

Metro Pro Bono Advocate

A publication of the Pro Bono Committee of The Bar Association of the City of Richmond

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Maya M. Eckstein Receives American Inns of Court Sandra Day O'Connor Award

On October 11, 2003, Maya Eckstein, a Hunton & Williams litigation attorney and Richmond Bar Association member, received the 2003 Sandra Day O'Connor Award for Professional Service. The award was presented at the annual American Inns of Court Celebration of Excellence held at the U.S. Supreme Court.

A member of Hunton & Williams' Community Service Committee, Maya has an outstanding public service and pro bono record. She was nominated for this prestigious national award by the John Marshall American Inn of Court in Richmond. As co-chair of the 2003 Richmond Bar Association's Bench/Bar Conference, Maya also is responsible for spearheading the Virginia Domestic Violence Safety Project; and for developing the Crime Victim Compensation Program, as a member of the Virginia State Bar's Young Lawyers Conference Pro Bono Committee. In 2001, Maya took a sabbatical from Hunton & Williams to serve a one-year clerkship with the Honorable Roger L. Gregory, the first permanent African-American judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit.

The Sandra Day O'Connor Award was established by the Board of Trustees of the American Inns of Court Foundation as a national award to recognize an Inn member in practice for 10 or fewer years for excellence in public interest or pro



Maya M. Eckstein

bono activities. The award is named in honor of Justice O'Connor, a long-time supporter of the American Inns of Court and a paragon of professional service throughout her distinguished career, who exemplifies legal excellence, civility, ethics and professionalism.

An active member of the Virginia State Bar Access to Legal Services Committee and a member of the Virginia State Bar Young Lawyers Conference Board of Governors, Maya also directs the International Child Abduction and Wills For Heroes programs at Hunton & Williams, and supports the firm's Women's Advocacy Project, a domestic violence program.

Letter from the Chair

*Tara Louise Casey, Chair
Pro Bono Committee of The Bar
Association of The City of Richmond*

Whenever I had trouble falling asleep, my grandmother would tell me to count my blessings instead of sheep. That way, I would slip into peaceful dreams, counting my blessings. This past September brought these words back from my childhood, as we commemorated a tragic anniversary while bracing ourselves for Isabel's wrath.

I cannot believe it has been two years since the devastating events of what has come to be known simply as September 11th. We all can recall where we were when we heard the news and how we felt. Some were dumbfounded, convinced that it must be a nightmare, while others sat in paralyzed silence, watching the horrors unfold in New York, Northern Virginia and Pennsylvania. Two years later, we are still awed by the heroism of those who fell to save others and the compassion that united a country.

Within a week of this anniversary, Mother Nature dealt a terrifying blow to Virginia. Richmond itself faced howling winds, torrential rains and horrendous flooding. The following day, an eerie calm descended upon our town, as we emerged from our homes to gaze upon the aftermath of Isabel's visit. Much of the area was without power, potable water, phones . . . all of the necessities of life in our modern age. How did the people of Richmond respond to this crisis? They banded together. There were front-yard barbecues by candlelight and neighborhood teams for debris removal. There were countless numbers of emergency personnel who tirelessly worked to make sure we were safe. I came upon

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Greater Richmond Bar Foundation Launches New Website!

Vist the Foundation's new website at www.grbf.org to learn more about the many ways it promotes service to the public and the legal profession on behalf of the Richmond, Chesterfield, Hanover, Henrico, Women's and Old Dominion Bar Associations.

Housing Law Program Needs Volunteers

For many years, the Richmond Bar Association has been privileged to work with the Central Virginia Legal Aid Society and the Legal Aid Justice Center in providing pro bono representation to indigent clients facing housing law disputes and litigation. Through RBA's Housing Law Program, volunteer attorneys typically devote two hours every six to eight weeks to meet with prospective clients and ascertain whether further representation is required in their respective cases. In some instances, volunteer attorneys represent LAJC clients throughout the litigation process, appearing in both general district court and circuit court.

With the expansion of this program, RBA is faced with a significant need for additional volunteers for both the Richmond and Petersburg offices. As a result, the Housing Law Program will sponsor a training session on November 10, 2003, from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m., in the 20th floor conference room at Hunton & Williams. The training will provide a basic overview of the program, as well as relevant procedural and substantive law. CLE credit will be made available, and dinner and refreshments also will be provided.

If you are interested in volunteering with this exciting program, please do not hesitate to contact Charlie Meyer at 804-783-7535 or King Tower at 804-783-6438. This program may be of particular interest to associates who are interested in a litigation practice, as it provides exposure to direct client services and an opportunity to go to court and try cases on behalf of Legal Aid Justice Center clients.

Pro Se Education Project Seeks Volunteers

Last year, the Bar Association of the City of Richmond embarked upon an exciting new project to address the special needs of the ever-growing pro se litigant population. The mission of the Pro Se Education Project is to create educational materials that will aid *pro se* litigants with the preparation and presentation of their cases, regardless of their respective positions in the litigation. The project's intent is to create informative pamphlets that briefly describe general civil procedure, as well as the basics of a particular subject area (i.e., housing, commercial transactions, etc.). During the Summer of 2003, the project launched its first pamphlet, "Your Guide to Civil Litigation in General Dis-

trict Court," to widespread praise from judges, clerks and legal services organizations. Already, more than 2000 pamphlets have been distributed throughout the greater Richmond area to clerks' offices and legal services organizations.

Not wishing to rest upon its laurels, the project is gearing up to publish its next pamphlet which will address landlord/tenant issues. As we are in the early stages of development, the project is looking for people in a variety of capacities - researchers, coordinators, authors and editors. If you are interested in lending your talents, or simply would like more information, please contact Tara Casey at tara.casey@usdoj.gov or 804-819-5506.

Letter from the chair

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a house in the Fan that had a sign on its front porch, "We have power, please come in for hot showers and cell-phone charging." Isabel's wrath could not diminish the spirit of our community.

These two events convinced me that the depth of a person's impact upon his community is incalculable. There is a strong, albeit invisible, support network created by our care for one another, a comfort in the knowledge that our corner of the world is better because of this bond. Whether it is through one person's initiative or a community's teamwork, we have within us the power to meet any challenge with compassion and commitment.

In this edition of the Metro Pro Bono Advocate, you will read of the pro bono opportunities available in the greater Richmond area. I would like to take this opportunity to ask you to give serious consideration to lending your time and talents to any one of them. We have created a tradition in this country of banding together in a time of need, and, unfortunately, there are great needs right now in your own backyard. Whether it is with our award-winning Housing Law Program or Pro Bono Clearinghouse, you should find an activity that suits your schedule and interests.

If you have questions about any of these programs, please feel free to contact me at tara.casey@usdoj.gov or 804-819-5506.

Thanks for taking the time to read this informative newsletter and my musings. And, thanks for continuing to be an example of a blessing to be counted.

THE METRO PRO BONO ADVOCATE is a semiannual publication of the Pro Bono Committee of The Bar Association of The City of Richmond, spotlighting some of the many pro bono activities available to lawyers practicing in the Richmond metropolitan area. Contributing writers for this issue include: George Hettrick, Hunton & Williams; Carol Murray, Richmond Bar Pro Bono Coordinator; Tara Louise Casey, Chair of the Pro Bono Committee; Brian Marron, Cantor Arkema and Charles Meyer, LeClair Ryan. June Jones of the Richmond Bar Association staff provides the design and layout.

Please forward any comments or suggestions for future articles to June Jones, Richmond Bar Association, P.O. Box 1213, Richmond, VA 23219-1213; telephone (804) 780-0700; e-mail: jjones@richmondbar.org.

Volunteers Needed for the Pro Bono Clearinghouse

Call 780-2600
for more details

September Benefit Featured Lawyer Musicians

On Friday, September 12, 2003, at the ACCA Temple Activity Center, the Greater Richmond Bar Foundation hosted the second annual Lawyer Palooza. The crowd weathered a significant storm to enjoy a fun evening of music and revelry. The music was provided by three featured bands: The Legacy Bluegrass Band, The Captones and The Members, each of which included at least one "lawyer musician." The event was sponsored by the Greater Richmond Bar Foundation, with corporate sponsorship from Dave Jones & Associates, Hunton & Williams, Prolegia-Lawyer Malpractice Insurance Co., Troutman Sanders LLP, Cantor Arkema P.C., Hirschler Fleischer P.C., The McCammon Group, McGuire Woods LLP, Williams Mullen, Superior Document Services, IKON Documents Services and Southern Title Insurance Corporation. Lawyer Palooza raised approximately \$6,000 which will be used to fund Greater Richmond Bar Foundation projects, including the Pro-Bono Clearinghouse. The event was a great success and a fun time was had by all. We extend our gratitude to each of the sponsors and participants of this event.



The Members, including lawyer Brian Marron, play one of their classic rock tunes.



The Legacy Bluegrass Band, featuring lawyer Randy Cook, charmed the audience with it's classic bluegrass sound.

GRBF Award of Merit Given to Charles F. Witthoefft



Charles F. Witthoefft receiving the Greater Richmond Bar Foundation Award of Merit from George H. Hettrick. The award was presented at the 2003 Bench Bar Conference in recognition of his many years of service to the Foundation.

Post-Isabel Disaster Legal Assistance Needed

As hurricane recovery continues, emergency legal assistance is needed by many coping with the effects of Isabel. Together with the Virginia State Bar Young Lawyers Conference Emergency Legal Services Committee, the Virginia Bar Association's Disaster Legal Assistance Committee trains and coordinates attorneys who are willing to volunteer their time in order to assist individuals rendered needy by emergency situations, such as natural disasters. To that end, the Committee works very closely with representatives of the Virginia Department of Emergency Services, the American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division Emergency Legal Services Committee and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Most importantly, when an emergency situation arises, members of the Committee, and the volunteer attorneys they have trained, provide pro bono legal services to pre-screened individuals.

The Committee is planning to hold a training session within the coming weeks for potential volunteers. Specifically, the Committee is recruiting volunteer attorneys to staff each of the Disaster Recovery Centers that have been, and will be, opened by FEMA and the Virginia Department of Emergency Management. For more information, please contact either of the Committee's Co-chairs, Valerie W. Long (434-977-2545; vlong@mcguirewoods.com) and Richard H. Ottinger (757-446-8673; rottinger@vanblk.com).

RICHMOND METRO PRO BONO SAMPLER

Learn More About the Activity that Interests You.

<u>Program</u>	<u>Contact Person</u>	<u>Telephone</u>
Appeal Bond Fund	Marcel Slag	643-1086
Community Tax Law Project	Elaine Javonovich	358-5855
LAJC Housing Law	Marcel Slag	643-1086
CVLAS Wills Program	Henry McLaughlin/Kathy Brigman	648-1012/862-8801
Henrico Bar Association Pro Bono Volunteers	Nancy Quinn	282-8494
Hunton & Williams- Church Hill office	George Hettrick	775-2248
VBA-YLD Central VA Pro Bono Hotline	Coburn Beck/Agustin Rodriguez	788-8576/274-5731
Pro Bono Clearinghouse (www.grbf.org)	Carol Murray	780-2600
Legal Information Network for Cancer (LINC)	Susheela Varky	662-5462
Virginia Poverty Law Center	Steve Myers	782-9430
Richmond Domestic Violence Project	Erin Fratkin	775-1842
VSJ Young Lawyers Board Match	Beth Hungate-Noland	783-6913
VBA-YLD Legal Services for the Mentally Ill	King Tower	783-6438
VSJ Crime Victim Compensation Program	Maya Eckstein	788-8200
Refugee and Immigration Services - Catholic Diocese of Richmond	Marilyn Breslow	355-4559

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