



By Robert A. Kutcher

# Do Something for Others

I was sitting at home on a rainy Father's Day afternoon thinking about what to write for this message when my wife, Renee, came back from the grocery store with an extra package. She had found an old, small, skinny toothless dog apparently abandoned on the street. This isn't the first time this has happened. Stray dogs seem to find my wife and my daughters. Being the person she is, she brought the dog home, dried her off and set about trying to find her owner. I was all for that since strays who don't have a home end up at our house for an extended stay. That's when it struck me. This profession and this Bar Association are not just about making a living but doing something for others . . . for people less fortunate than ourselves.

Yes, we all have problems and issues in our lives, that, after all, is life. You have good days and bad days. But no matter how bad that bad day may be, there are so many people who are far less fortunate.

Our state has a poverty rate of almost 20% and almost 900,000 of our fellow citizens live under the poverty line. That includes 300,000 children. Worse yet, it is estimated that every year almost 180,000 Louisianians will have at least one civil legal issue, and they need our help.

The good news is that both the federal government and our Legislature recognize the need.

I applaud the Governor and the Louisiana Legislature. This year, for the first time in almost a decade, our political leaders appropriated \$500,000 for civil legal aid. That's a big deal.

On the federal front, although nothing is certain, there is reason for optimism that Congress, acting on a bipartisan basis, will appropriate something in the range

of \$550 million, a material increase from last year but well below the adjusted-for-inflation amount of the Reagan era. With these funds, we can provide legal assistance to tens of thousands of seniors, opioid victims, veterans and juveniles and provide assistance for disaster declarations. This not only helps our citizens, but a social return on investment analysis conducted by the Louisiana Bar Foundation found that every dollar spent on civil legal aid delivers \$9.13 in financial benefits. It helps all of us.

Our two legal aid associations, Southeast Louisiana Legal Services and Acadiana Legal Service Corp., serve almost 49,000 individuals. They do a lot with very little. While the funding is very much appreciated, that does not cover all the unmet needs.

That's where all of us should come in. Volunteer to help a pro bono board in your community. The need is there. Give something back. You'll feel better for it.

Another way to help is through the Louisiana State Bar Association's (LSBA) "Find Legal Help" resource webpage. The Bar directs individuals to resources such as our Modest Means Online Legal Directory. Created by the Access to Justice Commission, the online directory lists attorneys for Louisiana citizens who don't qualify for free legal services but who still can't afford an attorney on the open market. This directory is designed to help Louisiana consumers obtain legal services at affordable rates. It connects people with attorneys who charge reduced rates based on client income, charge a flat fee, or charge less because they represent the client for just part of the case. This program is designed to help not only those of limited income but also provides income

to lawyers. If you are interested, go to our website to learn more, [www.lsba.org](http://www.lsba.org).

Our Lawyers in Libraries Program is an easy way to give back. The 2019 LSBA statewide week of service, held in conjunction with National Celebrate Pro Bono Week, is set for Oct. 21-26. Volunteer through the LSBA to visit a local library for a few hours and help people where they live. In the most advanced and richest country in the world and with the world at our fingertips, so many people lack access to a computer. Their only access is the public library, so let's meet them there. This affirms our commitment to providing access to the legal system for all individuals, regardless of financial circumstance, and better connects the public with counsel. At the same time, it enables a more efficient and just legal system.

Giving back also hits closer to home. Our statewide mentoring program, Transition into Practice, allows young lawyers to benefit from the experience of their more seasoned counterparts. We have also implemented our Spot Mentoring Program which allows lawyers who have been practicing two to seven years to obtain on-the-spot advice as needed. Again, please visit our website for more details.

You can also check out our Legal Innovators for Tomorrow (LIFT) Program which provides new lawyers with the resources and support necessary to develop solo and small firm practices that employ innovative solutions to addressing unmet legal needs of low- and moderate-income clients.

We annually conduct our Suit Up for the Future Program. This program, cosponsored with Just the Beginning, the Louisiana Bar Foundation and the four

state law schools, is available to incoming high school juniors, seniors and recent graduates who are interested in the legal profession. Students participate in a three-week legal institute, during which they attend an abridged law school session, field trips to law schools and courts, and an internship consisting of shadowing at area law offices and courts. This program gives young people a taste of what law

practice is like.

The point is simple. There are so many ways to get involved. Give something back to the communities in which we live and serve. It's good for you and the community. Volunteer for a board position on a not-for-profit. If you're a young lawyer, get active in our Young Lawyers Division (YLD). Volunteer for the YLD's Wills for Heroes Program or judge a

mock trial competition. If your "young lawyer" years are well behind you, get active in our Senior Lawyers Division. Do something for your community and you will benefit as well.

By the way, the good news on the lost dog front is that dog and master were happily reunited, and we don't have another dog living with us. Just like giving back, that's a win-win.

# 2020 Expert Witness, Consultant and Legal Services Directory

The Louisiana State Bar Association is publishing its Expert Witness, Consultant and Legal Services Directory. The supplement to the *Louisiana Bar Journal* will be printed separately and shrink-wrapped for mailing with the December 2019/January 2020 *Louisiana Bar Journal*. The directory is published annually, guaranteeing a year's worth of exposure in print and on the LSBA Web site.

- ▶ Reach 21,000+ practicing attorneys
- ▶ Listings indexed THREE ways: alphabetical, geographical and by category
- ▶ View last year's publication at [www.lsba.org/expertwitness](http://www.lsba.org/expertwitness)

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- ▶ Display ads must be provided camera-ready in PDF format.
- ▶ For text/CV ads, supply text in an editable word-processing format.
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- ▶ E-mail or mail ads on a disk to the addresses provided below.
- ▶ **DON'T FORGET TO PROVIDE YOUR 5 INDEXING CATEGORIES.**

## Contact Info, Deadlines & Pricing

To reserve space in the directory, mail and/or e-mail your display ad or text listing/photo and check (payable to the Louisiana State Bar Association) to:

Communications Assistant Krystal Bellanger Rodriguez  
Louisiana State Bar Association  
601 St. Charles Ave.  
New Orleans, LA 70130-3404  
e-mail: [kbellanger@lsba.org](mailto:kbellanger@lsba.org)

If you prefer to charge your listing (Visa, Mastercard or Discover only), please contact Krystal at (504)619-0131 or (800)421-5722, ext. 131.

	Early Bird Deadline Sept. 6, 2019	Final Deadline Oct. 18, 2019
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