherbo** is a senior staff attorney and the lead advocacy attorney for the Juvenile Rights Project.
IOLTA Litigation Update

Arguments Heard by Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals En Banc in Washington Case

On June 21, 2001, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco heard oral arguments in the *en banc* rehearing of the case involving constitutional challenges to Washington State’s IOLTA program. David Burman of Perkins Coie LLP delivered arguments on behalf of the IOLTA program, the Legal Foundation of Washington. Richard Samp argued for the plaintiffs, which include the Washington Legal Foundation and others.

On May 9, 2001, the court issued an order granting the petition for rehearing *en banc* filed by the Legal Foundation of Washington. In that petition, the IOLTA program sought rehearing *en banc* following the January 10, 2001, decision by a three-judge panel of the court in *Washington Legal Foundation v. Legal Foundation of Washington*, 236 F.3d 1097 (9th Cir. 2001).

That decision concluded that interest generated from IOLTA accounts is client property, and that the IOLTA program had taken that property. The January 10 decision remanded the case to the district court to determine whether the plaintiffs are entitled to just compensation.

The May 9 order filed by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals states that the January 10 opinion “shall not be cited as precedent by or to this court or any district court of the Ninth Circuit, except to the extent adopted by the *en banc* court.”

Please visit the ABA Commission on IOLTA’s Web page at http://www.abanet.org/legal-services/iolta.html for up-to-date news about developments in this case.

From the Chair…

(continued from page 3)

productive business session, the meeting was highlighted by a visit from representatives of the Utah Bar Foundation, which operates the state’s IOLTA program. We met with Executive Director Kim Garvin and three members of the foundation’s board, including its president, Randy Dryer. Even though she is relatively new to her position, Kim’s enthusiasm and energy were evident, and all three of the board members displayed dedication and interest in IOLTA and funding legal services.

The Utah Bar Foundation boasts an impressive rate of participation. Approximately 90 percent of eligible attorneys in this “opt-out” state are enrolled in the program. This high rate of participation undoubtedly helped the foundation distribute $450,000 in grants last year, even though it is a relatively small program. Kim and Randy outlined the foundation’s future plans, which include efforts to increase its engagement in the community.

I am grateful for the Utah Bar Foundation’s hospitality and for the opportunity the Commission had to learn about it.

In April, Jane Curran, director of the Florida Bar Foundation, completed the first site visit under the Joint Commission on IOLTA/NAIP Technical Assistance Committee’s peer review program. Jane met with the director and board members of the Virgin Islands Legal Assistance Foundation, and reports that her visit was positive and well received. She has prepared a written report providing concrete feedback to the Virgin Islands program, and will continue to assist the program as a mentor to its director, Karen Beagles. The peer review program is a resource with great potential to benefit IOLTA programs throughout the country by tapping into the expertise and perspective of experienced directors such as Jane. I hope that we will see other IOLTA organizations take advantage of this program in the future.

In just a few weeks the Commission and the National Association of IOLTA Programs will sponsor the Summer 2001 IOLTA Workshops in conjunction with the ABA Annual Meeting in Chicago. The Workshops will feature a session on the Federal Reserve Bank system, a joint seminar with the National Conference of Bar Foundations about board development, a look at business law pro bono programs, and several sessions on the implications of ongoing developments in the structure and delivery of legal services, including hotlines and *pro se* initiatives. If you have not already registered for the Workshops, please plan to join us on August 2 and 3.

Online registration for the Workshops is available by logging on to the Commission’s Web site at http://www.abanet.org/legal-services/iolta.html
members during the first 18 months of the campaign. Jack B. Middleton, currently secretary of the ABA Board of Governors, led the volunteer effort as chair of the Advancement of Justice Committee, which the NHBF created to spearhead the Justice Society effort. He and Charlie DeGrandpre, chair of the NHBF Board, worked tirelessly to make personal visits to bar members across the state. They worked to establish a new standard for giving among senior members of the bar. Their message was simple: “It is time for you to give back to the profession that has given you so much, and you can do it easily through your estate planning.”

Approximately 80 bar members joined the Justice Society as charter members, giving bequests ranging from $1,000 to $25,000. Some of these donors chose to give major gifts instead of estate gifts. The NHBF decided to establish categories within the Justice Society to recognize different levels of major giving and accepted cash gifts ranging from $1,000 to $100,000 during the first two years. During that time, the NHBF raised approximately $400,000 in cash gifts, and $400,000 in promised planned gifts for the Justice Society.

The funds raised through the Justice Society planned giving campaign are used to create permanently restricted endowment funds to ensure the NHBF’s future grantmaking ability. The NHBF also offered donors the option of creating “named funds” for specific purposes. Though many donors did not choose to create named funds and instead contributed to an unrestricted endowment fund (called the Advancement of Justice fund), some donors did create separate named funds to honor other bar members or deceased family members. In fact, several families dealing with the loss of a loved one found honoring the person through the named fund option particularly helpful.

In close collaboration with the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, a statewide community foundation that manages the NHBF’s funds, donors are encouraged to explore life income arrangements such as charitable gift annuities, remainder trusts and other planned giving vehicles. Many donors have chosen to remember the NHBF by naming it among the beneficiaries of their will or living trust. This vehicle is very attractive to younger donors who have current family and financial commitments.

Reinventing the Fellows Program

With the findings of the John Brown study in hand, a successful launch of the endowment campaign, and a commitment by the board to expand the NHBF’s grantmaking ability, the “exclusive” Fellows Program was reinvented beginning in 2000. The NHBF board realized that in order to raise critically needed funds and reach a growing community of new members, all potential donors should be encouraged to give. For almost 20 years, the requirements for joining the Fellows Program had included membership in the bar for 10 years and a $1,000 gift over 10 years. Instead, the NHBF decided to treat the Fellows Program as a traditional annual giving program and opened it to any member of the bar or the public willing to give $200 or more annually. There is no membership requirement other than the desire to give. The increased expectation of giving corresponds with increased recognition for fellows and creates a mechanism for upgrading donors. The change in the NHBF’s Fellows Program now brings more clarity and meaning to the donors’ role as supporters and benefactors, and makes the program more inclusive. Accordingly, the 25th anniversary solicitation program will boast the theme “Fellows All in 2001!”

The Community Campaign for Legal Services

For 30 years, New Hampshire’s legal services programs have been the path to justice and dignity for the state’s least powerful citizens. Building on this legacy, the leadership of the New Hampshire legal services community (continued on page 8)
IOLTA
New Hampshire
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undertook a comprehensive planning process that was made possible through a grant provided by the NHBF. This planning process laid the groundwork for a future of heightened collaboration and efficiency in New Hampshire’s legal services system.

A cornerstone of this commitment to integration and excellence is a joint fundraising campaign for legal services. Recognizing the importance of this joint fundraising initiative and the impact it will have on legal services statewide, the NHBF’s board of directors has committed to meeting the fund-raising expenses of this campaign for the next three years. This commitment includes the establishment of a new director of development position within the NHBF, which it will also support for three years.

The Community Campaign for Legal Services will enable collaborative programs to reach out with ever-greater effectiveness to those with special needs: the poor, the vulnerable, the disabled, the young, the elderly, and the working-poor.

Although the campaign is designed as an annual sustaining campaign, it is being launched initially with three-year pledge commitments. Recognizing that endowment gifts hold the potential for ensuring long term, permanent funding for legal services, named endowed funds can be established with gifts of $10,000 or more payable over this three-year period or through a planned gift.

A campaign master plan and case for support has been developed and the NHBF is currently in the process of identifying campaign leadership and steering committee volunteers to spearhead this significant fund-raising initiative.

Conclusion
Although New Hampshire has a small legal community, the NHBF feels it can sustain all three of these funding initiatives because they offer donors a variety of choices for supporting equal justice. Rather than competing against one another, these choices—including long term giving, annual giving, targeted giving for legal services, and support for broader justice initiatives—offer the opportunity to expand the total pool of resources by appealing to a wider spectrum of the profession and the public. NHBF’s endowment will sustain its mission in the long term, while increased Fellows Program giving will expand its grant-making abilities in the short term. The Community Campaign for Legal Services will significantly increase giving to support legal services and provide a stable foundation of funding in the future. The NHBF is encouraged by the initial support for its efforts to create a comprehensive philanthropy dedicated to strengthening justice in New Hampshire.

Tina Abramson is executive director of the New Hampshire Bar Foundation.
Linda Sirak is director of development of the New Hampshire Bar Foundation.

2001 National Lawyer Referral Workshop

The 2001 National Lawyer Referral Workshop will be held October 31 through November 3 at the Argent Hotel in San Francisco.

The theme of this year’s workshop is “Value Added—You’ve Seen the Rest, Now Try the Best!” Sessions will address topics such as how to turn calls into retained cases and how to develop and enforce effective regulations. There will also be nuts and bolts sessions on fee generation, subject matter panels, ethics and public relations.

This year the workshop will feature a full day of programming specifically for California programs on Saturday, November 3, in addition to the normal Saturday morning sessions.

The workshop provides an excellent opportunity to network with colleagues from across the country while enjoying one of America’s premier cities. Located in the SoMo area of San Francisco, the Argent Hotel has easy access to San Francisco’s best neighborhoods for arts, culture, entertainment and shopping. Look for your workshop brochure in July so you can register.

For further information, visit the LRIS Committee’s Web site at http://www.abanet.org/legalservices/lrisregister01.html or contact Marsha Boone at 312-988-5786.
From the Chair. . .

by John Busch
Chair of the ABA Standing Committee on Lawyer Referral and Information Service

What person plays the most critical role in your LRIS program or law firm? My law practice setting is comprised of six lawyers, two of whom work part time. (I am counting myself as a full-time attorney. At times my partners might question that status.) I consider the other lawyers in the firm to be bright, industrious, ethical and competent, and I would clearly hate to lose any of the lawyer partners or associates in my firm. We also have four paralegals. One has been with the firm over twenty years. I consider all of them crucial to the success of the firm.

Who is the most valuable player, though? Maybe none of the above. The MVP may be our office manager/receptionist. She handles the numerous small-town telephone inquiries, tip-toeing just to the edge of practicing law without violating any ethical standards as she sorts out the callers’ concerns. She is the first to greet and the last to say goodbye to someone entering or exiting the office. Her attitude and skills in handling people are exemplary. They are also intuitive, and she has a personality that perfectly suits the role she has assumed.

How does this relate to lawyer

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Four Steps to a Professional Lawyer Referral Service Web Site

by Adam Slote

Developing a professional Web site requires a professional approach. The following four steps will help you through the process of building your program’s site.

Step One: Define Goals
It is important to define the scope of the project before you begin to allocate resources toward it. There is a range of options to choose from. An inexpensive marketing Web site may provide little more than basic information about the lawyer referral and information service (LRIS). On the other hand, a Web site rich in content may provide up-to-date legal information and program-related information for consumers and/or attorneys. Sophisticated data-driven Web sites may provide attorney directories or online referrals. Decide what level of content and services is appropriate for your program.

Since success requires that you have sufficient resources to reach your goals, it is important that you have support for your initiative from interested parties, including your bar association’s key decision-makers. Include all LRIS program staff, bar association executive staff, the bar association president and LRIS committee representatives in defining the Web site’s goals.

Sample goals (and levels of service) include:
• providing program-related information for consumers only, or for both consumers and lawyers;
• delivering legal information; and
• providing data-driven applications, such as an attorney directory, online referrals, online attorney registration, and community-related applications such as an event calendar, moderated chat forums, or message boards.

Step Two: The Big Decision
After establishing the goals for your Web site, you then need to make a critical decision: Will you develop the site yourself, or hire an outside consultant? Consider the following factors in making your decision:
• Money: Can you afford outside designers? Can you afford not to have a professional Web site?
• Expertise and Experience: Do you have sufficient resources of expertise and experience in-house? If not, is it time that your bar association add these capabilities?
• Time is Money: Even if you have enthusiastic in-house volunteers, is Web site development a cost-effective use of their time?
• Objectivity: Outsiders may be more objective and more willing and able to criticize the executive director’s aesthetic suggestions.

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Web Site
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• What about next month? After the site is established, who is going to maintain it and post new information on the home page? How long will you have to bug him or her to do it? Even if outside consultants design the Web site, you may need staff trained to revise content.

Step Three: Creating the Site
If you decide to hire a consultant, you should look at the consultant’s previous work, and be aware of his or her background. Many Web designers fall into the following four categories:

Geeks: Be wary of “geeks.” Many computer consultants with no graphic arts experience offer Web design services to their clients. The days of black text on a gray background are over. Your image comes first.

Artists: The prevalence of HTML editing software that allows anyone who can type to create Web pages makes artists more valuable than geeks.

Students: Hiring a student says, “this Web site is low priority.” You probably didn’t hire students to paint your building sign. More people will likely see your Web site than visit your bar association.

Firms with multi-disciplinary expertise: Firms with multi-disciplinary expertise may assemble a team with capabilities in advertising, graphic design, user interface design, and Web-based application programming.

If you have to develop the Web site yourself and if your staff is familiar with Microsoft Office, a product such as Microsoft Frontpage is probably your best bet for HTML editing software. Macromedia Dreamweaver is popular among professionals.

Web sites that allow you to quickly build a site from templates are http://www.ImageCafe.com

From the Chair...
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referral? The person in your service who handles this crucial personal contact with clients is your lawyer referral service intake person, and the first contact is almost always by telephone.

Past LRIS workshop sessions for intake persons have been well received. The LRIS Committee is currently considering two additional projects to develop and support your intake staff. The first project would create a model manual for teaching and instructing intake persons. The second initiative contemplates the creation of a certification program for referral intake staff.

Should LRIS intake personnel be certified? Social work agencies have developed a certification process to give professional recognition to intake personnel, to improve the quality of the referral process, and to enhance the status of those willing to be trained and comply with ethical and procedural standards established to guide intake personnel in their crucial role.

Should the LRIS Committee develop a training manual that could be part of a certification process? While the threshold question of certification was actively discussed at the recent committee meeting, by necessity the discussion also centered on what might go into a training manual and how effectively a standardized manual could improve the quality of LRIS intake training.

Should certification be based upon testing or completion of a course teaching specific competencies? Should there be experience criteria? Will intake staff be motivated and, therefore, more effective if they have gone through a certification process? Will the process create the expectation among staff members that they are entitled to more compensation by virtue of their certification? Should the certification body be the LRIS Committee, or should the committee pass minimal certification requirements, but leave the ultimate certification criteria to be resolved at the local level? Is certification a viable idea and can training and certification be sufficiently standardized to benefit intake staff, and more importantly, enhance our service to the public?

The LRIS Committee took no position regarding certification. The matter is still on the committee’s agenda and will be considered again at future meetings. Not every intake worker has all encompassing intuitive skills and knowledge. But would the process of certification help your service with that most important process of handling the public’s sometimes-desperate inquiries for legal services? We would appreciate your thoughts.

Share your comments with Sheree Swetin at American Bar Association, Division for Legal Services, 541 North Fairbanks Court, Chicago, Illinois 60611-3314, email: ssweetin@staff.abanet.org or John E. Busch at P.O. Box 1819, Elkins, WV 26241, email: jbusch@buschtalbott.com

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Web Site  
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and http://www.Homestead.com

Utilizing these kinds of Web sites, you can accomplish tasks such as registering a domain name, creating a simple but professional Web site from a template, and establishing email accounts.

Step Four: The Brainstorming Session

Web designers, senior LRIS staff, marketing/public relations staff, an LRIS committee representative, and a bar association executive or officer should meet for at least half a day to discuss the following five subjects:

1. Brand
All lawyer referral Web sites should capitalize on the goodwill of the sponsoring bar association. Develop and market a bar association brand that brings you credibility by showing off strengths such as:
- age (e.g. “Established in 1878”),
- history (e.g. showing a picture of an historic building),
- public service orientation (e.g. show-off awards, non-profit status),
- meeting high standards (e.g. “ABA Standards” or state certification), and
- size (e.g. “the largest bar association in your state,” or “a small bar association with local expertise”).

Consumers who see your brochures at the courthouse should instantly recognize your Web pages and vice versa. If you don’t have a logo, now is the time to create one.

2. Impression
Define the impression that you want to give consumers visiting your Web site. Many bar associations make the mistake of designing lawyer-oriented home pages. The home page should be for the public, and the LRIS should be prominent.

Bar association members will gladly click to a secondary page in exchange for the benefit of capturing the attention of more potential clients.

3. Message
What do you want to say? If the average LRIS panel member has 14 years of experience, get that message out and counter assumptions that LRIS attorneys are inexperienced. If you have impressive experience requirements, tell the world. Tell the public why they should use your LRIS instead of other resources.

4. Content
Legal information will bring people to your Web site. Take advantage of the existing content already at your disposal such as pamphlets, audio recordings, bar association-sponsored legal newspaper columns, radio shows or television programs, and so on. Build FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) from the experience of staff and member attorneys. Try to keep your content fresh.

5. Themes
Many fine Web sites have a unifying theme, often visual. One bar association home page displays a drawing of its historic courthouse and incorporates a smaller version of the drawing throughout the Web site as the home link.

As you struggle with recalcitrant officers, balky staff, and/or occasionally incomprehensible consultants to create a Web site, remember this—it really is worth it. As more and more people surge online, having a professional-looking Web site for your program will soon be essential, not optional.

Adam Slote is an attorney and a founder and president of iLawyer, Inc.

Note: The ABA does not endorse any software, services or online sites referred to in this article. They are mentioned for the purposes of illustration only.

Harrison Tweed  
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leadership in the effort to expand and improve the delivery of legal services to low-income citizens in Oregon,“ said Ross.

In April 2000 the OSB unveiled a legal needs study—following a pioneering study in 1971—titled the “The State of Access in Oregon”. Since then the OSB has worked with the Campaign for Equal Justice and the state’s legal aid providers to implement key provisions of the study. In October 2000, they sponsored open houses at each of the state’s legal aid offices to highlight the work being done within each community to improve access to justice for low-income citizens.

In the past year, the OSB has expanded public access to critical legal information by developing a “legal links” Web site and producing a series of public access television shows. In addition, the bar installed computer kiosks in five of the state’s legal aid offices, allowing clients access to the “legal links” site.

The OSB is sponsoring a bill in the Oregon Legislature that would assess a fee on appearances by lawyers licensed out of state that would generate an additional $100,000 to $200,000 for legal services.

Dialogue/Summer 2001
Total Customer Care: Lawyer and Client Service
by Judy P. Melton

Lawyer Referral and Information Service (LRIS) programs are businesses. As in all businesses, customers are their lifeblood. An outstanding business honors and values its customers, cares for them with dignity and respect, hears and addresses their concerns, and makes sure they leave every contact with the business feeling better for having dealt with it. That’s good customer service. If customers take away a feeling of “WOW,” that is excellent customer service. Strive for the WOW.

What does WOW customer service take? Passion! This means passion about:
• the importance of your business: lawyer referral;
• your customers: both clients and lawyers; and
• what you do: your job.

Every lawyer referral program needs a mission, a clearly defined idea of what it is trying to accomplish. A mission statement is a wonderfully useful tool. It is a filter through which every action should be strained. Consider the following mission statements:
• Hallmark: “When you care enough to send the very best.”
• Ford: “Quality is job 1.”
• FedEx: “When it absolutely positively has to be there tomorrow.”
• Burger King: “Have it your way.”

These statements tell you where these companies place their emphasis—giving their customers the highest possible quality of product or service.

A mission statement for an LRIS program might be a declaration such as: “Provide appropriate assistance to everyone who calls” or “work with the public and lawyers to ensure adequate legal representation for everyone” or “provide equal access to the law.” The focus you bring to your job must mirror your organization’s mission and philosophy. So, what is your mission? Do you have a mission statement posted prominently where everyone can read it often? If not, why not? It is worth the time it takes to create a mission statement, and it certainly makes your job easier.

Once you have your filter in place, you will be able to see how to organize your business around your customers. LRIS programs have two distinct sets of customers: the clients who need help finding legal counsel and the lawyers who serve on your panel. Naturally, these two groups come to you with very different issues and concerns. The tools for working with them, however, are the same.

Attitude
Start with examining your own attitude. Your job may be stressful, full of interruptions, constant telephone calls and meetings, all of which can contribute to a negative attitude. To counter this, every morning on the way to work, psych yourself up! Think about the majesty of the law. Think about how you are in the enviable position of serving people. Think about their distress and concerns about what has happened to them (or what they have done). To paraphrase Mark Twain, most folks are just about as happy, or unhappy, as they make up their minds to be. The point is that you have choices about your behavior and how you will react to the challenges and stresses of the day. Chose to be ready, with a smile, to help every customer who has contact with you over the day. Another way to boost your attitude is to omit negative words from your vocabulary. For instance, I formerly used the word “try” when I planned things. “I’m going to try to do that.” “I’ll try to be there by 3:00 p.m.” Well, as the sage Yoda said, “Try! Try! There is no try! There is only do or not do.” Either I am there at 3:00 p.m., or I am not. There is no “try.” Choose to be positive in your thoughts and vocabulary.

Preparation and Training
Preparation and training are also key to handling your many daily tasks. The preparation part is simple. It is crucial that you have a well-stocked, user-friendly work area. Have adequate supplies such as pens, note pads and books within easy reach. Is your referral list of other organizations, contact people, telephone numbers and addresses handy, up-to-date and accurate? Is your filing system organized? Are your computer files organized so that you, or anyone, can easily locate information for callers?

The training part is a little different. It may require self, rather than environmental, improvement. How are your telephone manner (voice, tone, “appearance”) and your manners (friendliness, courtesy, helpfulness)? Is the phone promptly answered? Are callers told how (continued on page 13)
Customer Care
(continued from page 12)

long they may have to hold? Are they given the option of being called back? Once a customer reaches you, can you assist him or her? Can you assist a customer professionally, empathetically and graciously? Do you actively listen and let the customer know you are doing so?

Here are some rules of thumb for dealing with your customers:

• Answer the telephone by the second ring.
• Smile. Yes, smile. It shows—or rather sounds—in your voice.
• Ask permission before putting a caller on hold.
• Offer to call the person back.
• Once a caller is on hold, check back frequently. If your telephone does not have a 30-second hold reminder, have one installed.
• Give the caller an estimate of how long the wait will be.
• Listen to the customer and do not interrupt.
• Make sure the caller hears and understands you.
• Use proper English and good grammar.
• Do not “talk down” to any caller.
• Do not rush a customer through a call.

Angry Customers
How do you handle an angry customer? The answer is simple: find out what the problem is and address it to the customer’s satisfaction. This answer sounds glib, but it is not. It is harder than it sounds, and it is also the essence of good customer service. First, listen to the complaint. Make sure you understand it and tell the customer what you can do to help. If you can handle the problem, do so immediately. When you cannot help with the specific issue, you should make the customer feel heard, understood and valued. Demonstrate your care and empathy, all the while steering the customer to the appropriate person or agency. Do not be afraid to encourage complaints about your service from both sets of your customers. It is natural to shy away from complaints, but they are the surest way to discover what your customers think of you and what is not working. Reward complaints with thanks, praise and little gifts. Use your imagination.

Be mindful of what you say to customers. Emotional trigger words and expressions can simply irritate your caller. To increase cooperation, use neutral language. Emotional trigger words and phrases include “can’t,” “can’t help you,” “you must,” “you should,” “you have to,” and “it’s company policy.”

When you tell a customer you will handle a matter, you should follow through. Once you have done so, make sure that that customer knows what you did and how the issue has been resolved. Follow through on your promises: Good follow-through is crucial to building your business’s credibility and reputation for reliability.

If possible, gather a name, address and telephone number from every caller. This information is essential for necessary follow-up. The only way to know how you are doing is to ask your customers. Regularly follow up with customers—both current and former—with telephone and paper surveys. These steps will put you well on your way to providing your clients and lawyers with total customer care. Just as important is to follow in all your work the philosophy that underlies each of them: that a well-treated customer is a satisfied customer is a repeat customer is the source of more customers.

Judy P. Melton is a professional coach who holds a J.D. and M.B.A. She has assisted attorneys, other professionals and organizations in handling business issues and developing long-range strategic plans.

To learn more about total customer care, including tips about working with client and lawyer customers, visit the Standing Committee on LRIS Web site for more tips from Judy Melton at http://www.abanet.org/legalservices/lrishome.html
Delivery Committee Submits Hotline Standards to House

After three years of drafting and review, the ABA Standing Committee on the Delivery of Legal Services has filed a report and recommendation with the ABA House of Delegates for adoption of the Standards for the Operation of a Telephone Hotline Providing Legal Advice and Information at the Association’s Annual Meeting in August.

Hotlines have emerged as a widespread method of providing affordable legal services in a variety of settings, including legal aid offices, pro bono programs, prepaid legal plans, affinity groups such as AARP and, in some instances, within individual law practices. Other than the state ethics provisions setting out the minimum obligations of lawyers who participate in hotline operations, no guidelines exist to give directions for the operations and functions of these services.

The standards are designed to set out minimum obligations, as well as to advance best practices in order to maximize the potential for hotlines to provide cost-effective services in a variety of settings. However, they are not designed to result in sanctions for services that fail to comply with any particular provision. The standards are set out in four sections. The first part advances core values of the legal profession and strives to seek full compliance with all sources of regulations governing hotlines and the lawyers who participate in them.

The second section sets out aspects of the procedures for the operations of a hotline service. Specific topics include diligence, management of backlogs and response mechanisms, lawyer access, document preparation, referrals, and operational feedback. The third section addresses the need to communicate the scope of services provided callers as these standards focus on intake and processing issues. The final section advances the quality of services provided by hotlines.

The Delivery Committee has circulated drafts of the standards for more than two years in its efforts to obtain feedback and sharpen the focus on specific issues. The standards have been the subject matter of sessions at the Equal Justice Conference each of the past three years. Drafts have been circulated through relevant electronic mailing lists and posted on the Web site of the Project for the Future of Equal Justice. The standards have been the subject matter of articles in The Legal Hotline Quarterly.

In June, Mary K. Ryan, Chair of the Standing Committee on the Delivery of Legal Services, provided copies to the chairs and staff of each ABA entity seeking feedback and support. If you would like to comment on the standards or provide support for the Committee’s resolution, please contact the Committee’s staff counsel, Will Hornsby, at 312-988-5761 or whornsby@staff.abanet.org

ABA Establishes Commission on Law School Loan Repayment and Forgiveness

ABA President-elect Robert Hirshon will establish a special ABA commission to examine law graduates’ debt burdens and the extent to which debt impedes their ability to pursue and remain in public service legal careers.

The commission will coordinate closely with other organizations active on these issues, including the National Association of Public Interest Law and the National Legal Aid and Defender Association, to develop a schedule of activities that will complement ongoing efforts to address the debt burden issue. These may include encouraging legislation extending federal and state support to law students who enter public service and promoting law school and private sector support of loan forgiveness programs.

The commission will be co-chaired by U.S. Senior Circuit Judge Frank M. Coffin of Portland, Maine, and Curtis M. Caton, a partner at Heller Ehrman White & McAuliffe, LLP in San Francisco. Additional members will include leaders in the profession, drawn from the ranks of law school deans and faculty, recent law graduates, experienced public service lawyers, legislative experts and others. For more information, contact Commission Staff Director Dina Merrell at 312-988-5773 or merrelld@staff.abanet.org
From the Chair...  

by David C. Hague  
Brigadier General,  
U.S. Marine Corps, Retired  
Chair of the ABA Standing Committee on Legal Assistance for Military Personnel

Military legal assistance has many of the characteristics of a multi-national corporation: global reach, sophisticated communication and support network, vast customer/client base, thousands of talented employees, and a well-established culture of caring and competence. With that thought in mind, I will use the language of corporate America to report on the status of the “firm.”

My principal sources of information and insight for this report are:

• recent site visits to branch offices in Yorktown, Virginia; Everett, Washington; and Camp Lejeune, North Carolina;
• a January 2001, meeting in Washington, DC, with the Board of Directors (judge advocates general of the armed services);
• frequent contact with subsidiary chief operating officers (the service chiefs of legal assistance); and
• 30 performance reports from individual offices in the form of nominations for the 2000 LAMP Award for Excellence.

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LAMP Spotlight...  
Camp Lejeune, North Carolina  
by Bryan Spencer

The LAMP Committee held its spring meeting and CLE program at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, on April 4 and 5. The North Carolina Bar Association LAMP Committee arranged the CLE Program. Assistant US Attorney Gill Beck, of the North Carolina State Bar LAMP Committee, and ABA LAMP Committee member Ken Luce were course co-directors.

Major General R.G. Richard, Commanding Officer, Marine Corps Base, Camp Lejeune welcomed the group and offered favorable comments about legal assistance as necessary for readiness. The committee was also welcomed and assisted by Colonel Ellen Healey, SJA, II Marine Expeditionary Force; Lieutenant Colonel Bruce Landrum, SJA 2d Marine Division; Lieutenant Colonel Jeremiah Rupert, SJA, 2d Forces Service Support Group; and Major David Bligh, OIC of Legal Assistance at Camp Lejeune. Captain Allison Daly was the Project Officer for the event and provided outstanding support in every respect.

Camp Lejeune is the Marine Corps’ major installation on the East Coast. The base is responsible for training and logistical support for its tenant commands and operates entry-level and career-level schools such as the School of Infantry and the Combat Service Support Schools. All told, the base covers over 246 square miles (including over 14 miles of Atlantic coastline) which is used for amphibious training.

The base houses the II Marine Expeditionary Force (II MEF) command element with subordinate units consisting of the 2d Marine Division, the 2d Force Service Support Group, and the 2d Marine Expeditionary Brigade. The aviation combat element of II MEF is the 2d Marine Aircraft Wing at the Marine Corps Air Station New River, which is adjacent to Camp Lejeune.

Almost 37,000 military personnel—many constantly deployed overseas—as well as their family members, plus 25,000 retirees with additional family members make for a total of over 140,000 clients in the area. Camp Lejeune’s legal assistance team has its work cut out for it. Fortunately Major Bligh, Captain Daly, the other two legal officers and five support staff headed by SSGT William Yables are up to the task. The five most frequently encountered legal problems are, in order of frequency, (1) wills and estates, (2) divorce and separation, (3) consumer issues, (4) landlord and tenant problems, and (5) immigration. Reserve officer attorneys are used as available to augment the legal assistance program.

The legal assistance office has undertaken a number of initiatives to better serve clients. Over 160 preventive law classes were conducted during the last reporting year, as were over 150 will/power of attorney and predeployment classes. Legal assistance appointments were made available on Thursdays until 2000 hours. An immigration and naturalization coordinator billet was established and provided expanded support in this area not only for Camp Lejeune personnel but also for other Marines on the East Coast.

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The legal assistance office closely monitors off-base consumer businesses such as insurance companies and check-cashing/payday loan businesses that may violate consumer protection laws. The office pursues violators through the Armed Forces Disciplinary Board or Headquarters Marine Corps Legal Assistance.

The office routinely provides support to pro se clients regarding non-contested adoptions, name changes, paternity, divorce and custody. It recently received new office furniture and computer equipment to aid in providing better legal assistance.

The CLE program on April 5 consisted of eight hours of instruction for 50 legal assistance personnel. It began with a session titled “The Top 10 Malpractice Traps for Legal Assistance Attorneys” by John Huggard, Captain, USNR, and an attorney with Huggard, Obiol & Blake, P.L.L.C., in Raleigh, North Carolina. Colonel George Hancock, Chief of Army Legal Assistance, followed with an hour on “Leveraging Internet Legal Knowledge Technology & Preventive Law.”

Gerald Robbins from the North Carolina Attorney General’s Office then spoke about paternity and child support enforcement in North Carolina. Chris Rydelek, Chief, Marine Corps Legal Assistance, spoke about new developments in Marine Corps legal assistance. Paul Davis, of the Federal Trade Commission in Atlanta, gave an update on consumer protection practices. Michael Zetts, from the North Carolina State Bar, addressed the group on professional responsibility, unauthorized practice of law, conflicts, confidentiality and other issues arising in legal assistance.

Patricia Millush, Office of the Staff Judge Advocate, Camp Lejeune, then described procedures to quickly and efficiently process immigration and naturalization cases for Marines at Camp Lejeune and elsewhere on the East Coast.

The last speaker of the day was Mark E. Sullivan, Colonel, USAR, Law Offices of Mark E. Sullivan, P.A., Raleigh, North Carolina. Colonel Sullivan is one of the country’s leading practitioners in his topic presentation, “Military Pensions, Separation Agreements, and Other Military Divorce Issues.” He regularly speaks on this topic at the Army JAG School and other CLE programs around the country.

An interesting change to our committee meeting entailed a panel discussion from three command/administrative Marines titled “Legal Assistance as Seen From Our Level.” The panel consisted of CWO Arcadio Ramos, Command Sgt Maj Robert E. Colon, and Gunnery Sergeant Dale Baker. Their consensus view of legal assistance is that preventive law was the most important aspect. They said that efforts to get the word out to troops through newspaper articles, base Web site notices and base TV station spots, as well as through programs for those in leadership positions, newcomer briefings and the troops themselves were particularly effective.

The Camp Lejeune meeting was a success, and the hosts deserve thanks, especially Captain Daly.

It is hard to visit a Marine Corps base without thinking of the famous photo of the six Marines raising the American flag on Mount Suribachi on Iwo Jima during World War II. Let me strongly urge you to read Flags of Our Fathers, by James Bradley. It is the story of those six Marines. During the battle, 6,800 Marines died and 19,000 were wounded. If you want to read about sacrifice, dedication and persistence, this is the book to read. Twenty-seven Medals of Honor were awarded for the month-long battle out of the 353 awarded during the entire 45 months of the war.

—Bryan Spencer
Military Child Support Conflicts Raise Special Issues

by Marilyn Michaels

Military personnel or their dependents may seek legal assistance regarding paternity and child support issues. The majority of their questions can be answered by referring to federal child support statutes (found at 42 USC §§ 651-669), state laws and the Uniform Interstate Family Support Act (UIFSA). However, because of the mobility of military personnel and the unique aspects of military service, military legal assistance attorneys need to be aware of some special issues when advising clients on child support matters.

As with the civilian general public, military members and dependents may apply for services from their local child support enforcement agency. Members stationed overseas may also apply for help from their home state or the state where the other parent is located. State and local services may be free or at nominal expense. In addition, fathers generally will have to reimburse government agencies for paternity test expenses if paternity is proven. Voluntary acknowledgment of paternity forms are only available for children born in the United States (not at overseas duty stations) and must be filed with the agency that handles birth records. Each state form is different. Paternity may be established at least until the child is 18 years of age.

Child support orders will usually also contain an order for medical support. Generally this requires the non-custodial parent to enroll the child(ren) in his or her employer’s medical plan. This often causes confusion in a military context since the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) is different from regular medical insurance policies. If the military sponsor/non-

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From the Chair...

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Dear Shareholder:

Military legal assistance has had an outstanding year thus far in 2001. We have built on the momentum achieved last year and have been operating in a favorable business climate of increased command support, greater client awareness and appreciation, and improved workforce efficiency.

This performance was a direct result of the firm’s consistent philosophy of managing our business for the long term. We have always applied a disciplined and selective strategy that reflects the realities of our business, including high demand, limited resources and the unrelenting requirement of quality performance. We have drawn on many strengths and assets to achieve these results. Among the most important are technology, and the talent, creativity and determination demonstrated by our people.

The fundamental outlook for our business is positive and highly encouraging. Responsive to market demand, we are strategically organized in three key businesses: legal assistance, preventive law and income tax support. The legal services we provide are vital to individual and unit readiness, morale, and quality of life in the armed forces. They also give meaning to our corporate mission statement “taking care of our own” and are significant factors in recruiting and retention.

Many of our offices have achieved extraordinary levels of productivity. They have done so by effectively leveraging the benefits of networking, and reserve, paralegal, and service-level support. Their superior performance has been characterized by focused effort combined with nimbleness, creativity and entrepreneurial skill.

Looking forward, we see continued growth in demand for our services by our clients and the commands we support. We also see our offices expanding their outreach and emphasis on preventive law and, through technology and synergistic effort, achieving even greater efficiency and effectiveness.

For nearly 60 years, we have held the unshakable conviction that success in lawyering and leadership is achieved by people of intelligence, drive and high personal standards. We still believe that, and we know that the credit for this and past years’ success goes to the men and women who make it happen.
Recognizing Distinguished Service Award Nominees

by Daniel K. Bean

Earlier this year the Standing Committee on Legal Assistance for Military Personnel (LAMP) recognized the outstanding efforts of the six entities that were presented with the 2001 LAMP Distinguished Service Award. The Committee’s task of isolating the six finalists was daunting given the multitude of excellent nominations. Because each nomination included tremendous legal assistance achievements, the committee thought it valuable to publicize each of them.

Air Force nominations

Representing the United States Air Force, the RAF Lakenheath Air Base Tax Center, United Kingdom, prepared tax returns for an amazing 96 percent of the base population eligible for legal assistance. The Patrick Air Force Base Civil Law Division, Florida, implemented several programs tailored to meet individual client needs. Those initiatives included a program called “Legal Assistance for Homebound Clients” designed to assist hospitalized and physically disabled clients, evening legal assistance for working clients, and a “Legal Readiness Day” for geographically separated units. The legal assistance office at Kunsan Air Base in Korea implemented a policy that “everyone gets seen anywhere in Korea” despite the remote locations and communication difficulties. The Luke Air Force Base, Arizona, legal assistance program excelled in meeting the unique challenge of

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Child Support

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custodial parent does not enroll his or her child in DEERS, there is a means outlined in AFI 36-3026 (Army Regulation 600-8-14, BUPERS Instruction 1750.10A, Marine Corps Order P512.11B) for the custodial parent to apply for enrollment. Fathers of non-marital children whose paternity was not judicially established (either an administrative forum or voluntary acknowledgment form) may have some difficulty in enrolling the child in DEERS. As the rule now stands, a dependency determination is required of these parents before the child is entitled to an identification card.

The Soldiers’ and Sailors’ Civil Relief Act applies to paternity and child support judicial proceedings. It does not, however, apply in administrative hearings. Many states now have administrative processes for determining the amount of support to be paid. Military personnel are to be granted leave to attend child support hearings, except when prevented by contingency operations or exigencies of the service (See Department of Defense Directive 1327.5, Leave and Liberty, paragraph 6.25.)

State guidelines apply in determining child support and many states count all sources of income. For military personnel this can include housing allowance (and the equivalent/in-kind for base quarters), subsistence allowance, cost of living allowance, and special pays. Once support is ordered, generally the amount will be withheld from the non-custodial parent’s wages. Wage withholding orders are sent to Garnishment Operations, DFAS Cleveland, for processing. The non-custodial parent may accumulate an arrearage before the first payment reaches the appropriate state central disbursement unit because it takes time for the military pay system to process the order (verifying, initiating withholding, and disbursing payment). The non-custodial parent should make arrangements with the state/local agency to make up for the payments until the first DFAS check is received.

Additional information regarding child support is found on the Office of Child Support Enforcement Web page at http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cse/

Marilyn A. Michaels is the Military Liaison Officer for the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE). Legal assistance attorneys with general questions regarding military issues and child support may contact her at (808) 692-7139; mmichael@pixi.com; or mmichaels@acf.dhhs.gov

The military liaison officer is not an ombudsman for military personnel. Issues concerning a client and his or her individual case at a child support agency should be directed to that particular agency for resolution.
Service Awards
(continued from page 18)

delivering legal assistance to a large retired population. Both the Pope Air Force Base Legal, North Carolina, and the Shaw Air Force Base Civil Law Division, South Carolina, developed new programs to improve the efficiency of the delivery of legal assistance.

Individual achievements by Air Force personnel were equally impressive. Captain Christopher A. Brown, Ramstein Air Base, Germany, produced the Comprehensive Preventive Law Plan, which included a monthly newsletter, handouts and a robust Web site. Captain Monica S. Lewallen, stationed at Malmstrom Air Force Base, Montana, provided the services of three attorneys during critical attorney shortages while also volunteering to provide services during off-duty hours in order to accommodate clients’ work schedules. Captain Matthew M. Scoble, at Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado, created an electronic mail newsletter distributing the latest legal assistance news to all base personnel and 19 geographically separated units. Finally, Captain W. David Young, II, Yokota Air Base, Japan, created legal handouts for clients as well as his peers.

Outstanding Army programs
Not to be outdone, the United States Army also had several outstanding nominations. The Legal Assistance Office, OSJA, III Corps and Fort Hood, Texas, with six personnel, provided over 6,000 individual client services. The Legal Assistance Section, Client Services Division, OSJA, U.S. Army Medical Department Center and School, and Fort Sam Houston, Texas, assisted pro se clients with 400 probate petitions and 500 divorce and name change petitions. The attorneys of the 1st Cavalry Division Legal Assistance Office, Texas, taught 59 classes attended by 4,425 students.

In the individual category, Captain Koby Langley, 82d Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, was recognized for implementing systems to assist soldiers and family members attempting to gain citizenship under new Immigration and Naturalization Service processing guidelines. Captain Jason Thelen from the 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas, represented 16 clients against two insurance companies that had employed unfair and deceptive practices to induce soldiers to purchase policies.

Impressive Coast Guard accomplishments
The accomplishments from the United States Coast Guard were also impressive. The Seventh Coast Guard District Legal Assistance Program, Miami, Florida, created a hurricane response paradigm that included training programs, ready teams, and pre-prepared information packets that assisted the deployed attorneys.

Two individual civilian legal assistance attorneys were bright shining stars for the Coast Guard. Benjamin S. McCarty, Coast Guard First District Legal, Boston, Massachusetts, created and maintained the Coast Guard Legal Assistance Program Internet Web site. McCarty devoted countless hours outside his normal job description to develop and maintain the site. Patricia Laverdure, a member of the LAMP award-winning unit from Coast Guard Maintenance & Logistics Command Pacific, Alameda, California, was person-ally responsible for directing the only legal assistance program in the Bay Area. She expanded the program to serve more clients in numerous ways including the utilization of various reserve assets from the other military units assigned to the area.

Marine Corps superstars
Setting the standard for the United States Marine Corps was the legal assistance office at the Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. Camp Lejeune’s preventive law measures included publishing newspaper articles weekly, coordinating a base Inspector General white letter on consumer tips, and publishing a legal guidebook for service members. The legal assistance office at Marine Corps Base Hawaii specialized in elderly law issues to better meet client needs. One of the office’s innovations was posting preventive law material on the base’s Web site.

MCAS Miramar Legal Assistance, California, had a pair of individual superstars. Captain Jerry A. Stevenson, II, instituted an 18 month schedule of presenting deployment briefs to local units, which utilized the Internet and preventive law emails to spread the message. Corporal Robert J. Weiner created a large-scale Client Management Database, streamlined the California dissolution process, and was a key player in the implementation of time-saving legal assistance software. Finally, Catherine Snodgrass, MCAGCC Tax Center, Twentynine Palms, California, authored a California tax manual that was used by USMC tax centers worldwide.

Navy nominees
The Force Judge Advocate’s
Service Awards
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Office, U.S. Naval Forces, Europe and Staff Judge Advocate’s Office, Commander, U.S. Naval Activities, United Kingdom filled the void created by the closing of the Naval Legal Service Office Detachment London. Both offices assumed the legal assistance duties despite the lack of change in their primary duties of providing advice to the Commander in Chief of all Naval Forces in Europe and the Commander of all Naval Activities in the United Kingdom, respectively. The Naval Legal Service Office Central, Pensacola, Florida, and its branch offices spanning 13 states provided assistance a total of 20,411 times and saw over 16,460 new and return clients. The Tax Assistance Center, Naval Legal Service Office, Mid-Atlantic, Norfolk, Virginia, prepared over 30,000 tax returns, saving service members $1.6 million in tax preparation fees and generating over $18 million in refunds.

The success of the Navy’s LAMP Award winner, Naval Legal Service Office Southwest, San Diego, California, was fueled by three outstanding performers. Lieutenant Colin A. Kisor counseled over 1,000 clients in less than ten months and negotiated several contract rescissions, saving his clients over $100,000. Leonard Reingold recovered over $24,000 in disability back pay and corrected the retirement status (E-5 vice E-3) for a World War II Navy veteran with a 100 percent disability. Fran Weldon completed over 2,315 notary services in addition to serving as the sole office assistant preparing marital separation agreements and adoption pleadings. Finally, Cecelia A. Welch, Naval Legal Service Office Northwest, Whidbey Island, Washington, coordinated the NLSO Northwest Preventive Legal Assistance Outreach Program. The program is designed to share information with sailors before they become involved in situations that reduce their mission readiness and require corrective legal services.

Daniel K. Bean is a member of the ABA Standing Committee on Legal Assistance to Military Personnel.

An article featuring the six LAMP Distinguished Service Award Winners was published in the Spring 2001 issue of Dialogue. It can be viewed on the Web at http://www.abanet.org/legalservices/dialogue/01spring/dialogue_01springlamp.html

Secretary of Defense Recognizes Work of LAMP Committee

LAMP Committee Chair David C. Hague recently received a letter from Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. The letter is reprinted below:

Dear General Hague:

Thank you for sending me the Winter 2001 edition of Dialogue. I commend the work of the Standing Committee on Legal Assistance for Military Personnel, which exemplifies the continuing commitment of the American Bar Association to legal assistance for military personnel dating back to the early days of World War II.

The Committee’s work in the area of policy and legislative development, such as promoting a uniform will drafting protocol and clarifying the SGLI beneficiary designations, contributes greatly to a higher standard of readiness for our Service Members and an improved quality of life for them and their families.

I encourage you to continue your constructive efforts on behalf of military legal assistance and our men and women in the Armed Forces.

Sincerely,
Donald Rumsfeld
From the Chair...

by Robert N. Weiner
Chair of the ABA Standing Committee on Pro Bono and Public Service

The success of this year’s Equal Justice Conference—its evolution into the largest assemblage of pro bono and legal services talent in the nation—has prompted me to reflect on the significance of this event.

At the first Equal Justice Conference, David Hall, provost of Northeastern University, offered his vision for the gathering. He observed that:

This conference must usher in a movement that redefines what it means to be a lawyer. We must collectively develop a blueprint that the profession will be convinced to follow. Not because they are charitable, but because they understand how essential this movement is to this profession’s survival and growth. When we do that, then this conference will not be a place where those who are already committed to the ideals come, but it will be a destination of choice for any serious lawyer who wants to be a part of the future direction of this profession.

This year, on March 29-31, over 900 individuals came together in San Diego for the third annual Equal Justice Conference. Have we achieved Provost Hall’s vision for the conference? We are well on the way.

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Third Annual Equal Justice Conference

More than 900 pro bono program managers, judges, legal services advocates and attorneys gathered in March for the Third Annual Equal Justice Conference at the Town and Country Resort in San Diego. The conference was made possible through the combined efforts of the National Legal Aid and Defender Association and the ABA Standing Committee on Pro Bono and Public Service. Some of the numerous highlights of the conference are captured in the photos here. Pro Bono Committee Chair Robert N. Weiner shares his thoughts on this year’s conference theme “Pro Bono, Innovations and Partnerships” on page 21.

“All of you want to do well, but if you don’t also do good, doing well will never be enough.”

Citing the words of writer Anna Quindlen, Justice Ming W. Chin of the California Supreme Court delivered keynote remarks that explored the definition of pro bono publico. When it is properly functioning, our legal system protects the weak and the poor, Chin said.

“Somehow we have let those who have enough say ‘enough is enough’, permitting them to set the agenda and to accuse everyone else of having an ‘agenda’, leaving millions wondering where the ‘human rights’ they thought they were promised are, and why so many who already have them, think nobody else needs them. The reality is that there are still built-in headwinds for many people who are thwarted in their conscious choices and aspirations by stereotypes unconsciously assigned, and who cannot be expected to understand why the evolutionary knowledge we came to call human rights appears to be suffering such swift Orwellian obliteration. It is knowledge we ignore at our peril.”

Keynote speaker Justice Rosalie Abella of the Court of Appeal for Ontario recounted the status of human rights from the end of World War II and into the Twenty-first Century. Knowledge of inequality is key to addressing the ambiguous status of human rights in the first years of this century, according to Abella. “To deliver justice fairly, we must never forget how the world looks to those who are vulnerable.”

Harrison McIver III, executive director of Memphis Area Legal Services and Randy Jones of the ABA Standing Committee on Pro Bono and Public Service, (right) served as co-chairs of the 2001 Equal Justice Conference.
NLADA recognized Ayn Crawley of the Maryland Legal Assistance Network with its Innovations in Equal Justice Award. Pictured with her is Jan May of Legal Counsel for the Elderly, Inc.

Photography by Jane Ribadneyra

Wayne Tanna was presented with NAPBCO’s William Reece Smith Jr. Special Services to Pro Bono Award. Tanna serves on the board of Volunteer Legal Services of Hawai‘i and has devoted many hours of his time to pro bono legal representation.

Robert N. Weiner, chair of the ABA Standing Committee on Pro Bono and Public Service, presents Carol Burdette of the Polk County (Iowa) Bar Association Volunteer Lawyers Project with the National Association of Pro Bono Coordinators 2001 Pro Bono Coordinator of the Year Award.
From the Chair... (continued from page 21)

When the Pro Bono Committee sponsored this conference on its own, as the annual Pro Bono Conference, 500 to 600 people attended. It was a high-powered, but fairly homogeneous group. Now, through a co-sponsorship with the National Legal Aid and Defender Association and our vigorous outreach, the Equal Justice Conference fully reflects the diversity of the profession. The conference drew together a broad coalition of legal services and pro bono program staff, private attorneys, judges, corporate counsel, law school faculty and students, government attorneys, public interest advocates, and others—all linked by a common commitment to equal access to justice for the poor. The conference offered special programs targeted to each of these groups, keynote speakers of national stature, and over 90 workshops conducted by experts in the field. Despite the challenges of planning an event for such a diverse audience, the participants found the programming useful and provocative.

But, in my view, it was the fact of the conference, its conception as a melting pot of diverse legal communities sharing a common goal, that was unique. People who might otherwise never have had the opportunity to talk with each other, to learn from each other—pro bono directors and judges, legal services staff and corporate counsel, bar association leaders and law students—earnestly convened in workshops, even in hallways. The results often were new project ideas, strategies for increasing funding, potential partnership opportunities, legal advocacy approaches, and much more. In many instances, people from the same city or state who never have a chance to just sit down together made great strides toward their mutual goals.

One particular program focused on those not involved in the day-to-day delivery of legal services to the poor. More than 150 people attended this event, the Partners for Justice Forum. The program offered a day of structured networking in the form of highly interactive sessions that gave those in attendance a chance to participate. It was a rare opportunity for judges to talk with other judges, law school representatives to talk to their peers and so forth, swapping ideas and information about what has worked and what has not worked to expand delivery of legal services to the poor.

One of the conference’s principal goals was to educate people about what they can do to develop partnerships in support of legal services in communities across the nation. We provided the tools, the information and the models. Many left the conference better prepared for this important work. On behalf of the Pro Bono Committee, I am proud of what we accomplished by bringing committed people together. We will continue to strive to make the Equal Justice Conference an event that inspires lawyers to rededicate themselves to what is best in our profession.

Endnote:

1 The Pro Bono Conference began in 1983 and was replaced by the Equal Justice Conference beginning in 1999.

Further coverage of the 2001 Equal Justice Conference begins on page 22 of this issue.

Publico Award (continued from page 21)

Act to state-funded services.

• Judge Merrill Hartman of the 192nd Judicial District of Dallas County, Texas, has made numerous contributions to pro bono legal services throughout his career. He has developed innovative pro bono programs, delivered free legal help, and improved existing programs that assist those who cannot afford a lawyer. He was instrumental in the creation of several neighborhood legal clinics in Dallas, and has been a tireless recruiter of volunteer lawyers—visiting law firms, bar associations, and pro bono recruiting functions to speak about the importance of assisting low-income people in need of legal help. He has demonstrated the critical role judges can play in promoting and facilitating pro bono services to the poor.

The awards will be presented during an August 6 luncheon during the 2001 ABA Annual Meeting in Chicago. ABA President Martha W. Barnett will host the luncheon. Bryan Stevenson, executive director of the Equal Justice Initiative of Alabama, will speak at the luncheon.
From the Chair... 

by L. Jonathan Ross
Chair of the ABA Standing Committee on Legal Aid and Indigent Defendants

The ABA has long been concerned that the federal Legal Services Corporation (LSC) be the most effective possible vehicle for assuring access to justice for millions of poor people across the U.S. To maximize its effectiveness, the LSC must be guided by a board of directors that is committed to LSC’s mission and able to fully implement its goals.

The LSC has been well served for the last eight years by a board appointed by President Clinton. Now, with a new administration, a new board will be appointed.

In 1989, the ABA adopted a resolution calling upon the U.S. President (in nominating LSC board members) and the U.S. Senate (in confirming them) to adhere to five broad criteria:

1) The nominees should be free of all conflict, or the appearance of such conflict, with the existence and function of the LSC or the representation of poor persons in legal matters so that the nominees will be able to act and will be perceived as able to act with objectivity and fairness;

2) The nominees should be committed to, and have demonstrated a commitment to, the continued existence and the effective operation of the LSC;

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2001 Harrison Tweed Award Winners

The Brooklyn (New York) Bar Association, the State Bar of California and the Oregon State Bar will receive the 2001 Harrison Tweed Award for achievement in preserving and increasing access to legal services for the poor. The awards will be presented during the ABA Annual Meeting in Chicago at a joint luncheon of the National Conference of Bar Presidents, National Association of Bar Executives and National Conference of Bar Foundations.

The Harrison Tweed Award is given annually by the ABA Standing Committee on Legal Aid and Indigent Defendants and the National Legal Aid and Defender Association. It was created in 1956 to recognize the extraordinary achievements of state and local bar associations that develop or significantly expand projects or programs to increase access to civil legal services for poor persons or criminal defense services for indigents.

Brooklyn Bar Association

The Brooklyn Bar Association (BBA) established the Volunteer Lawyers Project in 1990 to meet the demonstrated need for pro bono legal services among Brooklyn’s indigent community. The VLP is now an independent 501(c)(3) corporation, with its own staff, budget, and board of directors. More than 1,000 lawyers, paralegals, and law students now volunteer with the program. “[T]he association has played a fundamental role in the growth and success of the project, sustaining a lasting commitment to meeting the needs of Brooklyn’s indigent community,” said SCLAID Chair L. Jonathan Ross.

Each year the bulk of VLP’s volunteers and legal education instructors come from the ranks of BBA membership. In addition to providing the project with volunteers and instructors, the association provides the VLP with annual in-kind gifts of free rent and utilities. Through its ongoing support from the BBA, the VLP has assisted more than 6,000 clients in a variety of matters, including family law, domestic violence, medical directives, bankruptcy proceedings and wills.

State Bar of California

“The determined effort of the State Bar of California to increase access to justice for low-income people deserves to be applauded,” according to Ross. The bar launched a multifaceted bench-bar program in 1996, beginning with the establishment of the Access to Justice Commission. Since 1999, the bar and the commission have worked with the California Judicial Council, the legislature and the governor’s office to establish the Equal Access Fund, the first-ever state appropriation for legal services.

During its first two years, the fund included $10 million for civil legal services to the poor. The bar successfully lobbied for including a 50 percent increase in the fund for the current fiscal year in the governor’s proposed budget.

The State Bar of California has also led efforts to increase the yield on IOLTA accounts, co-sponsored regional planning meetings on methods to better address the needs of self-represented litigants, and established a task force on unrepresented litigants.

Oregon State Bar

“The Oregon State Bar (OSB) has a long history of providing invaluable

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From the Chair...
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3) The nominees should be committed to the freedom of the LSC and its grantees from political control;
4) The nominees should be cognizant of and fully committed to the role of legal services attorneys and the principle that the poor should have full access under law to comprehensive and effective legal services; and
5) The board of directors as finally constituted should adequately represent the organized bar, the legal education community, legal services attorneys, clients to be served by LSC grantees, and organizations involved in the development of legal assistance to the poor.

The ABA also resolved, in 1989, to evaluate nominees and provide the results of its evaluations to the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, which confirms nominees to the LSC board. The Standing Committee on Legal Aid and Indigent Defendants (SCLAID) conducts the evaluations on behalf of the ABA.

We anticipate that in the next few months the President will announce his nominations to the LSC board. We will then quickly begin the process of evaluating the nominees. Our process includes notice to all state and local bar associations, confidential interviews with persons who are familiar with each nominee’s views and accomplishments, and personal interviews with each nominee. SCLAID’s position on each candidate will then be transmitted to Senate Committee Chair Edward Kennedy (D-Massachusetts).

We urge you to inform the Senate Committee and your own senators of the importance of these nominations and the need to confirm only those nominees who meet the criteria outlined above. We also hope that you will keep in close contact with our committee, and share any relevant information about the nominees. With your help, we will ensure the confirmation of Board members who will work to provide a high-quality legal services program for our nation.

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As you probably know by now, LSC President John McKay concluded his service to the Corporation on June 30. I want to commend him for a job well done, and wish him much success in his future endeavors.

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LSC Geographic Funding Areas Defined

On April 16, 2001, the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) announced the service areas in 26 states and the District of Columbia eligible for FY2002 grant awards for providing legal services to the poor. The decisions were based on LSC evaluations of “state plans” submitted in each jurisdiction. Based on its review of other information and recommendations from a range of stakeholders involved in state planning, LSC made significant changes in the service areas of 14 states for FY2002 bidding. Descriptions of the changes in those 14 states are available on the LSC web site at http://www.lsc.gov/pressr/releases/010416pr.htm

LSC Releases “Building State Justice Communities” Report

An LSC report released in March 2001 reviews the progress made in 18 states to enhance legal services for the poor through “state planning.” LSC first called upon states to conduct comprehensive planning for the delivery of legal services to the poor in 1995.

The new report, “Building State Justice Communities,” identifies 18 states that serve as models for successful planning and implementation of enhanced systems.

The report found that each state “improved access to justice for low-income people, strengthened the quality of legal services delivered by programs and forged new and deeper bonds among stakeholder partners in each state’s civil justice community.” The LSC has charged all 50 states with evaluating “whether the current structure of the state [legal aid] delivery system… constitutes the most effective and economical way to meet client needs throughout the state.”

The “Building State Justice Communities” report was the first comprehensive assessment issued by LSC’s State Planning Team, which reviewed the progress of all 50 states before selecting the top 18. Randi Youells, LSC’s vice president of programs, noted that several states not included in the report have made meaningful strides in restructuring to better serve more clients, but that the 18 states included in the report were “the cream of the crop” in delivering legal aid.

The entire report, including state-by-state analyses, can be found online at http://www.lsc.gov
Changes in Top Staff Post at the Legal Services Corporation

LSC President John McKay Steps Down - John McKay left his post as Legal Services Corporation (LSC) president at the end of June after four years of service. “I have asked the Board of Directors to be relieved of my duties as LSC president so I may pursue my interest in serving President Bush as U.S. Attorney in Seattle,” McKay said. “It has been my great honor to lead and work with the thousands of dedicated lawyers and staff who labor so hard every day to provide legal representation to America’s poor.

Former Representative John N. Erlenborn Named Interim President - The LSC Board of Directors selected former Congressman John N. Erlenborn to assume the LSC presidency on July 1, 2001.

Former Rep. Erlenborn (R-IL), who served 10 terms in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1965 to 1984, was chosen to succeed outgoing President John McKay. Erlenborn’s commitment to legal services can be traced back to LSC’s founding in 1974, when he was one of the House managers of the legislation creating the independent, non-profit Corporation. Erlenborn, now vice chair of the LSC Board, is currently serving his second term on the board. He was appointed by President Bush in 1989 and re-appointed by President Clinton in 1995.

Erlenborn is currently an adjunct professor at Georgetown University Law Center. His past public service includes acting as chair of the U.S. Department of Labor’s ERISA Advisory Council; membership on the President’s Chemical Warfare Review Commission; and acting as a state representative in the Illinois General Assembly from 1957 to 1964.

Erlenborn is expected to remain LSC’s president on an interim basis until President Bush selects, and the Senate confirms, a new board of directors responsible for picking a permanent LSC president.

Bush Administration Seeks $329 Million for LSC in Detailed Budget

In his budget proposal for the 2002 fiscal year, President Bush asked Congress to fund the LSC at $329.3 million. The amount is equal to LSC’s current-year funding and would be allocated as follows: $310 million for basic field programs, $4.4 million for client self-help and information technology, $12.4 million for Management and Administration, and $2.5 million for Office of the Inspector General.

The President’s budget request also included a statement in support of LSC:

“The Federal Government, through LSC, ensures equal access to our Nation’s legal system by providing funding for civil legal assistance to low-income persons. For millions of Americans, LSC-funded legal services is the only resource available to access the justice system. LSC provides direct grants to independent local legal services programs chosen through a system of competition. LSC programs serve clients in every State and county in the Nation. Last year, LSC-funded programs provided legal assistance and information to almost one million clients.

“Legal services clients are as diverse as the Nation, encompassing all races, ethnic groups, and ages. They include the working poor, veterans, family farmers, people with disabilities, and victims of natural disasters. The most common types of cases that people bring to LSC-funded offices are related to domestic violence, family law, housing, employment, government benefits, and consumer matters.”

To date, Congress is behind schedule in considering appropriations measures due to the focus on passing the President’s tax cut legislation. The House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, State, the Judiciary and Related Agencies, which funds LSC, was expected to draft its FY 2002 appropriations bill the last week in June. At press time, the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee schedule is uncertain due to the recent change in power in the Senate.

While the President has endorsed LSC’s mission with his budget request, the program still faces some opposition, particularly in the House, that may threaten full funding. LSC grassroots advocates are strongly encouraged to write their Representatives and Senators and ask that Congress fund LSC at no less than the President’s request of $329.3 million. This is particularly important if your Representatives sit on the House or Senate Appropriations Committees.

For more information, please visit the ABA’s Governmental Affairs Office Web site at http://www.abanet.org/poladv
ABA Launches New Web Site to Guide People Seeking Legal Help

The American Bar Association has created a new Web site, http://www.findlegalhelp.org, to empower consumers to make informed decisions about addressing their legal needs on the Internet.

“Findlegalhelp.org is the starting point for people seeking legal help on the Internet,” said Mary K. Ryan of Boston, chair of the ABA Standing Committee on Delivery of Legal Services. “People from across the country look to the ABA for objective information about the law and the legal profession. This Web site is a response to their need for a variety of legal information—including information about how to find a lawyer.” Findlegalhelp.org offers information on a variety of ways consumers can handle their legal concerns:

**Referral to private attorneys:** The site contains information to help those with legal concerns find a lawyer through their local bar-sponsored lawyer referral services. Viewers can either go through the online lawyer referral directory or click through to iLawyer.com to arrange a consultation with a local lawyer. Viewers can also link to online lawyer directories and services.

**Legal aid and pro bono:** The site contains information to help low-income people find free legal assistance from legal aid and pro bono programs and projects. Viewers can locate the legal aid office nearest them or determine which pro bono programs serve their local community. A listing of special programs geared toward victims of domestic violence is also provided on the site, as are links to civil legal programs available to members of each branch of the military and their dependants.

**Pro se:** The Web site contains a variety of resources designed to help people who choose to handle simple legal matters themselves. Information is included from local courts and nonprofit organizations that provide guidance and information about procedures and the use of necessary forms and documents.

**Disputes with lawyers:** Findlegalhelp.org also focuses on how clients can work out disputes they may have with their lawyer. The site explains how mediation and arbitration services can help resolve them, and also explains how people can file a complaint with a state disciplinary board.

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