

Pro Bono & Public Service Opportunities Section



FALL 2008 NEWSLETTER

BACK TO BASICS: A Clear Focus On Service.

By: Pamela Robinson, Section Chair, University of South Carolina



Political commentary is bombarding me from one side and hurricanes are swirling on the other side. All signs that it must be the start of another exciting year at the Law School! As I sit at my desk and prepare for a radio interview I am thinking of all the trick questions the interviewer could ask me about the Pro Bono Program. In some way I know I will be pressed to defend the reputation of all lawyers in general. The hardest part of this kind of presentation is their need for short, pithy sound bites and my need to explain with clarity and precision! A real dilemma that we each face every day! When in doubt it is back to the basics! What are the goals of the pro bono program? What is the mission? And if time permits a few descriptions of successes would be icing on the cake.

When we the professionals who daily manage the recruiting, managing, supervising, evaluating and recognizing hundreds of highly motivated intellectual people are asked to describe what we do, it proves to be difficult. We do many things and often all at once! It is kind of like choosing your favorite child!! It is very easy for us to extol the virtues of a prominent program or even the successes of another even more complicated task. On most days we take the time to express our belief that every volunteer is important and to be valued but deep down we know that some people are just harder to motivate and some projects are extremely difficult to explain to the public, never mind to a potential volunteer. But that is what we do and we do it well.

Recently our friends at the Fordham University School of Law School Public Interest Resource Center were recognized with one of five 2008 *Pro Bono Publico* Awards by the American Bar Association Standing Committee on Pro Bono and Public Service. In the presentation it was noted that: "By training and educating students to be dedicated to the public good, PIRC's impact on encouraging public service is considerable. PIRC serves as an inspiration to all law students. We applaud their efforts and bask a little in their light as we are all part of the process to educate the next generation of lawyers who care and make a difference. When one of is recognized for outstanding service we all benefit from the positive press.

Soon you will be receiving information about the *AALS Section on Pro Bono and Public Service Opportunities* Deborah Rhode and Father Drinan Awards. These awards are our opportunity to say thank you to outstanding leaders in the profession who are helping our mission of inculcating the lawyers of tomorrow with a desire to serve and make a difference in the lives of the unrepresented and poor. Please take the time to look around you and think about those who walk the walk of public service!

As we prepare to head to San Diego for our annual opportunity to learn and share we are excited about our Joint Program with the Section on Law, Medicine and Health Care. The program, **Opportunities for Collaboration and Interdisciplinary Learning: Medical-Legal Partnerships** features a panel with not only hands on experience but includes the leaders in the forefront of this new area of legal cooperation. This is a wonderful opportunity to explore new projects for your community.

The hurricanes keep churning along and I have noticed that another area of disturbance has developed in the Atlantic but I must return to my radio interview preparation. As much as I hate being away from the energy and enthusiasm of my students, it is time for me to explain to the public what a law student can and cannot do! I am sure someone will want me to explain the entire mortgage crisis - in 10 seconds or less. But I will return to basics and will find time to squeeze in a few accolades for our profession and our students. Such is the life of the pro bono program manager at the start of every academic year. Wishing you well!

NOMINATIONS FOR RHODE & DRINAN AWARDS MUST BE SUBMITTED BY OCTOBER 31, 2008.

By: Deb Ellis, Assistant Dean for Public Interest Law, NYU School of Law

The AALS Section on Pro Bono and Public Service Opportunities will present two awards at the AALS Annual Meeting in January 2009. The purpose of these awards is to honor those who have dedicated significant efforts towards increasing access to justice through the law school environment and to inspire similar efforts from others. The intent is to honor those who personally design and manage pro bono programs, those leaders in legal education who promote these programs, and those who personally give of their time and talents in pro bono service.

The Deborah L. Rhode Award will be awarded to a full-time faculty member or Dean who has made an outside contribution to increasing pro bono and public service opportunities in law school through scholarship, leadership, or service. The Father Robert Drinan Award will be presented to a professional faculty or staff member at a law school who has forwarded the ethic of pro bono service through personal service, program design or management.

Nomination Procedure: Nominations of others or oneself may be made by any member of AALS, and will be accepted until Friday, October 31, 2008, 5 p.m. EST.

Nomination letters should be no longer than five pages. Up to three letters of support are encouraged, but not required. If submitted, the letters should be from a diverse group of supporters (i.e., a student, a faculty member and a member of the public interest community) or should address different facets of the nominee's achievements. Brochures and other outside materials will not be accepted. Re-nominations of persons who have been previously nominated but not selected for the Award are encouraged. Please indicate if you are nominating the person for any other AALS awards.

Please email your submissions to Deb Ellis, Assistant Dean for Public Interest Law at NYU School of Law, at deb.ellis@nyu.edu. Letters of support can be emailed separately from the nomination letter but must be received by the deadline if they are to be considered. If submissions cannot be emailed, or if you have any questions, please contact Deb Ellis at 212-998-6668.

The Selection Committee will be made up of law school public interest and pro bono professionals from a range of law schools throughout the country.

Prior recipients of the Rhode and Drinan Awards are, respectively:

2008: Philip G. Schrag and Michael Millemann
2007: David Kairys and Anthony Alfieri
2006: Efen Rivera Ramos and Wally Mlyniec
2005: Mark Sargent and Ellen Chapnick, Sandy Buhai (shared)
2004: Howard Lesnick and Sudha Shetty
2003: John Feerick and Thomas Maligno
2002: Vanessa Merton and John Kramer
2001: Deborah Rhode and Father Robert Drinan

AALS SECTION PROGRAM January 2009

Opportunities for Collaboration & Interdisciplinary Learning: Medical-Legal Partnerships

**By: Elizabeth Tobin Tyler, Director of Public Service & Community Partnerships
Roger Williams University School of Law**

Medical-Legal Partnerships integrate legal service and advocacy into health care settings to address the legal issues which are connected to poor health outcomes. Increasingly, law schools are offering opportunities for students to participate in interdisciplinary medical-legal partnerships and to learn the value of collaborative problem-solving.

This panel will explore the different models of medical-legal partnerships developing in law schools, including clinics, externships, pro bono opportunities, and courses, all of which help students to understand the connections between social justice and health and the value of interdisciplinary collaboration with health care providers.

Join us for this outstanding discussion on January 8, 2009 from 4-5:45 pm.

Program Details

Co-Sponsored by Section on Law, Medicine & Health Care

Opportunities for Collaboration & Interdisciplinary Learning:

Medical-Legal Partnerships

Thursday, January 8, 2009, 4:00–5:45 p.m.

MODERATOR:

Elizabeth Tobin Tyler, Director of Public Service & Community Partnerships, Roger Williams University School of Law

PANELISTS:

Sylvia B. Caley, JD

Assistant Clinical Professor &
Director, Health Law Partnership,
Georgia State University College of Law

Melissa Rodgers, JD

Directing Attorney,
Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County; Co-Founder, Peninsula Family Advocacy Program; &
Lecturer in Law, Stanford Law School

Dana Weintraub, MD

Clinical Instructor, Division of General Pediatrics, Lucile Packard Children's Hospital at Stanford
& Lecturer in Law, Stanford Law School

Deborah Weimer, JD

Professor, Health Care Delivery and Child Welfare Legal Issues Clinic, University of Maryland
School of Law

Service Project

Wednesday, January 7, 2009, 1:00–5:00 p.m.

Visit to Third Avenue Charitable Organization

The service project will offer an opportunity to visit the Third Avenue Charitable Organization, which assists low-income and homeless persons in San Diego.

We will learn about the legal project at Third Avenue, legal issues facing the homeless population in San Diego, and city-wide efforts to address those issues. Our group will assist Third Avenue serve food and provide personal necessities to their clients.

PLEASE JOIN US!

Pro Bono News

Roger Williams University Students Partner with Pro Bono Attorneys Taking Statements for Liberian Truth & Reconciliation Commission

**By: Liz Tobin Tyler, Esq., Director of Public Service & Community Partnerships
Feinstein Institute for Legal Service, Roger Williams University School of Law**

Many Liberian refugees suffered terrible human rights atrocities during many years of civil war. Like other war-torn societies trying to move past deeply troubled times, Liberia has created a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to deal with its past. Through its Pro Bono Collaborative, Roger Williams University School of Law has partnered with three major law firms to take statements from Liberian refugees about their experiences during the period

in Rhode Island. The students and attorneys were trained by Advocates for Human Rights, the group organizing the statement-taking project in the U.S. The statements will be provided to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to help bring perpetrators to justice and heal the wounds caused by decades of unrest.

Charlotte School of Law Creates New Position: Assistant Professor of Pro Bono

By: Cynthia Adcock, Director of Experiential Learning & Assistant Professor

Charlotte School of Law is committed to teaching students the knowledge, skills and values necessary for today's lawyer to excel in the modern practice of law and in life. As a value and a skill of the profession, service to the underserved is emphasized as a major mission pillar. Since opening its doors just three years ago, Charlotte Law has required every student to engage in at least 20 hours of pro bono service prior to graduation. This fall the school created the position of Assistant Professor of Pro Bono – believed to be the first of its kind in legal education - to insure the academic quality of the pro bono experience and to integrate it throughout the curriculum. The position has been filled by Sean Lew.

Sean Lew is a practicing lawyer from Winston-Salem, NC, who has received honors for his pro-bono legal work with immigrants, self-help organizations, and underserved members of the community.

In 2008, Professor Lew received *Business Leader Media Magazine's* Pro Bono Impact Award for his work in the Piedmont-Triad community. In 2007, he received the inaugural North Carolina Bar Association (NCBA) "Citizen Lawyer" Award for Public and Community Service in the state. Professor Lew currently co-chairs the NCBA's Pro Bono/Poverty Issues Committee, which organizes, plans, and delivers free legal clinics across the state each month.

Professor Lew is a Fellow of North Carolina's Institute of Political Leadership and a recipient of the William C. Friday Fellowship for Human Relations at the Wildacres Leadership Initiative. He has written articles and researched issues concerning civic engagement, leadership, and public service society.

CALL FOR ARTICLES

Does your law school have a public service project you would like to showcase? The next Section Newsletter will be published in the winter. Please forward any suggestions or contributions to Arlene Rivera Finkelstein, Penn Law School, arfinkelstein@law.upenn.edu by December 1, 2008.

2008 Section Executive Committee

Chair:	Pamela Robinson , University of South Carolina Robinson@law.sc.edu
Chair-Elect:	Arlene Rivera Finkelstein , University of Pennsylvania arfinkelstein@law.upenn.edu
Secretary:	Marni Lennon , University of Miami mlennon@law.miami.edu

Treasurer:	J.P. "Sandy" Ogilvy , Columbia School of Law, The Catholic University of America, ogilvy@law.cua.edu
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Awards:	Deb Ellis , NYU ELLISD@juris.law.nyu.edu
Program:	Liz Tobin-Tyler , Roger Williams University lt Tyler@rwu.edu
Service Project:	Eden Harrington , University of Texas at Austin EHarrington@law.texas.edu
Publications:	Arlene Finkelstein University of Pennsylvania arfinkelstein@law.upenn.edu

JOIN US: WWW.AALS.ORG/PROBONO

The AALS Section on Pro Bono and Public Service includes a diverse group of faculty and administrators committed to pro bono and public service in law schools. Our members teach in a variety of areas across the law curriculum and work in law school offices ranging from career services, student services, financial aid, dean's offices, and public interest offices, demonstrating that our Section has something to offer everyone. To become a member of this section, contact the AALS National Office at 202.296.8851 or aals@aals.org.