

FALL 2009

# Just Dealings

THE OHIO LEGAL ASSISTANCE FOUNDATION

## CLYDE RECEIVES OSBF RITTER AWARD

Bob Clyde is a passionate leader in the legal aid community who works to ensure that those unable to help themselves can get access to justice. His continuous efforts to improve the legal aid system have earned him much respect throughout the state of Ohio.

More than 30 years ago, as director of a regional legal aid program, Bob represented workers in a three-year struggle to fight steel plant closings in the Mahoning Valley. While the effort to keep the steel mills in the Youngstown area failed, the lawsuits helped to create plant closing notification laws. In the early 1980s, his leadership guided the Ohio Legislature's adoption of the Legal Aid Fund—which included IOLTA funding and a civil case filing fee surcharge for the first time, adding state appropriated revenue to assist the struggling legal aid community. That program has grown from a \$3 million annual supplement in 1985 to become the legal aid programs' single largest source of revenue at \$38 million in 2007.

To better serve the less fortunate, Bob knew a statewide study was required to pinpoint the specific needs of Ohio's poor. The resulting 1991 Spangenburg Report documented that only 17% of low-income Ohioans were receiving legal assistance. As a result of the Spangenburg Report, the Chief Justice created an ad hoc implementation committee to carry out

its recommendations. Bob volunteered to provide staff support to the implementation committee. His expertise in the area of legal aid funding helped him to direct legislative creation of the Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation (OLAF)—which would oversee the administration of the state's Legal Aid Fund.

Not only does Bob support the economically disadvantaged, he also supports his fellow lawyers in the legal aid system. Through OLAF's leadership, a major recruitment and retention program was adopted. It included the creation of OLAF's Loan Repayment Assistance Program (LRAP) and the Denis Murphy Fellowship Program. The LRAP provides financial assistance to attorneys who commit to continuing their employment in one of OLAF's grantee organizations in Ohio.

In support of Bob for The Ritter Award, Jeffery Fortkamp, an associate director at OLAF,

writes, "Bob is one of the most loyal persons I know. This trait is manifest in his commitment to his employees and the mission of OLAF."

Bob was honored by the Columbus Bar Association in 2006 for 15 years of service as a Homeless Project Volunteer. His character, tenacity and constant devotion to the public embody the mission of the Foundation.



*Story used with permission by the Ohio State Bar Foundation.*

# OLAF FRIENDS AND PARTNERS SHARE SUPPORT FOR THE NOMINATION OF BOB CLYDE FOR THE OHIO STATE BAR FOUNDATION'S 2009 RITTER AWARD

“Mr. Clyde has devoted his entire career to improving legal services to the less fortunate... Few people have done more to attempt to cause changes and improve the justice system in Ohio.”

*Samuel H. Porter  
Partner, Porter Wright Morris & Arthur L.L.P., Columbus*

“Bob has never been a caretaker. Rather, he has sought to aggressively advance the cause of access to legal services throughout the state...In all his efforts, Bob has conducted himself as an absolute legal professional maintaining high standards of quality, professionalism, and integrity.”

*Jim Petro  
Former State Auditor and Attorney General  
Partner, Roetzel & Andress, Columbus*

“Bob’s vision and effective strategies for IOLTA are driven by his deep commitment to access to justice...Although quiet and unassuming, always giving credit to others, the nation’s IOLTA community has prevailed and flourished in great measure from his vision, strength and leadership.”

*Jane Elizabeth Curran  
Executive Director, The Florida Bar Foundation*

“Bob makes things happen, and the lives of people in Ohio are better for his efforts. He has truly furthered the cause of access to justice in concrete and meaningful ways.”

*Sara E. Strattan  
Executive Director, Community Legal Aid Services, Inc., Akron*

“During my three-year tenure as President of the Board of Trustees, [OLAF] has undergone significant growth resulting in substantial increase in the delivery of legal services to those Ohioans who cannot afford to hire legal assistance. It was essential that the Board be guided by an Executive Director with the vision, leadership and talent that Bob possesses.”

*David C. Weiner  
Partner, Squires, Sanders & Dempsey L.L.P., Cleveland*



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*The Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation is a private, non-profit organization created by the Ohio Legislature in 1994 as a response to the serious deficiencies in meeting the civil legal needs of all Ohioans. In partnership with the state and local bars, elected officials, and local legal service providers, the Foundation continues to coordinate statewide resource development, support the delivery of legal services by local legal aid providers, and promote innovative approaches to ensure justice for all.*

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Columbus, Ohio 43215-3483  
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www.olaf.org

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# ONLINE INTAKE PROOF OF CONCEPT PROVING TO BE VERY EFFECTIVE AND IN DEMAND BY CLIENTS

In the Fall 2007 issue of Just Dealings, we reported that Legal Aid of Western Ohio, Inc. (LAWO) had received a technology initiative grant (TIG) from the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) for the development of a new Access-to-Justice (A2J) online web-based client intake system. The grant is designed for those clients who need alternatives to the traditional 9:00 to 5:00 phone intake systems. These populations include clients with low literacy and physical disabilities, those in rural areas, clients who work during normal business hours, and those with other barriers. Clients who work irregular hours, who need emergency assistance during non-business hours, who prefer to use the internet, or who may be reluctant to give information by telephone also need alternative ways to access legal assistance.

Online intake reduces the load on intake offices during peak hours when clients may otherwise be discouraged by busy phone lines or waiting on hold. The A2J interview is now available on the application portion of the website (see [www.legalaidline.org](http://www.legalaidline.org)) for

LAWO and its partner Advocates for Basic Legal Equality, Inc. (ABLE). It allows potential clients to quickly complete the initial application process, and receive self-help information pending contact with an attorney, no matter where or when they submit their request for assistance.



*ABLE/LAWO Legal Aid Line Webpage.*



*ABLE/LAWO Online Access to Legal Aid Line Webpage.*

The online template uses A2J Author software to create user-friendly screens that allow clients to respond to a simple series of direct questions. When the client submits the completed intake information via the web screen, the system responds to the client with confirmation that contact has been made; the probable date and time when the client may expect a response from an intake specialist or an attorney, if appropriate; suggestions on how to respond to emergency situations; and, printable information appropriate to their problem.

**Continued on page 5.**

Continued from page 4.

Launched on August 31, 2009 as part of ABLE and LAWO's new website redesign, Legal Aid Line serves as one of the first central intake systems in the country to implement web-based intake with a Pika case management system. Partners in the project are the Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago-Kent College of Law, the Center for Computer-Assisted Legal Instruction, the National Technology Assistance Project (NTAP), and Advocates for Basic Legal Equality, Inc. The project was collaboratively managed by LAWO and ABLE Legal Aid Line and technology staff, with staff from OLAF providing project management and Pika technology integration and code development support.

The new Legal Aid Line online application template is being used daily by potential legal aid clients, with 721 web applications submitted online in September 2009. The demographics of the applications submitted show that 305 were from urban counties and 416 were from rural counties; showing that a majority of all online applications originate in the rural counties served by LAWO and ABLE.

Four other Ohio legal aid programs are in various stages of developing their own A2J online intake templates, including Community Legal Aid Services, Inc. (CLAS), the Legal Aid Society of Columbus, the Legal Aid Society of Cleveland, and Southeast Ohio Legal Services (SEOLS). OLAF will continue to provide project management and code development support for these programs, and are also providing programs from around the country with support in developing their own A2J online intake templates.



*Legal Aid Line Online Application (A2J) Screenshot.*

## OLAF TECHNOLOGY AND PIKA TEAM ACTIVITIES AND UPCOMING PROJECTS

OLAF technology staff continue to support the delivery system through Pika case management assistance and development; document assembly development and training; editorial content, technical support and development of all views of the Ohio Legal Services website (see [www.ohiolegalservices.org](http://www.ohiolegalservices.org)); support of the Ohio Poverty Law Center (OPLC) website; and, the development and support of the OLAF annual report and grant application system. In addition, OLAF staff provides project management for program-awarded Legal Services Corporation (LSC) technology innovation grant (TIG) initiatives. Staff also provides support and consulting to other programs in states around the country, specifically in the replication of Ohio's many technology projects.

**CLAS Wins TIG Grant** -- OLAF supported a TIG application submitted by Community Legal Aid Services (CLAS) for the development of the Next Generation Legal Services Desktop (NGLSD) project. This project, once completed, will provide programs in Ohio and across the country with a web homepage template that is a customizable, legal services content-centric desktop that contains links to each advocate's individual case management system, document assembly such as HotDocs and A2J templates, case research tools such as Lexis and Westlaw etc., and news and other information. OLAF and CLAS are happy to report that CLAS won the TIG grant award and that staff will begin work on the project beginning in January 2010. This grant adds nearly \$19,000 of LSC funding for technology support to the CLAS budget for 2010, and collectively adds over \$10,000 to other legal aid and related programs including Legal Aid of Western New York (LAWNY), Montana Legal Services Association (MLSA), National Technology Assistance Project (NTAP), and OLAF.

**New Way to Submit OLAF Grant Applications** -- OLAF staff Ty Acker and Chuck Cook have successfully launched the new OLAF Online Grant Submission System that will enable programs to submit their annual grant applications exclusively online, creating a more efficient and time-saving system for both OLAF and programs.

## NATIONAL PRO BONO CELEBRATION IN OHIO A GREAT SUCCESS

Fifteen months of planning and preparation culminated in almost 50 events statewide to mark Ohio's participation in the first ever National Pro Bono Celebration.

The Celebration kicked off in Ohio with the Pro Bono Convention, which brought together for the first time members of the local pro bono committees participating in the Judicially Led Appellate District Pro Bono Project (more on the Judicially-Led Pro Bono Initiative on page 7).

More than half the events were clinics organized and supported by legal aid programs, with staffing provided by the programs' pro bono volunteer lawyers. Some clinics were in collaboration with local bar associations and law schools. It is estimated that over 400 low-income Ohioans were given free legal help during the Pro Bono Celebration week. Community Legal Aid's 15 clinics earned a mention in LSC Updates, a publication of the Legal Services Corporation.

Training was also a focus of National Pro Bono Celebration events, and several programs, including Columbus, Cleveland, and Community Legal Aid, held continuing legal education programs free to lawyers who agreed to accept a pro bono case. Cleveland Legal Aid offered a foreclosure mediation program for the first time in Lake County, for lawyers willing to represent homeowners as part of the ongoing "Save the Dream" project.

Chief Justice Moyer, Ohio State Bar Association President Barbara Howard, and Ohio Attorney General Richard Cordray closed out the week with a joint call to action directed to all 35,000 Ohio lawyers with an active registration.

In a letter sent by email, the three stated "The American Bar Association declared the last week of October 2009 as National Pro Bono Week to highlight the need for more attorney volunteers to meet the need for pro bono legal services. This is a time for those of us in the legal profession to renew our commitment to fulfilling our professional responsibility to provide services for the greater public good. We are writing to ask that if you have not already done so you consider volunteering pro bono at your local legal aid society. In Ohio, we know that there are hundreds of attorneys donating thousands of hours of pro bono service. Are you one of them?"

A third focus of National Pro Bono Celebration events was to recognize pro bono lawyers and to showcase the value and importance of their service to communities across Ohio. A number of legal aid programs and bar associations held volunteer recognition receptions and appreciation days, and cities, including Toledo, Akron, and Youngstown, enacted proclamations recognizing pro bono lawyers. In Toledo, the proclamations were enlarged and displayed on easels in the courthouses during the week of the Celebration.

On October 30, Friday of the week of the National Celebration, Chief Justice Moyer, one of Ohio's two honorary state co-chairs for the Celebration, was keynote speaker at the Columbus Bar Foundation's Annual Meeting and Celebration of Pro Bono.

Chief Justice Moyer asked the audience to look around the room and count ten people, and then use those ten people to visualize the justice gap in America: "If they were poor, only two of the people sitting near you would go to court or enter into legal negotiations with the necessary legal advice that would ensure their rights are protected. Only two out of ten would get the help they need."

At the conclusion of his remarks, he again asked his audience to look around the room, only in this instance he asked the lawyers to visualize the difference made when the lawyers provide pro bono legal services: "In a civilized society, everybody must have access to the peaceful resolution of disputes. Universal access to justice is a fundamental principal of the rule of law. . . . Your efforts, your presence here today are a testament to the value you place on those rights."

The events of the National Pro Bono Celebration delivered a sense of appreciation to those who try to meet the needs of Ohioans who cannot afford a lawyer, and will provide inspiration and renewed energy for the work going forward, until our next Celebration.

*See pictures of the National Pro Bono Celebration from across the state of Ohio on back cover.*

**WANT TO VOLUNTEER?**

Visit [www.ohioprobono.org](http://www.ohioprobono.org)

**JUSTICE IN ACTION**  
*GET READY TO REPORT YOUR  
2009 PRO BONO SERVICE &  
FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS*

Justice in Action, Ohio's voluntary pro bono reporting opportunity, will again be offered in early January of 2010 to all attorneys on active registration in Ohio.

Attorneys who choose to report will be asked to report hours of pro bono service performed in Ohio during calendar year 2009. Financial contributions to programs that provide legal services to persons of limited means may also be reported.

The process will again be all-electronic. Lawyers will receive from the Supreme Court of Ohio an email containing a link to a website where reporting information will be entered. This process allows for reporting to be done both voluntarily and anonymously, as outlined in the Court's Statement Regarding the Provision of Pro Bono Legal Services by Ohio Lawyers. The email will show the sender as The Supreme Court of Ohio.

Lawyers who are equity partners in law firms may report a pro rata share of a law firm contribution to a legal aid program or other organization that provides legal services to persons of limited means.



*Cake made by a member of  
Community Legal Aid's Volunteer  
Lawyer Program staff for the  
Akron Bar Association's National  
Pro Bono Celebration pro bono  
attorneys recognition event.*

**JUDICIALLY-LED PRO BONO  
INITIATIVE BEGINS THIRD YEAR**

The Judicially Led Appellate District Pro Bono Project – a collaboration between OLAF and the Ohio State Bar Association – marked completion of two years of work with a Pro Bono Convention, which kicked off Ohio's participation in the National Pro Bono Celebration.

The Convention, which took place at the Ohio Judicial Center in Columbus, was the first time the local appellate district committees met together as a group.

Second District committee member Judge Walter Rice, also a National Pro Bono Celebration honorary co-chair for Ohio, welcomed the participants with words of both gratitude and caution. While allowing participants to “reflect with great emotion of pride on what we've accomplished,” he warned that offering access to the justice system through pro bono legal services is “not a mere academic exercise. If we don't step up, people will lose respect for the rule of law and will begin to take the law into their own hands.”



*The Hon. William Klatt  
receiving the Columbus  
Bar Foundation's award  
for Outstanding Pro Bono  
Service by a Judge.  
Image provided by the CBF.*

About 40 judges and lawyers from across the state exchanged reports on the work of the local pro bono committees, and planned for the future of the project. Informal networking continued during a luncheon portion of the program, which included a keynote speech by Erwin Chemerinsky, Dean of University of California, Irvine School of Law, who spoke about pro bono in law schools. The program concluded with recognitions awarded by each of the local committees to a person, program or organization that had made a substantial contribution to the work of the committee.

Project chair David A. Kutik of Cleveland announced at the close of the Convention that his term as chair of the project had ended, and he introduced his successor, Hon. William A. Klatt of the 10th District Court of Appeals, an OLAF board member who also serves as a co-chair of the 10th Appellate District Committee.

IMAGES FROM AROUND OHIO  
AS PART OF THE  
NATIONAL PRO BONO CELEBRATION  
OCTOBER 25-31, 2009



*Akron Bar Association Executive Director Donnie Long (left), with Community Legal Aid Executive Director Sara Strattan, at the Akron Bar Association's National Pro Bono Celebration volunteer recognition event.*



*Adrian Thompson, Esq. – an attorney at Taft Stettinius & Hollister and board member of The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland – assists a client at a free legal clinic during Pro Bono Week. Tom Haren, a law student from Cleveland-Marshall College of Law looks on.*



*Judge Mary Rowlands (left), OLAF Board member Bill Dowling, Community Legal Aid Pro Bono Managing Attorney Jennifer van Dulmen at the Akron Bar Association's National Pro Bono Celebration volunteer recognition event.*



*Tom Weeks (right), Executive Director of the Ohio State Legal Services Association, with pro bono volunteer attorney Jim Abrams, recipient of the Columbus Legal Aid's Award for Excellence in Pro Bono Service.*



*Patrick Krebs, Esq., an attorney at Taft Stettinius & Hollister, assists a client at a free legal clinic during Pro Bono Week.*

*The two images, above, were taken at a pro bono clinic held at the East Cleveland Tech High School as part of the National Pro Bono Celebration.*

**See related story on Ohio's National Pro Bono Celebration - page 6.**



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