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LSBA Honors Exceptional Louisiana Pro Bono Work

NEW ORLEANS -- The Louisiana State Bar Association (LSBA), in conjunction with the Louisiana Supreme Court, hosted the 26th Annual Pro Bono Awards Ceremony on May 24th. Marta-Ann Schnabel, LSBA Access to Justice Committee Chair, and Luz M. Molina, Access to Justice Committee Vice Chair, presented the awards to the 2011 Pro Bono Publico and Children's Law Award recipients. The ceremony was held in the Louisiana Supreme Court Building in New Orleans, and was followed by a reception.

The Pro Bono Awards Ceremony honors attorneys and other public interest legal professionals from around the state who provided exceptional pro bono services to Louisiana's indigent, who may not otherwise have received adequate representation or access to the legal system.

The awards and the 2011 recipients follow.

Friend of Pro Bono Award:

Adams and Reese LLP, New Orleans
Caroline McSherry Dolan, New Orleans
Lorenzi & Barnatt, LLP, Lake Charles
Patrick S. Ottinger, Lafayette

Pro Bono Publico Award:

Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz, PC, New Orleans
L. Bianca Chretien, Lafayette
Robin R. De Leo, Mandeville
C. Peck Hayne, Jr., New Orleans
Huval, Veazey, Felder & Renegar, LLC, Lafayette
Gregory A. Koury, Lafayette
Lindsay L. Meador, Lafayette
Will Montz, Lafayette
Lt. Cmdr. Christopher D. Mora, New Orleans
Laborde & Neuner, Lafayette
Michelle C. Purchner, New Orleans
Peter B. Sloss, New Orleans
Jeannine Alford Sullivan, Denham Springs
Doreen A. Taravella, Baton Rouge

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Career Public Interest Award:

Ayn W. Stehr, Baton Rouge

David A. Hamilton Lifetime Achievement Award:

David F. Bienvenu, New Orleans

Law Student Pro Bono Award:

Lilian R. Hangartner, LSU Paul M. Hebert Law Center

Felix Cao, Loyola University College of Law

Cleveland M. Patterson, III, Southern University Law Center

Rosanna Eugenio, Tulane University Law School

Children's Law Award:

Margot E. Hammond, New Orleans

Juvenile Defender Advisory Council

LSBA Friend of Pro Bono Award, recognizes any individual (attorney or non-attorney), law firm, or organization that has made a major contribution to the enhancement and promotion of pro bono legal services to the poor.

2011 Recipients:

Adams and Reese LLP performed a total of 6,300 pro bono hours for more than 100 different pro bono project organizations and causes throughout the nation in 2010 with attorneys and advisors located in 13 offices throughout the southern United States and Washington, DC. Adams and Reese ranks No. 123 in the American Lawyer rankings of the Top 200 pro bono firms in the country.

Caroline McSherry Dolan is Of Counsel in the New Orleans office of Baker Donelson Bearman Caldwell & Berkowitz, PC and promotes pro bono work as Baker Donelson's Louisiana offices pro bono liaison. In 2009 and 2010, during the ABA's Pro Bono Celebration Week, Sherry prepared and co-presented with The Pro Bono Project a professionalism CLE promoting pro bono work. For the past three years, she has also prepared for the New Orleans Bar Association professionalism CLEs that educate attorneys about pro bono opportunities in our community.

Lorenzi & Barnatt, LLP and their founding partners, Tom Lorenzi and Theresa Barnatt, dedicated their spare time in 2009 to set up a non-profit to meet the legal needs of the underserved in Southwest Louisiana. As a result in January of 2010 the Southwest Louisiana Bar Foundation was established in Lake Charles. Once the Bar Foundation was established with Theresa as its president they recruited nearly 100 attorneys to volunteer to take on pro bono cases or reach out to the community through free legal advice clinics. They not only spear headed this program, but also found time to take on pro bono cases and participate in advice clinics. Tom has taken on Child In Need of Care (CINC) cases, he is passionate about the CINC program and its success in Southwest Louisiana.

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Patrick S. Ottinger is a partner in the Lafayette, law firm of Ottinger Hebert, L.L.C., where his practice is concentrated in the area of oil and gas and commercial litigation, including arbitration and mediation services. Pat was President of the LSBA in 1998-99, and also served on the Board of Directors of the LBF. Prior to that position, Pat served as President of the Lafayette Parish Bar Association. During Pat's presidency of the Lafayette Bar Association and the LSBA, he focused on pro bono service and made great strides to support access to justice activities.

Pro Bono Publico Award, recognizes an attorney, or law firm, that has provided pro bono legal services to the citizens of Louisiana that meets or exceeds the aspirational goal of providing 50 hours of pro bono services per year, as established in Rule 6.1 of Louisiana's Rules of Professional Conduct.

2011 Recipients:

Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell, & Berkowitz, PC with over 570 attorneys and public policy advisors in 15 offices throughout the Southeast and in Washington, D.C., Baker Donelson is committed to pro bono service. The firm's efforts include advocating for the homeless and organizations that serve the homeless, death penalty litigation, providing corporate legal services to non-profit organizations, and much more.

L. Bianca Chretien is an associate attorney with John E. Ortego & Associates, in-house counsel for State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Company in Lafayette. Bianca provides pro bono services to the Lafayette community through the Lafayette Volunteer Lawyer (LVL) program. Bianca has assisted 82 clients in the H.E.L.P. program, which assists homeless and indigent clients with obtaining identification cards, notarizing documents and answering other legal questions.

Robin R. De Leo formed The De Leo Law Firm in Mandeville in 1998. Her practice concentrates on bankruptcy, where she has represented Debtors, Creditors and Trustees in Chapters 7, 11 and 13. During the past twelve months, Robin has accepted and handled approximately seven bankruptcy cases for Southeast Louisiana Legal Services' Pro Bono Project of the 22nd Judicial District.

C. Peck Hayne Jr. is a member of Gordon, Arata, McCollam, Duplantis & Eagan LLC in its New Orleans office. Peck has provided pro bono services through The Pro Bono Project for about twenty years and also through some of Judge Zainey's programs. Peck most frequently helps pro bono clients with estate and succession matters, such as drafting wills and obtaining judgments of possession.

Huval, Veazey, Fedler & Renegar, LLC is an energetic and progressive law firm dedicated to providing unmatched legal services to corporate, insurance, and individual clients in a wide array of practice areas including commercial litigation and dispute resolution, insurance litigation and coverage, family law, workers' compensation, and appellate litigation. Members of the firm have volunteered their time in various ways including representing individual clients through the Lafayette Bar Foundation's Lafayette Volunteer Lawyer referral program, involving domestic matters concerning child custody, visitation, and support matters.

Gregory A. Koury is a member of Koury & Hill, LLC in Lafayette and practices in the areas of plaintiff and defense-based litigation, business transactions, family law, workers compensation, wills and successions, debtor-creditor law, and personal injury. Since 2006, Greg has accepted 26 divorce, custody and/or child

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support cases from LVL, and he has further taken on numerous other non-LVL pro bono cases. Greg has also accepted 10 Protective Order Panel cases regarding domestic abuse and volunteered 14 times for the Homeless Experience Legal Protection (“HELP”), which provides legal services to the homeless in the Acadiana area.

Lindsay L. Meador is an associate at Galloway, Johnson, Tompkins, Burr & Smith in Lafayette, Louisiana and practices in the areas of insurance defense, insurance coverage, and premises liability. She currently serves on the Lafayette Volunteer Lawyers Committee for the Lafayette Bar Foundation and on the executive board of the Lafayette Young Lawyers’ Association as the Secretary/Treasurer. Since 2008, Lindsay has accepted over 42 pro bono clients and has donated over 300 hours to pro bono services.

Will Montz is an associate at the law firm of Laborde & Neuner in Lafayette. Through Lafayette Volunteer Lawyers (LVL), Will has assisted over 60 clients in the past five years through a multitude of programs and has served as an LVL committee member for the past two years. As a Lafayette Young Lawyer, Will chaired the community service initiatives for two consecutive years, which included organizing a Christmas party for mothers and children at Maison de Mere, a shelter for pregnant teens, and a Christmas in July event at a local children’s shelter with food, sno-balls and a fun jump.

Lt. Cmdr. Christopher D. Mora is a military officer and attorney in the U.S. Navy Judge Advocate General’s Corps. Over the past twelve years, Lt. Cmdr. Mora donated an estimated 1500 pro bono hours, 434 hours in 2010 alone, in support of citizens of the Chitimacha Tribe of LA. He often traveled long distances to the Chitimacha Reservation, meeting with Tribal Council Members, Court Officials and Members to listen to their needs. In the process, he guided the Tribe through a major revision of its legal system that modernized its laws while preserving tribal culture.

Laborde & Neuner specializes in admiralty, energy, insurance, toxic tort, employment and business law in Lafayette. In 2010 alone, Laborde & Neuner accepted and handled 29 family law case referrals; assisted 32 victims of domestic violence obtain a Title 46 Protective Order and volunteered for 41 days of service at a local homeless shelter through LVL’s Homeless Experience Legal Protection (HELP) Program. All attorneys, both partners and associates, are encouraged to accept and handle pro bono cases. Through the years Laborde & Neuner has worked hand in hand with the LVL to provide legal representation to hundreds of clients who did not have the financial means to obtain it.

Michelle C. Purchner is an associate at The Andry Law Group, L.L.C where she primarily focuses on environmental litigation. Michelle volunteered over two hundred hours in 2010 with the Pro Bono Project and the Loyola Wage Claim Clinic actively pursuing contractors who failed to pay laborers their agreed upon wages for work completed. Michelle continues to volunteer her time for this cause in 2011.

Peter B. Sloss is a partner with Murphy Rogers Sloss & Gambel in New Orleans. A long-time volunteer of New Orleans Pro Bono Project, Peter has taken a variety of cases since 1997, including consumer credit cases and wills. However, his specialization in the construction cases in the last few years has made him a very important resource for the Pro Bono Project’s clients. Peter is also a frequent presenter at Continuing Legal Education Seminars involving a wide range of litigation-related topics.

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Jeannine Alford Sullivan is a volunteer Legal Fellow with Louisiana Appleseed. Recognizing that relationship violence is both a personal and systemic issue, Jeannine crafted an Appleseed project designed to highlight the prevention of relationship abuse through educating Louisiana youth. Jeannine has spent the last two years recruiting volunteers to conduct research regarding best practices, as well as organizing a Roundtable Discussion and task force on dating violence. During the 2010 Legislative Session, Jeannine organized testimony and testified in favor of HB 46, requiring schools to teach dating violence prevention in 7-12 grades. After its passage, she organized workshops for educators and advocates to ensure meaningful implementation.

Doreen A. Taravella volunteers with the Capital Area Family Violence Intervention Center. Privileged to assist survivors of domestic violence in obtaining protective orders, she donated 439 hours of legal services in 2010. In addition to practicing law, she is a licensed addictions counselor. She also does volunteer legal work for Club 12, a social club affiliated with Alcoholics Anonymous. Furthermore, Doreen is a member of the Baton Rouge Bar Foundation Pro Bono Panel.

Career Public Interest Award, recognizes any individual (attorney or non-attorney) in the state of Louisiana who has devoted at least 10 years of his/her career to public interest legal work; demonstrated excellence in his or her work; demonstrated leadership within his/her organization; and provided significant service on behalf of the poor and disenfranchised.

2011 Recipient: Ayn W. Stehr is the Director of Legal Services for the Capital Area Family Violence Intervention Center, Inc. (CAFVIC) and an Adjunct Clinical Professor of Law at the LSU Paul M. Hebert Law Center. Through CAFVIC, she represents victims of domestic and dating violence in five parishes. As professor, she co-teaches a domestic violence course and supervises third year law students in the domestic violence clinic. Ayn has dedicated most of her social work and legal career to the domestic and dating violence field. She began as a volunteer with CAFVIC in 1979 and after receiving her social work degree in 1982 became the Director; in 1998 she developed the Legal Services Component and became its first and continuing Director. In 2008, Stehr co-developed, with Professor Lucy McGough, the Domestic Violence Clinic at LSU Law School; she continues in that clinic, co-teaching with Professor Robert Lancaster. Since the early 1980s, Ayn has served as the Public Policy Consultant for the statewide advocacy organization, the LA Coalition Against Domestic Violence. She has served as the Legal Consultant and Trainer for the LA Protective Order Registry since 1999, assisting the Judicial Administrator's Office in the development of statutorily-mandated order forms, education and training of domestic violence advocates, clerks' office personnel, law enforcement, attorneys, hearing officers, and judges.

David A. Hamilton Lifetime Achievement Award, recognizes a Louisiana attorney who demonstrates a commitment to the provision of legal services to the poor, has made significant contributions to enhance the pro bono movement in Louisiana over their lifetime, and has shown significant leadership and service on behalf of the poor and disenfranchised.

2011 Recipient: David F. Bienvenu is a partner in the New Orleans firm of Simon, Peragine, Smith & Redfearn, L.L.P. David served as President of the LSBA (1997-98) and as President of the LBF (2004-2005). He has also served on numerous committees of the ABA and is a member of its House of Delegates, currently serving as the LA State Delegate and as a member of the Conference of State Delegates and the ABA Nominating Committee. A former member of the ABA Standing Committee on Delivery of Legal Services, David volunteered for

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many years as a Peer Consultant for the ABA Center for Pro Bono, and has dedicated his efforts here in LA addressing the legal needs of the poor, where he was instrumental in establishing the LSBA's Access to Justice Program. He is currently Vice-President of the LA Civil Justice Center. As Chair of the ABA Special Committee on Disaster Response and Preparedness, and recently worked with the consortium of legal services and pro bono providers across the Gulf to secure resources to assist the victims of the Gulf Oil Spill.

Through the Access to Justice Committee, the LSBA included the **Law Student Pro Bono Award**. This award recognizes a law student from an ABA-accredited law school in the state of Louisiana who has demonstrated a dedication to providing legal services to the poor. One award may be given at each of the four Louisiana Law Schools.

2011 Recipients:

Lilian R. Hangartner is a 2011 graduate of the LSU Law Center. As a student she was an active participant of the Law Center's Trial Advocacy and Moot Court programs, and is a student member of the Wex Malone chapter of the Inns of Court. Throughout her student years, she was also been an outstanding member and leader for the Law Center's Public Interest Law Society (PILS).

Felix Cao is a graduate of Loyola University College of Law. Prior to graduation, Felix along with a collaboration of attorneys, law students, and interpreters around the nation gathered in the gulf region to assist victims of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. His team, in conjunction with local organizations, held rounds of legal education clinics informing claimants of their legal rights and spearheaded the impact claims process. Together, the results of their ongoing negotiations with Kenneth Feinberg were successful in permitting and facilitating legitimate loss claims for affected fisheries.

Cleveland M. Patterson, III is currently a second year law student at Southern University Law Center. Cleveland is an intern at the Baton Rouge Bar Association where he performs intake duties for the Ask-A-Lawyer and Thirst for Justice Programs, and interviews clients applying for pro bono legal services through the Pro Bono Project. He also volunteers regularly for the Wills for Heroes events in Baton Rouge which are sponsored by the Louisiana State Bar Association and Baton Rouge Bar Association.

Rosanna Eugenio is a 2011 graduate of Tulane University Law School. Over the last three years, Rosanna has volunteered at the Loyola Immigration Clinic, helping address the legal needs of immigrant populations in New Orleans. Specifically, she has worked on cases involving asylum and refugees, domestic violence, human trafficking, and other crimes.

For the third year, the **Children's Law Award** was awarded at this ceremony. The LSBA Children's Law Committee developed the award to recognize any Louisiana attorney or Louisiana based organization that has provided outstanding services in the field of Children's Law.

2011 Recipients:

Margot E. Hammond is an Attorney Supervisor with the Mental Health Advocacy Service, where she has worked since 1986. The Agency represents adults and children with mental illness. She has been a guest lecturer at Tulane University and LSU Schools of Medicine, Loyola and Tulane Schools of Law, Holy Cross College

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and the Charity Hospital School of Nursing. She has done training for many other groups including CASA. Margot serves on the LSBA's Legal Services for Persons with Disabilities Committee and Children's Law Committee as well as the LA Law Institute and Children's Code Committee. She is on the Coordinating Council for the LA Youth Enhanced Services for the Office of Mental Health. She helped develop the Interagency Service Coordination process used by the child serving agencies throughout the state. She is also a member of the LA Legislature task force on representation in Child in Need of Care cases.

The Juvenile Defender Advisory Council (JDAC) is a leadership body of juvenile public defenders from various offices in Louisiana. JDAC members actively participate to reform laws impacting Louisiana's children. As necessary, they recommend juvenile defense services improvements to the Louisiana Public Defender Board (LPDB). Membership includes experienced juvenile defenders, juvenile section chiefs and District Defenders. JDAC participation is voluntary, and its members make time for regular meetings, ongoing communication and work-product, and collaboration with LPDB above and beyond their direct representation of children and supervisory responsibilities.

For the second year, the **Pro Bono Century Award** was also handed out. This award recognizes attorneys that have shown consummate pro bono leadership by completing one-hundred hours of service from January 2010 through December 2010.

2011 Recipients:

Marianna Broussard
William G. Cherbonnier, Jr.
L. Bianca Chretien
Jeffrey K. Coreil
Laura L. Davenport
Robin R. De Leo
Ann E. Duvic
Bradford H. Felder
Lauren E. Godshall
C. Peck Hayne, Jr.
Judith R. Kennedy
Gregory A. Koury
Michael D. Lane
Lindsay L. Meador
Will Montz
Tania L. Nelson
Michelle C. Purchner
Michael A. Rainey
Dwazendra J. Smith
Peter B. Sloss
G. Andrew Veazey
Kevin S. Vogeltanz
Daniel Zweben

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Visit <http://www.lsba.org/2007atj/ProBonoAwards.asp> for more information on the 26th Annual Pro Bono Awards Ceremony and for a complete list of this year's award recipients and their biographies.

To view photographs from the event, please click on the following link, <http://www.lsba.org/2007NewsResources/pressphotos.asp?Photos=27>

The Louisiana State Bar Association assists its more than 21,000 members in the practice of law. The statewide association, as part of its multi-faceted mission, promotes and maintains access to justice initiatives for the state's residents, assists the Louisiana Supreme Court in its regulation of the practice of law, upholds the honor of the courts and the profession, and supports programs that increase public understanding of and respect for the law.

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