

Focus on *Access to Justice*

For more information, visit www.lsba.org/atj.

Four new solos join LIFT and deliver 300 pro bono hours in first 6 months

Four new solo practitioners joined the Louisiana State Bar Association's legal incubator program, Legal Innovators for Tomorrow (LIFT), at the beginning of 2020. While the year has presented many unforeseen challenges in the midst of COVID-19, the attorneys continue to pursue and develop their solo practices to ensure access to legal representation in areas where the demand for legal services has risen — estate planning, successions and family law.

Since January, the attorneys listed below have provided more than 300 pro bono hours combined and are using hands-on experience to develop their practice skills and increase access to legal representation.

LIFT operates under two projects — the Flood Proof Project and the Domestic Violence Project.

The **LIFT Flood Proof Project** helps people affected by the 2016 flood in Baton Rouge settle property disputes, gain clear title and handle matters involving succession law. The attorneys in the program provide these services at no cost and receive a stipend through a grant from the Louisiana Bar Foundation. Additionally, the attorneys receive mentorship, case management software, legal research tools and training during the 18-month program from the partners — Southeast Louisiana Legal Services (SLLS), Southern University Law Center, American Bar Association Center for Innovation, Louisiana State University Paul M. Hebert Law Center and the LIFT program. The program welcomed its second class of participants, Shawn B. (Pepper) Roussel and LaKendra D. Sampson, in 2020.

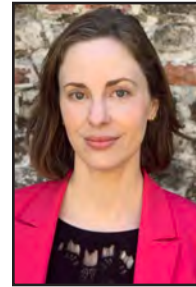
► **Shawn B. (Pepper) Roussel** is a graduate of Loyola University College of Law, an environmentalist, an ecoculinarian and a solo practitioner at Green Pepper Legal, which offers food and farm, business



Shawn B. (Pepper)
Roussel



LaKendra D.
Sampson



A. Camille Patti



Christine D.
Thomas

transactions, land use, estate planning and successions services as well as assisting with bankruptcy cases in the U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Louisiana.

► **LaKendra D. Sampson**, with LaKendra D. Sampson, L.L.C., is a graduate of Southern University Law Center. Upon passing the bar exam, she immediately opened her law firm. She understands the impact that the lack of clear title can have on a family and seeks to help people with homes passed down through generations obtain clear title and keep inherited property family-owned for future generations.


The **Domestic Violence Project**, operated in partnership with the New Orleans Family Justice Center, Southeast Louisiana Legal Services (SLLS) and the LIFT program, was launched in 2015 to ensure domestic violence survivors have access to legal representation for legal matters that can go unaddressed due to gaps in available services. A. Camille Patti and Christine D. Thomas make up the fourth class of attorneys in this project.

► Attorney **A. Camille Patti** graduated *magna cum laude*, with a certification in civil law, from Tulane University Law School. She has been dedicated to social justice and increasing access to affordable legal services early in her career. At the New Orleans Family Justice Center in New Orleans, she offers family law-related legal services with a focus on survivors of domestic violence.

► Attorney **Christine D. Thomas** is a graduate of Loyola University College of Law. She has more than 20 years' professional experience in civil and criminal law and compliance. In 2019, she opened her own solo law firm focused on serving domestic violence survivors and providing passionate, affordable legal services to meet the needs of the community in family law, wills and successions.

Patti is already seeing the impact of her work in a short time during an emergency custody hearing: "We did the hearing via Zoom and were able to successfully reunite child and client. The client, who has limited English proficiency, had not been able to afford an attorney, which I believe directly impacted the previous custody proceedings while the courts were closed due to COVID-19."

Elena M. Perez, who manages SLLS's pro bono program and works closely with the attorneys in LIFT, said, "As a former solo practitioner, I know the exceptional effect hands-on legal experience has on an attorney developing a solo practice. And from a community perspective, the pro bono work the attorneys in LIFT are doing to meet the legal needs are already having a critical impact for people who are not able to obtain legal help elsewhere."

For more information about the LIFT program, projects and participants, go to www.lsba.org/lift. 

Attorney volunteers: Sign up to offer free legal assistance via *LA.FreeLegalAnswers*

The Louisiana State Bar Association's (LSBA) online program, accessible at *LA.FreeLegalAnswers.org*, allows attorneys to volunteer their legal experience, virtually, to low-income users who post civil legal questions to the site.

Through the website, attorney volunteers are able to log in whenever and wherever they like to anonymously respond to legal questions submitted by individuals who could not otherwise afford to consult an attorney. Volunteers will be covered by malpractice insurance provided by the American Bar Association for any legal advice given through the site.

An added bonus is that volunteers earn one hour of CLE credit for every five hours of service (three-hour maximum).

La.FreeLegalAnswers.org is not only an incredibly convenient way for attorneys to do pro bono, but also it will help expand pro bono access throughout Louisiana, especially to those in rural areas where few pro bono resources are currently available.

For more information, contact LSBA Access to Justice Projects Counsel Rachael Mills at (504)619-0104 or email rachael.mills@lsba.org.



#yourLSBA: A Pro Bono Hero *Providing Justice for ALL*

“ Pro bono work is important to me because I want to give back to the community, and I believe that the best way to do this is by using my skills as an attorney. I have been given so many wonderful opportunities in my personal and professional life, and it is my privilege to pay it forward by providing legal services to those in need.

”

Courtney Hollier Guillory
Attorney at Law

Law Office of Courtney Hollier Guillory, L.L.C.
Lafayette, LA



LAWYERS *and* IN LIBRARIES

October 26-31, 2020

For the past 6 years, the Louisiana State Bar Association and the Louisiana Library Association have hosted “Lawyers in Libraries” events during National Celebrate Pro Bono Week. This year, we hope you will join “Lawyers AND Libraries” to provide virtual access to individuals who may be in even more need of legal direction as a result of the current health crisis. We need volunteers who will conduct educational conversations on relevant legal topics or who will virtually answer questions for participants across Louisiana.

{ **Make a difference and ensure justice:
volunteer virtually!** }

To participate in a virtual Lawyers ~~in~~ **AND** Libraries event, sign up at <https://lil.ivolunteer.com/2020>