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# AALS SECTION ON PRO BONO & PUBLIC SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES NEWSLETTER

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## Message from the Chair

*SANDE BUHAI, LOYOLA LAW SCHOOL, LOS ANGELES*

It has been my great honor to be the Chair of the Section on Pro Bono and Public Service Opportunities for this year. This is our first newsletter; I hope you find it interesting and informative. There are a few things I want to touch on in this column. First, the AALS Pro Bono Project headed by Cindy Adcock is making great strides in helping all of us to create more and better public interest and pro bono opportunities at our law schools. Second, I hope everyone will attend our fabulous program at the Annual Meeting. It is scheduled for January 3rd- so plan on coming early to San Francisco. (See article on page 2.)

As I have talked with folks involved with pro bono in the law school setting over the past year, I have learned a lot. Probably the most important thing I have learned is there is not one

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## Awards News

*TWO NEW AWARDS TO BE GIVEN AT THE ANNUAL MEETING*

The Section is proud to announce that nominations are now being accepted for two annual awards to be given at the AALS Annual Meeting in January 2001.

The Deborah L. Rhode Award is designed to honor an individual who is a full-time faculty member or Dean of a law school and who has made an outstanding contribution to increasing pro bono and public service opportunities in law schools through scholarship, leadership, or service.

The Father Robert Drinan Award is designed to honor an individual, whether full-time faculty or not, who has forwarded the ethic of pro bono and public service through personal service, program design or management.

Nominations should be sent to the Award Selection Committee, care of Sande Buhai, Chair, Loyola Law School 919 So. Albany St., Los Angeles, CA 90015. Nominations will be accepted until October 31, 2000.

*ABA PRO BONO PUBLICO AWARD GIVEN TO LAW SCHOOL*

Congratulations to the University of Pennsylvania Law School for being the first law school to receive an American Bar Association Pro Bono Publico Award. The school's public service program, with its mandatory public service requirement of 7 hours, was honored during a luncheon at the ABA Annual Meeting in New York City this summer. We extend kudos to the Program's Director, Susan Feathers, and Assistant Director, Pamela Mertsoc Wolfe. ♦

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way to do this. There are lots of great approaches to encouraging pro bono activities at law schools. However, working together as a law school community is a common thread found throughout many successful programs. I want to briefly mention some elements of a pervasive public interest law school culture, beyond pro bono programs.

**Clinical Programs-** Even in schools that have extensive clinical programs, usually every student is unable to participate. In order to involve more students, some in-house clinical programs encourage non-enrolled students to volunteer on a pro bono basis, benefiting the student and the program, which gets assistance and recruiting opportunities. Externship placements may also be willing to have students do some pro bono work, either before or after an externship placement.

**Full-time faculty-** During classroom discussion, faculty can point out if a case was handled by pro bono attorneys or legal services. Many of our most important cases have been brought in that manner. For example, Miranda v. Arizona was handled by volunteer lawyers along with the ACLU.<sup>1</sup>

**Student Organizations-** Most schools have PILF organizations that do fundraising for Public Interest. Auctions featuring faculty donations such as lunches, clothing and other fun activities have been very successful. Another possibility is to have faculty provide some entertainment- short skits or songs- to show their support. Other student organizations such as La Raza, Balsa or law fraternities can be encouraged to sponsor pro bono activities as a regular part of their activities.

**Administration and Staff-** Of course it is crucial to have the administration of the law school support public interest programming. This support includes not only financial- but also showing in visible ways that the law school values pro bono and public interest work. Such

visible support includes giving awards at graduation (or other functions) for students, faculty or alumni who have contributed to the public interest. Attendance by Deans at public interest functions and, indeed, participation by the administration and faculty in pro bono projects, can be exceptionally persuasive. Encouraging non-lawyer staff to participate as appropriate, maybe with release time, can help to show a law school community that supports public service.

There are as many ways to encourage pro bono and public interest activities as there are law schools. My only hope is that this Newsletter will inspire you to try something-anything- to add more opportunities at your law school. Thank you for a great year. I look forward to seeing you in January. ♦

## UPCOMING SECTION EVENTS

The AALS is hosting its **Annual Meeting in San Francisco** from **January 3-6<sup>th</sup>**. The Section is sponsoring, along with Criminal Justice and Poverty Law, a three hour mini-conference on opening day, beginning at 2pm. The schedule is as follows:

**2pm-** Program Introduction and Guest Speaker, **Bryan Stevenson, Director, Equal Justice Initiative of Alabama.**

**3:15-4pm-** Breakout Sessions: **Supporting Law Students' Pro Bono Efforts; Pro Bono Programs by Law Faculty; Law School Partnerships with Law Firms &/or Public Service Offices**

**4:15-5pm-** Breakout Sessions:- **Criminal Justice Pro Bono; Models of Public Interest Programs at Law Schools; Teaching Pro Bono in Law School Curricula**

Immediately following the Breakout Sessions, the **Section on Pro Bono and Public Service Opportunities** will be holding its business meeting.

There will also be at least one service project opportunity during the Annual Meeting. Details are forthcoming."

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<sup>1</sup> See Richard Reuben, Case of a Lifetime, 80 APR A.B.A.J. 70 (1994)

## OTHER EVENTS OF INTEREST

The **AALS Equal Justice Project**, an initiative of AALS President Elliott Milstein, is convening Colloquia during the 2000-01 school year at 19 host law schools. The Project's goals include "To stimulate throughout the entire law school-in nonclinical courses, library programs and pro bono projects, among others-cross-cutting interest in and commitment to the provision of legal services to understand individuals, groups and communities." Complete information on dates, registration and contacts can be found on the website: <http://www.aals.org/equaljustice>.

### Host Schools:

American University, Washington College of Law; Howard University; Capital University; Washington University; University of Chicago and DePaul University; University of Tennessee; University of California at Los Angeles; Pace University; University of Minnesota; Tulane University; University of Arkansas, Fayetteville; University of New Mexico; Seattle University; Nova Southeastern University; University of Denver; University of Texas at Austin; University of North Carolina; Northeastern University; University of California at Berkeley. ♦

The **2000 PSLawNet Public Service Workshop** is once again being held in conjunction with the NAPIL Conference (see below). The Workshop begins at 12:30 on October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2000, at Georgetown University School of Law in Washington, DC, with an Opening Luncheon and Awards Ceremony. Two concurrent break-out sessions and a closing plenary session follow. For more information, log on at [www.pbsa.org/announcements.asp](http://www.pbsa.org/announcements.asp). ♦

The **NAPIL 2000 Conference, Career Fair and Awards Dinner** is being held at the Renaissance Washington DC Hotel on October 20-21. At the Career Fair, over 1000 students are expected to interview with and/or meet potential public interest employers. They will then be inspired at the Awards dinner where the founding partner of Cromwell &

Moring, Eldon H. "Took" Cromwell, and other award recipients will be honored. The substantive Public Interest Conference will spotlight death penalty issues but will also offer panel discussions on such cutting-edge issues as Cyberlaw, International Human Rights, Gun Control and American Indian Law. There will be a separate track offered for those initiating or expanding a loan repayment assistance program. For more information, log on at [www.napil.org](http://www.napil.org). ♦

## PROGRAM FOCUS

In each Newsletter, space will be made available to highlight helpful information on pro bono and public interest programs in law schools. In this first newsletter, and in honor of our outgoing chair, the programs at several of the law schools in the Los Angeles area are included: Loyola Law School, USC and Pepperdine. The hope is that those at other law schools will see ideas of things they would like to try in their schools, and maybe even more importantly, that the schools in the region will see things they can do together.

### Loyola Law School

Loyola Law School has a Public Interest Law Department with a Director and Department Administrator. The staff counsels students, creates and implements programs, and serves as liaisons to the public interest community. Loyola also has many clinical opportunities, including the Western Law Center for Disabilities Rights, the Disability Mediation Center, the Cancer Legal Resource Center, the Learning Rights Project and the Center for Conflict Resolution. All of the on-campus programs encourage students to do pro bono work. Loyola has an exceptionally extensive externship program including over 100 public interest programs as well as government and judicial. In addition, over 200 students donate 40 hours each year in the VITA program, helping low income taxpayers file tax returns.

The Public Interest Law programs are as follows:

- **Pro Bono Graduation Requirement**

In 1992, Loyola became the first ABA accredited school in California to have a pro bono graduation requirement. All Loyola students must provide 40 hours of pro bono work. The purpose of the pro bono graduation requirement is to expose students to their professional ethical obligation to perform public service work, consistent with a lawyer's professional responsibility to provide legal assistance to those persons unable to afford traditional legal representation.

- **Summer Public Interest Employment Program**

The Summer Public Interest Employment Program provides opportunities for 70 students, 60 students in public interest and 10 students in government, to experience public interest law practice. Funding is available to first and second year students.

- **Public Interest Loan Assistance Program (PILAP)**

The Public Interest Loan Assistance Program (PILAP) provides financial assistance, in the amount of \$80,000 per year, in an effort to make it possible for Loyola graduates to engage in a career representing poor or disadvantaged clients. Since 1989, Loyola Law School has provided significant financial assistance to graduating students who accept lower-paying public interest employment, but who need help in repaying educational loans. The program is available to graduates who are employed, at a salary of less than \$38,000, by a qualified public interest program. Loyola graduates receiving assistance under PILAP will be given grants of up to 90% of the difference between their annual salary and the \$38,000 ceiling. Those grants must be applied directly to the repayment of educational loans.

- **Post-Graduate Fellowships in Public Interest Law**

The Post-Graduate Fellowships in Public Interest Law were established in 1998 to create job opportunities in public interest. Two fellowships were created providing a salary of \$28,000 per year for the first year and second-year funding of \$12,000.

- **Public Interest Scholars Program**

The Public Interest Scholars Program provides for six full tuition scholarships, plus a stipend for incoming students. Scholars are selected based on a combination of academic merit and public interest background and commitment.

**University of Southern California**

At USC Law School, an Associate Dean has the responsibility for promoting and coordinating pro bono and public interest activities. The Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles was first established at USC more than seventy years ago. The school was also the first site of the Western Center on Law and Poverty. Currently, the school has several clinics -- Post-Conviction Justice Project, Children's Legal Issues, and Small Business/Nonprofit Employment Law Clinic-- and dozens of clinical internships in public interest agencies.

During the 2000-01 academic year, USC Law School will launch two new clinics, one focusing on domestic violence, providing full representation for restraining orders, and an immigration clinic, providing assistance to political asylum seekers and taking on larger international human rights cases.

Since 1987, the Law School's Loan Repayment Assistance Program has provided subsidies to help repay student loans for graduates who undertake public interest and public service careers. USC law students also enthusiastically support public service financially. In support of the Public Interest Law Foundation (PILF), nearly 100% of the student body donates through a negative check-off on their fee bills, a pledge drive, annual fundraising auction, and sales of sweatshirts to fund grants for their classmates to work full-time during the summer and, post-graduation. Each summer, through the Irmas Public Interest Fellowship, PILF provides more than 20 summer grants that place USC law students in public service agencies that would not otherwise be able to afford their services.

Two additional public interest grants have been established in honor of graduates and fully fund students who similarly commit their summers to public interest work. Similarly, the law firm of Sidley & Austin chose to celebrate its Los Angeles office's 20th anniversary this year by generously donating new funds that will enable an additional 4-5 students to work in the public interest during the summers of 2001 and 2002.

PILF also fosters an annual Pro Bono Campaign that enables more than 100 students to volunteer their time. The Campaign culminates each year at a banquet to announce students who received PILF and other public interest grants, to honor an outstanding public interest graduate, and to provide a forum for the Los Angeles County Bar Association President to award certificates to each student who performed a minimum of 35 pro bono hours during the school year.

USC Street Law, a student-run organization routinely involves more than 50 law students who volunteer to teach at several local high schools and prepare them for higher education and careers in the law.

### **Pepperdine**

Public Interest and Pro Bono activities at Pepperdine University School of Law are spread throughout the school's clinical curriculum. The School's Clinical Education Program provides the following support:

- **Clinical Law-Public Interest Externship**

Through externship placements with various public interest entities in both the public and private sectors, during the school year or summer, students explore the role of the lawyer in society, as well as ethics and morality as it applies to law. An example of some of the entities include: the ACLU Foundation of Southern California, Alliance for Children's Rights, Black Law Institute, Environmental Defense Center, HIV & AIDS Legal Services Alliance, NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc., and the Public Law Center.

- **Clinical Law – Public Interest Seminar/  
Poverty Law**

To be taken in conjunction with a public interest externship, this class is divided into two parts. Component one features readings from various legal theories and philosophers and emphasizes how these various views of the law may impact legal services to the poor. Component two focuses on practical lawyering skills for working with low-income clients.

- **Clinical Law-Lanterman/Pepperdine  
Special Education Law Clinic**

The Lanterman Regional Center and Pepperdine have formed a partnership to provide consumers and families with education advocacy on an ongoing basis. This clinic offers a unique opportunity for students to gain valuable experience advocating for children with disabilities to ensure that they receive appropriate education and related services as required by law.

- **Clinical Law-Pepperdine/Union Rescue  
Mission Legal Aid Clinic**

This pro bono clinic serves the men and women who live at the Union Rescue Mission in downtown Los Angeles. Students, professors and alumni volunteer at the mission, where they meet with residents regarding their legal problems. The clinic assists residents with a broad range of legal issues, including criminal matters, child support obligations, immigration, landlord-tenant law, and credit issues. ♦

### **AALS Website and Listserv**

The AALS Pro Bono website is accessible through <http://www.aals.org/probono>. Detailed information about the Project and the Section are available on the website, and there is a web version of the Commission's report, *Learning to Serve: The Findings and Proposals of the AALS Commission on Pro Bono and Public Service Opportunities*. To subscribe to the AALS Section on Pro Bono and Public Service Opportunities listserv, please visit: <http://majordomo.lls.edu/cgi-bin/lwgate/AALS-PROBONO/>.

This NEWSLETTER is a forum for the exchange of points of view. Opinions expressed here are not necessarily those of the Section and do not necessarily represent the position of the Association of American Law Schools.

### **Pro Bono & Public Service Opportunities Executive Committee:**

Sande Buhai, Loyola Law School, **Chair**  
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### **Planning Committee for Section on Pro Bono and Public Service for Annual Meeting 2001:**

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 Thomas Schoenherr, Fordham Law  
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 Vicki Eastus, New York University Law  
 Arthur LaFrance, Lewis and Clark College of Law  
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### **Planning Committee for Pro Bono Service Project at Annual Meeting 2001:**

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 Susan Feathers, University of Pennsylvania Law

