

Metro Pro Bono Advocate

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

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Fall 2008

Author Grisham to headline Legal Aid Fundraiser on November 13

John Grisham, award-winning writer of *The Firm*, *The Street Lawyer* and other notable novels set in the legal system, will host a fundraiser November 13, 2008 at Toad's Place in Shockhoe Bottom to jointly benefit the Legal Aid Justice Center and Central Virginia Legal Aid Society. The event will begin with a 5:45 p.m. signed-book distribution and private reception with Grisham, followed by a 6:30 p.m. reception hosted by Grisham.

At the reception, First Lady Anne Holton, a ten-year lawyer with Central Virginia Legal Aid Society and a former family court judge in Richmond, will receive a special service award.

LAJC and CVLAS provide legal services to low income and elderly clients in Central Virginia. This is their largest fundraising event together.

The benefit is sponsored by Altria, Dominion, Hunton & Williams, LeClairRyan, McGuireWoods, Troutman Saunders and Williams Mullen.

John Grisham is a former practicing criminal defense and personal injury lawyer and seven-year member of the Mississippi House of Representatives. He penned his first published novel, *A Time to Kill*, and also *The Firm*, while sitting

in courtrooms awaiting hearings and trials. He is a passionate advocate for Legal Aid.

More than 225 million John Grisham books have sold worldwide, which has given the author a platform to speak authoritatively about the cause of and necessity for legal assistance to disadvantaged people in the American community. As a

special contribution to this benefit, Grisham will auction off November 13th the right to name a character in an upcoming book. Proceeds will benefit Legal Aid. Bidding will start at \$5,000.

Individual, law firm and corporate event support is appreciated, and additional attendees welcome. For ticket information call Scott Oostdyk of McGuireWoods at 804-775-4743.



John Grisham

RBA offers many opportunities for pro bono service

Whether you are a veteran litigator, a young lawyer new to practice or a corporate attorney who does not spend a lot of time in court, the RBA sponsors pro bono programs that will give you an opportunity to give back to your community:

Pro Bono Housing Project - The Pro Bono Housing Project, administered by the Legal Aid Justice Center and the Richmond Bar Association Pro Bono Committee, provides pro bono services to indigent clients who face the loss of housing or other basic leasehold services throughout the greater Richmond area. Where a meritorious defense exists, pro bono housing law volunteers represent these indigent tenants in their leasehold disputes. Volunteer attorneys obtain meaningful litigation experience and may receive up to three 3 hours of CLE credit by attending the training program. For more information, please contact Marcel Slag at 643-1086 (marcel@justice4all.org) or Peggy Sanner at 344-3400 (msanner@reedsmith.com).

No-Fault Divorce Project - The Richmond Bar Association, the University of Richmond School of Law, and the Central Virginia Legal Aid Society have partnered to create the No Fault Divorce Project, which pairs volunteer attorneys with law students, who together represent clients seeking no-fault divorces in the greater Richmond area. A no-fault divorce is available to Virginians if the "husband and wife have lived separate and apart without any cohabitation and without interruption for one year." Va. Code Ann. § 20-91 (2008). An attorney must file the paperwork with the Court, as well as conduct the required deposi-

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Mark your calendar and plan to attend!

The RBA will present its John C. Kenny Pro Bono Award at the luncheon on Thursday, January 15, 2009. For more information or to make a reservation visit www.richmondbar.org.

Ben R. Lacy IV receives Foundation's Volunteer of the Year Award

Ben Lacy of Sands Anderson Marks & Miller was awarded the 2008 Pro Bono Clearinghouse Volunteer Service Award by the Greater Richmond Bar Foundation. The award, which recognizes exemplary service through the Pro Bono Clearinghouse program, was presented to Mr. Lacy at a reception on September 23, 2008. The Clearinghouse matches volunteer attorneys with the legal needs of local non-profit organizations and provides these services to them at no charge.

The reception, which was hosted by Hirschler Fleischer at their new offices,

was held to give nonprofit executives and board members an opportunity to learn more about the Pro Bono Clearinghouse program and meet with some of the attorneys who volunteer through the program.

Due to the efforts of Mr. Lacy and other volunteers in the program, the Pro Bono Clearinghouse has been able to make a real difference in the lives of the many thousands served by the various non-profit organizations that have been provided pro bono legal assistance through the program.



Volunteer of the Year Ben Lacy (left) with GRBF President Chris Malone

Volunteers needed for program addressing civil rights of incarcerated persons

After a year of investigation and research, the Legal Aid Justice Center started a new program to address the civil rights of Virginia's institutionalized persons. The Virginia Institutionalized Persons Project ("VIP" Project) is now screening and referring cases arising from Virginia's prisons. These cases fall into three categories: excessive force cases (in which inmates have been mistreated by correctional officers); medical neglect cases (in which a prisoner either dies or is seriously or permanently injured by inadequate medical care); and medical malpractice cases (in which employees

of a private prison health care company, or the Virginia Department of Corrections commits medical malpractice).

The VIP Project is preparing to coordinate pro bono representations in these cases. The Project is also working to develop a fund to facilitate referral of these cases by providing up-front funding of litigation costs. If you are interested in a pro bono representation with the VIP Project or working to develop a litigation costs fund for these cases, please contact Helen Trainor, VIP Project Director, at Helen@justice4all.org, 434-977-0553, ext. 139 (LAJC Charlottesville office).

Housing Law Program Begins New Volunteer Cycle

The Pro Bono Committee of the Richmond Bar Association and the Legal Aid Justice Center will hold a Pro Bono Housing Law training session on Tuesday, December 2, 2008 from 4:00 pm to 8:00 pm. The training will be held at Troutman Sanders, 1001 Haxall Point, 15th floor. Participants will receive 3 hours of CLE credit.

The Pro Bono Housing Law Program, which is administered by the Legal Aid Justice Center and the Richmond Bar Association Pro Bono Committee, provides crucial pro bono services to indigent clients throughout the greater Richmond area who are facing the loss of housing or other basic leasehold services. Pro bono housing law volunteers represent these indigent tenants in landlord tenant disputes.

For more information about volunteering for the program, please contact Marcel Slag at 643-1086 (marcel@justice4all.org) or Peggy Sanner at 344-3400 (msanner@reedsmith.com).

Pro Bono Committee Members:

W. Benjamin Pace, Chair
Hon. Joi J. Taylor
Hon. Robert A. Pustilnik
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Christina E. Marra
Henry W. McLaughlin III
Marcellinus L. M. B. Slag
Tara L. Casey
Keith L. Phillips

Make a difference - volunteer today to participate in a RBA pro bono program

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tion testimony of a third-party witness. Many low-income individuals cannot afford the services of an attorney, so they languish in marriages that have ended in all other respects. The No Fault Divorce Project seeks to fill this critical legal services need. A typical no fault divorce case takes only five hours of a volunteer attorney's time, so this is a great way to make a lasting impact on a person's life through a limited time commitment. If you are interested in volunteering with this project, or would like more information, please contact Tara Casey, Director of Pro Bono Services at the University of Richmond School of Law at 287-1207 (tcasey@richmond.edu).

Emergency Lawyer program - The Pro Bono Committee of the Richmond Bar Association has teamed up with Central Virginia Legal Services to assist CVLAS with emergency hearings. CVLAS receives many requests for legal assistance on an emergency basis. These cases include a variety of emergency matters, including protective orders, evictions, collection actions, domestic violence, and various other General District Court matters. Many times, individuals without the means to hire an attorney are victims of abusive practices or have a legitimate defense to an eviction or collection action.

Intake in emergency cases is handled by CVLAS. CVLAS makes the immediate case acceptance decisions and prepares the necessary pleadings. CVLAS

then forwards the case to a participating law firm, who coordinates the assignment to a pro bono lawyer in the firm. Assuming there are no conflicts, the pro bono lawyer assigned by the law firm then co-counsels with a CVLAS lawyer, who sees to the filing of the papers and notification of the opposing party and consultation with the client. The pro bono lawyer appears in court, allowing CVLAS lawyers to handle other matters.

For more information or to participate in this program, please contact Chuck Seyfarth at (804) 285-5200 or Cseyfarth@ohaganspencer.com.

Pro Se Education - The Richmond Bar's Pro Se Litigant Project addresses the special needs of the ever-growing pro se litigant population. The pamphlet, "Your Guide to Civil Litigation in General District Court," will help pro se litigants understand the basic rules and procedures of civil litigation in the General District Court, from how to file a case to obtaining a judgment. This brochure is also available in a Spanish version. An additional pamphlet, "Your Guide to Landlord-Tenant Disputes," has also recently been published to assist pro se litigants with landlord-tenant disputes. The pamphlets are currently being updated, with both to be available in Spanish in the next year. The pamphlets are available on the web at <http://www.richmondbar.org/publications.htm>. For more information, please contact Carol Deitrick at 780-0700 (cdeitrick@richmondbar.org).

LINC referral lawyers needed

The Legal Information Network for Cancer (LINC) is a nonprofit, community-based organization providing the Central Virginia community with information, education, counseling and referral services for legal and financial assistance to individuals confronted with the overwhelming issues that arise from the diagnosis and treatment of cancer.

LINC referral attorneys provide pro

bono representation in a variety of areas, including employment negotiation and benefits, creditors' rights, social security disability and testamentary instruments.

Diagnosis of cancer means so much more than a medical battle. LINC feels no one should have to face cancer alone. If you are interested in being a referral attorney, you can reach LINC at 804.378.5462 (LINC) or visit www.cancerlinc.org

Law Firms pledge aid to CVLAS

The Association wishes to acknowledge the following firms who have responded to the RBA's annual request for financial support to Central Virginia Legal Aid Society, Inc. as of October 1, 2008:

Christian & Barton
Cuthbert Law Offices
Davidson White & Lesniak
Freed & Shepherd
Hill, Tucker, & Marsh
Hirschler Fleischer
Hunton & Williams
Murray Janus
LeClairRyan
Marks & Harrison
McCandlish Holton
McGuireWoods
Morris & Morris
ParisBlank
Spotts Fain
Thompson & McMullan
James Thorsen
Troutman Sanders
Williamson & Lavecchia
Williams Mullen

GRBF to host luncheon for local bar leaders

The Greater Richmond Bar Foundation will host a luncheon on November 12, 2008 for the leaders of the Bar Association of the City of Richmond, Henrico County Bar Association, Hanover County Bar Association, Chesterfield County Bar Association, Old Dominion Bar Association-Richmond Chapter, and the Metropolitan Richmond Women's Bar Association. The Foundation partners with these six bar associations in providing various pro bono and educational programs in the Richmond metropolitan area. The November luncheon, which is being sponsored by Hunton & Williams, will feature John G. Douglass, Dean of the University of Richmond School of Law, who will be talking about the law school's downtown pro bono initiatives.

RICHMOND METRO PRO BONO SAMPLER

Attorneys, please refer to the list below to learn more about the activity that interests you.

<u>Program</u>	<u>Contact Person</u>	<u>Telephone</u>
Appeal Bond Fund	Marcel Slag Henry McLaughlin	643-1086 648-1012
Community Tax Law Project	Elaine Javonovich	358-5855
LAJC Housing Law	Marcel Slag	643-1086
CVLAS Wills Program	Kathy Brigman	862-1100
Henrico Bar Association Pro Bono Volunteers	Christopher H. Macturk	762-9500
Hunton & Williams - Church Hill office	George Hettrick	775-2248
VBA-YLD Central VA Pro Bono Hotline	Kevin Georgerian; Rich Brooks	787-8960, 787-8058
Pro Bono Clearinghouse (www.grbf.org)	Carol Deitrick	780-2600
Legal Information Network for Cancer (LINC)	Allison Held	371-9543
Virginia Poverty Law Center	Jay Speer	782-9430
Richmond Domestic Violence Project	Robbi Gray/Alexis Fishel	775-1227/771-5765
VBA-YLD Legal Services for the Mentally Ill	John Phelps	662-7242
VSJ Young Lawyers Board Match	Beth Hungate-Noland	783-6913
Refugee and Immigration Services - Catholic Diocese of Richmond	Marilyn Breslow	355-4559

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