

Pro Bono & Justice

A periodic publication of the AALS Section on Pro Bono and Public Service Opportunities

Stephen Says....

Fall, 2019

Dear Friends:

I hope you are having a wonderful Fall!

A few weeks ago we celebrated *Pro Bono* Week. Being on the quarter system, finals at Baylor Law are always right around the corner during *Pro Bono* Week and it's never conducive to host any celebratory event. I usually just set out some cookies for the students, say some words of encouragement, and do something nice for those who contribute to *pro bono* projects throughout the year. The hectic time of the quarter means *Pro Bono* Week passes without much fanfare.

But this year we did something different – we recognized our faculty and staff that make *pro bono* projects happen day-in and day-out throughout the year. I sometimes feel like we don't do enough for the heroes who work countless hours behind the scenes. The focus is always upon the students and the work that they're doing, and not necessarily on those that made that work possible. So, as Thanksgiving approaches and I'm thinking about what I'm thankful for, please know that I'm thankful for all of you and the work you do. The *Pro Bono* and Public Service Opportunities Section is a wonderful family. I'm proud to be a part of it. In case you haven't heard it recently – *thank you*.

Turning to the 2020 Annual Program, our Section's program has landed a pretty good spot on the schedule: 8:30 a.m. on Saturday, January 4th. We have an incredible lineup of speakers and I'm looking forward to the conversation. It seems that the need for *pro bono* services for our fellow Americans grows every day. Please spread the word about this panel!

We are also looking for new officers for the Section. Here are the Executive Board positions open for nominations:

1. Chair-Elect
2. Secretary / Awards Committee Chair
3. Finance Chair
4. Communications Chair
5. Executive Committee

If you are interested in any of the above positions, or if you would like to nominate someone for a position, please let me know by November 15th. We'll be voting on our incoming officers at the 2020 Annual Meeting after the panel and awards program.

As always, if you have any suggestions for this newsletter, Pam Robinson and I would love to hear them.

Best,

Stephen



Books We Love

Palaces for the People: How Social Infrastructure Can Help Fight Inequality, Polarization, and the Decline of Civic Life

by Eric Klinenberg

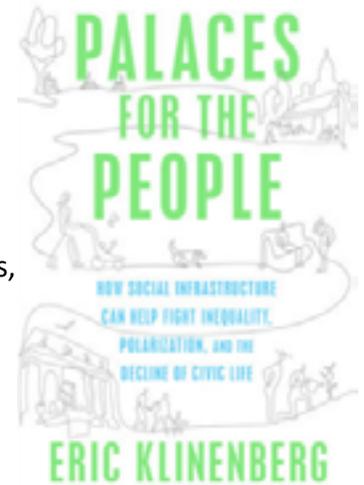
Reviewed by Eve Ross*

New York: Crown, 2018. 233p. \$18.00, paperback. Also available in hardcover, e-book, or e-audiobook.

Sociologist Eric Klinenberg's thesis is that "local resources such as libraries, barbershops, and community organizations" (p.7) make neighborhoods significantly safer and healthier.

To Klinenberg, local libraries are the archetypal social infrastructure. He illustrates how local libraries do "all kinds of unexpected things for surprisingly large numbers of people," (p.37) with the result of providing a kind of nobility or dignity for every library user, for free. Hence the title, "palaces for the people." The book is not just about libraries, though. It brims with examples of communities being generated, strengthened, and transformed by small changes to public housing architecture, green spaces, campuses, online classes, addiction treatment, community gardens, parks, playgrounds, pools, markets, barbershops, neighborhood groups, congregations, clubs, and more.

Klinenberg's hopeful, factual anecdotes will encourage anyone who cares for their community, especially if they also love their library.



*Eve Ross, 2019. Reference Librarian, Law Library, University of South Carolina School of Law, Columbia, South Carolina.

Section Leadership

Chair, Stephen Rispoli, Assistant Dean of Student Affairs and Pro Bono Programs

Baylor Law 254.710.3927 (Cell) 956.371.4350 E-Mail: Stephen_Rispoli@Baylor.edu

Chair-Elect: Sande Buhai, Loyola Law School, Los Angeles

Phone: (213) 736-1156 E-mail: sande.buhai@lls.edu

Secretary / Awards Committee: Kiva Zytneck

Phone: (856) 225-6263 E-mail: zytnick@cua.edu

Finance Chair: Bridget Fuselier, Baylor University School of Law

Phone: (254) 710-3861 E-mail: bridget_fuselier@baylor.edu

Communications Chair: Pam Robinson, University of South Carolina School of Law

Phone: (803) 777-3405 Email: robinspd@law.sc.edu

Immediate Past Chair: Jennifer Tschirch, Georgetown University Law Center

Phone: (202) 661-6641 E-mail: Jennifer.Tschirch@law.georgetown.edu

Executive Committee Member: Janet M. Heppard, University of Houston Law Center

Phone: (713) 743-2093 E-mail: jheppard@uh.edu

Section Awards

Each year, the AALS Section on Pro Bono and Public Service Opportunities honors two individuals who have dedicated significant efforts towards increasing access to justice through the law school environment, and who inspire similar efforts from others, with the [Deborah L. Rhode](#) and [Father Robert Drinan](#) Awards. The Rhode Award is presented to a full-time faculty member or Dean who has made an outstanding contribution to increasing pro bono and public service opportunities in law schools through scholarship, leadership, or service. The Drinan Award is presented to a full-time faculty or staff member at a law school who has forwarded the ethic of pro bono service through personal service, program design or management.

This year, after reviewing many compelling nominations, the Section is pleased to announce [Aviam Soifer](#), Dean of the William S. Richardson School of Law at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, as the recipient of the 2020 Rhode Award and [Laurie Barron](#), Director of the Feinstein Center for Pro Bono & Experiential Education at Roger Williams University School of Law, as the recipient of the 2020 Drinan Award.

Dean Soifer is a leader in legal education as well as in the access to justice movement. He has served as Dean of the William S. Richardson School of Law for 16 years. During that time, he has “profoundly transformed the state’s pro bono legal community.”

During Dean Soifer’s tenure the law school founded the groundbreaking Medical-Legal Partnership for Children in Hawai‘i, the Child Welfare Clinic, the native Hawaiian Rights Clinic, the Entrepreneurship & Small Business Clinic, the Hawaii Innocence Project, and the Refugee & Immigration Law Clinic. He is credited with the success of these programs and more. Dean Soifer has also focused tremendous effort on recruiting and retaining students from underserved communities and nontraditional backgrounds. In his role as Dean, he has also labored to raise funds for facilities such as the newly built law school clinical building.

Additionally, Dean Soifer is an essential force behind Hawai‘i’s many successes in access to justice. He has served as a commissioner on Hawai‘i’s Access to Justice Commission since its inception and led as chair of its Committee on Education, Communications, and Conference Planning. His contributions to the delivery of justice in Hawai‘i are “unique and unparalleled.”

Meanwhile, over 5,000 miles away, Laurie Barron has built one of the top public interest law programs in the nation. When Laurie became the Director of RWU’s Feinstein Center in 2001, it was a tiny program and she was the only (part-time) attorney. Under her leadership, the Center has grown tremendously in its capacity to serve law students and the community. She has developed a 50 hour pro bono graduation requirement, a nationally recognized program called the Pro Bono Collaborative, and a robust Alternative Spring Break. She initiated RWU’s Summer Public Interest Stipend Program and created RWU’s Public Interest Loan Repayment Assistance Program. She has pushed to make public interest programming a “main event” at the law school’s orientation. Thanks to her the Center is also a major player in the access to justice movement in Rhode Island.

Laurie is a community-builder. She nurtures and inspires RWU’s public interest students and alumni. She opens her home to them. (Apparently, her potlucks are legendary.) She remains a mentor long after students graduate.

Laurie is also a thoughtful scholar and a national leader in public interest externship pedagogy. Under her oversight, RWU’s Externship Program has grown from a dozen students to over 100 each academic year.

Laurie Barron is, as one nominator noted, “an absolute rock star.”

Dean Soifer and Laurie Barron will be recognized at the AALS Annual Meeting in Washington, DC on January 4, 2020, during the Section’s 8:30 – 10:15 a.m. program. Please join us in honoring them.

Save the Date for the 2020 Equal Justice Conference!



Attendees of the 2019 EJC Law School Pro Bono Advisors pre-conference in Louisville, KY

We hope you will join us for the 2020 Equal Justice Conference, May 7-9, 2020 in Atlanta, GA, with pre-conferences on May 6. The ABA/NLADA Equal Justice Conference is an annual gathering of legal services and pro bono advocates to share and learn about developments and innovations in providing legal services to low-income persons. The emphasis of this Conference is on strengthening partnerships among key players in the civil justice system. Through plenary sessions, workshops, networking opportunities and special programming, the Conference provides a wide range of learning and sharing experiences for all attendees.

The annual EJC Law School Pro Bono Coordinators Pre-Conference will take place May 6, 2020. Designed for law school pro bono program advisors, coordinators, directors, and assistant and associate deans, this program will take a close look at law school pro bono including cutting-edge programs and activities. Several interactive workshops will explore the unique aspects of operating and expanding a law school pro bono program. The EJC law school pre-conference is exclusively devoted to law school pro bono! Stay-tuned for more details on the specific topics for this year's pre-conference.

We hope you will join us in Atlanta in 2020! Find out more information about the Equal Justice Conference [here!](#)



Interested in more engagement with the Section?
Join in for the *Quarterly Call*

Get the latest news on the Listserv. Simply add yourself to the Section on the AALS Website!

Calendar of Events

National Pro Bono and Public Interest Calendar of Events

2020

January 2-5, 2020	AALS Annual Meeting and Conference	Washington, DC
April 28-May 1, 2020	NALP Conference	Montreal, Canada
May 7-9, 2020	ABA Equal Justice Conference	Atlanta, GA

2021

January 5-8, 2021	AALS Annual Meeting and Conference	San Francisco
-------------------	------------------------------------	---------------

AALS -Association for American Law Schools
<http://www.aals.org>

ABA- American Bar Association Standing Committee on Pro Bono and Public Service
http://www.americanbar.org/groups/probono_public_service.html

EJW- Equal Justice Works
<http://www.equaljusticeworks.org>

NALP- National Association for Law Placement
<http://www.nalp.org>

PSJD-Public Service Job Directory
<http://www.psjd.org>

Annual Meeting

Pro Bono and Public Service: Pillars of Democracy and the Legal Profession

Lawyers have an obligation to uphold the rule of law and be the guardians of our legal system and society. Pro bono and public service are essential elements to the profession remaining a profession – helping those who cannot help themselves. These historical roles of the lawyer have been critical in protecting our society through cases for individual clients, serving as advisors for non-profit organizations, or serving in public office. Moreover, this service is not just good for clients and society, it is also good for the lawyer doing it.

However, these traditional roles face modern challenges. This session will discuss funding issues that the Legal Services Corporation and state Access to Justice Commissions face, how defunding them may affect pro bono around the country, and how legal education can help. Finally, this session will provide some practical tips and sample programs that attendees can implement at their home schools.

Scheduled panelists:

- Betty Balli Torres, Executive Director of the Texas Access to Justice Foundation
- David Bienvenu, Chair of the ABA Standing Committee on Pro Bono and Public Service
- Darcy Meals, Assistant Director of Center for Access to Justice at Georgia State University College of Law
- Jim Sandman, President of the Legal Services Corporation

Our Section's program has landed a pretty good spot on the schedule: 8:30 a.m. on Saturday, January 4th.



RESULTS

Periodically the Section will post a Survey question on the Listserv, results will be published in the next newsletter

Pop Up Question #13

Do you track the % of students engaged in pro bono activities?

Results

75% YES 25% NO

If, yes how often?

Monthly
13.64%

Annually
45.45%

At Graduation
18.18%

Thanks to these schools for participating

University of Richmond School of Law
Baylor Law
Tulane Law School
Georgetown
UCI Law
Maurer School of Law (Indiana University)
Penn Law
Rutgers Law School
Loyola Law School
Elon University School of Law
UNC School of Law
UNLV Law School
Michigan Law School
UMass
University of Kansas School of Law
Stanford Law School
CUA Law
Roger Williams University School of Law
University of South Carolina School of Law

Meet a Colleague

Name: Sande Buhai
Title: Clinical Professor and Director of the Public Interest Law Department
School: Loyola Law School, Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles

Please give a brief description of your school pro bono program or efforts? And your role in making things happen.

In 1994, Loyola Law School's faculty voted to institute a 40 hour Pro Bono Graduation Requirement. At the time, I was Executive Director of Loyola's Disability Rights Clinic. After the faculty vote, I became founding Director of our new Public Interest Law Department, which expanded to implement far more than just the pro bono service requirement. Our Public Interest Scholars Program now awards 10 three-year scholarships per year to incoming students interested in careers in public interest law. Through our Summer Public Interest Employment Program, we fund 70 positions in local legal service organizations each summer. We also award four to five Post Graduate Fellowships in Public Interest Law to create job opportunities in public interest for Loyola graduates. Through these and other programs administered by my Department, Loyola students donate well over 20,000 hours of student legal services annually to nonprofit organizations throughout the community.

Why do you think this job is important?

Legal training is empowering. Yes, law school graduates can use their newly acquired skills to make money. But Loyola believes that, regardless of their chosen career paths, lawyers have a unique responsibility to serve their communities and make the world a better place. Our school's financial commitment to the many activities of its Public Interest Law Department reflects its commitment to that belief.

What special skills or attributes to you bring to it?

Prior to coming to Loyola, I served as a Deputy Attorney General for the State of California, working on consumer protection. I then joined Loyola as Executive Director of its Disability Rights Clinic. Both positions gave me managerial skills, front-line experience in public interest work, and familiarity with Southern California's public interest community.

Who is your go-to person when you need advice on law school pro bono matters?

Tom Schoenherr and Pam Robinson

Do you have a favorite quote? If yes, will you share it with us.

From Batman (the movie): "And why do we fall, Bruce? So we can learn to pick ourselves up. ..."

Will you share something about yourself that your colleagues might not know about you? Your hobbies? Cat or dog person? Favorite place on Earth? What makes you laugh?

I have twin girls and three dogs – and a very smart husband.