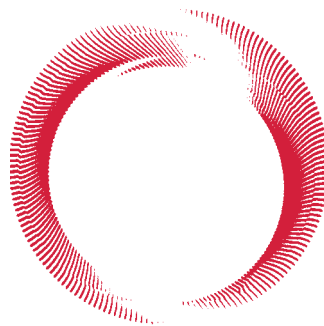
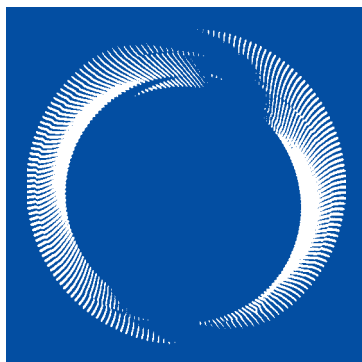


Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation

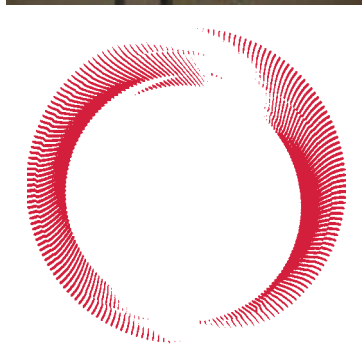
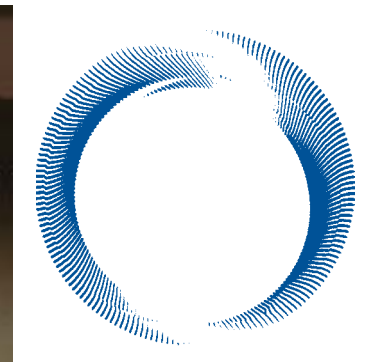
Presidential Awards



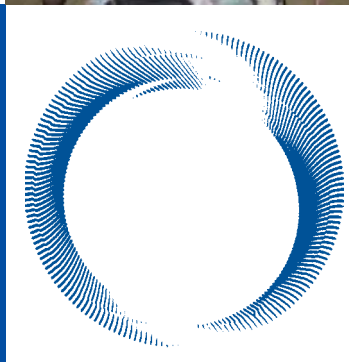
Outstanding Leadership in the Delivery of Pro Bono Legal Services in Ohio



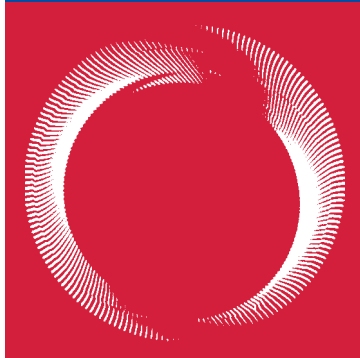
May 2002



Stephanie Clark



Volunteer Lawyers for the Poor Foundation



The Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation (OLAF) is committed to equal access to justice and works to assure that resources, programs, and services exist statewide to serve the unmet civil legal needs of low-income individuals in Ohio.

Stephanie Clark

In less than two years, Magistrate Stephanie Clark of the Licking County Court of Common Pleas, General Division, has helped transform Interfaith Legal Services from a fledgling project into a nationally recognized model of collaboration, which has provided free legal services to more than 600 poor and low-income clients in three Ohio counties. Her hands-on involvement with ILS, particularly with the original clinic in Licking County, demonstrates how the bench can and should lead by example in the effort to expand pro bono in Ohio.

Magistrate Clark's invaluable contributions to ILS include persuading the Licking County Bar Association to adopt a formal resolution to do more pro bono; "twisting arms" and "working the phones" to recruit volunteer attorneys; doing set-up and thanking volunteers personally at clinic sessions; working with the ILS steering committee to implement and refine clinic policies and procedures; and, helping to design and participating in Continuing Legal Education trainings for potential volunteers.

Drawing from a seemingly infinite reserve of energy, Magistrate Clark performs all of these functions for ILS while overseeing a full docket and remaining active in numerous professional organizations and non-profit boards. Under her leadership, Licking County has provided the state of Ohio and the nation with a proven and successful blue print for expanding access to justice in urban and non-urban areas alike. Her efforts also merit the honor of the OLAF Presidential Award.



Magistrate Stephanie Clark of the Licking County Court of Common Pleas.

Volunteer Lawyers for the Poor Foundation

Since its establishment in 1982, the Volunteer Lawyers Project of the Volunteer Lawyers for the Poor Foundation (VLP) and its participating attorneys have brought the value of "Equal Justice Under Law" closer to reality for thousands of low-income persons living in the Greater Cincinnati area. Originally a partnership between the Legal Aid Society of Cincinnati and the Cincinnati Bar Association, VLP today serves as the *pro bono* arm of the Cincinnati, Butler, Clermont, and Warren County Bar Associations. Thirty-four law firms contribute financial support while eleven law firms and some 600 attorneys from individual practices, small partnerships, corporate legal departments, the government sector, and area law schools accept VLP referrals. VLP attorneys contribute in excess of 5000 hours of *pro bono* representation to more than 1200 clients annually.

VLP links private attorneys with low-income clients who have contacted the Legal Aid Society of Cincinnati for assistance. Volunteering attorneys agree to accept at least two *pro bono* referrals annually involving civil legal issues of their choosing. For two decades, VLP attorneys have worked to secure justice for the disadvantaged and protect the rights of those most in need by contributing their legal expertise for the good of their community.

This partnership among urban and rural bar associations and large and small law firms exemplifies how a community can meet the civil legal needs of its most vulnerable. It is this dynamic partnership that merits the honor of the 2002 OLAF Presidential Award.



VLP staff members Krista Lohr and Timothy Juenke.
(Picture courtesy of the Cincinnati Bar Association)

Past OLAF Presidential Award Recipients

Attorney General Betty Montgomery (2001); the Greater Dayton Volunteer Lawyers Project (2000); Sternberg, Newman, Shifrin & Associates of Akron, Barkan Neff of Columbus, and Gilliam & Ireland of Dayton (1999); Denis Murphy (1998); Bill Weisenberg, the Ohio State Bar Association's Government Affairs Director, Ohio State Bar Association (1997); the Columbus law firm of Vorys, Sater, Seymour & Pease (1996).