

# SPEAKING OF JUSTICE

NEWS FROM THE FLORIDA BAR FOUNDATION  
Volume 11 Issue no. 3



JUDY WATSON TRACY

Attorney Jesusa Panton and Barry Law School student Jonathan Levy worked together on a bankruptcy pro bono case from Community Legal Services of Mid-Florida after matching on the Florida Pro Bono Law School Challenge website. Panton mentored Levy throughout the case, which they resolved within a few weeks.

## Pro Bono Law School Challenge benefits mentor, law student and clients

by Jessica Brown

After scouring the internet for legal help and finding the cost of a bankruptcy lawyer overwhelming, an elderly couple approached Community Legal Services of Mid-Florida (CLSMF).

What might have seemed like an everyday occurrence at a legal aid program would become enlightening for law student Jonathan Levy. He and his mentor, lawyer Jesusa Panton, listened as their new pro bono clients, the elderly couple, grew concerned about how

they would travel to work if they had to surrender their car after filing for bankruptcy. Levy observed Panton as she counseled the clients about alternatives.

"It made me realize, I'm going to law school to deal with legal issues," Levy said. "But you have real people and your legal actions have real consequences. It's not just legal."

Levy had the opportunity to work on the case through the Florida Pro Bono Law School

Challenge, a pilot program created by the Foundation's pro bono department this spring.

Using an online platform to match students with alumni mentors, Florida's law schools competed to see whose students and alumni could take the most pro bono cases during the spring semester. During the four months of the challenge, students and lawyers from all of Florida's 12 law schools worked on 306 unique cases.

"I honestly didn't know if I would get the



*Florida Bar Foundation President Hala A. Sandridge began her term July 1. A co-managing shareholder of the Tampa office of Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney, she is a member of the firm's board of directors and chair of its appellate practice group. She earned her bachelor's degree from the University of Florida and her law degree from the Florida State University College of Law. Last year, Sandridge was reappointed to the Florida Supreme Court Judicial Nominating Commission. She is a recipient of the Hillsborough County Bar Association's Jimmy Kynes Pro Bono Award, The Florida Bar President's Pro Bono Service Award and the Distinguished Pro Bono Award from Bay Area Legal Services.*

## Message from the President

**B**enjamin Franklin once said, "You may delay, but time will not." The poet John Mark Green wrote, "I blinked my eyes and in an instant, decades had passed." These quotes capture some of the sentiments the Foundation has and is experiencing.

What had been expected to be a short-term downturn in the economy in 2007 turned into a decade-long dry spell and perhaps America's longest and greatest recession. Interest rates remained virtually non-existent, literally crushing IOTA revenues, once the primary source of Foundation funding. While individual donations rose, there simply wasn't enough money to continue providing civil legal aid funding at the previous levels.

Seeing that the path forward was fraught with lagging funding from IOTA, our board of directors implemented a Strategic Reset. Importantly, in implementing the Strategic Reset, we remained mindful of the fact that the Foundation was not changing its mission, only its mindset. The Reset was forged with the realization that every dollar granted needs to be used as efficiently as possible; be used to increase collaboration among grantees; promote best practices and sharing; facilitate innovation; and help grantees grow and sustain wide-ranging impact work.

In order to accomplish these and other objectives, we also realized we needed to establish a baseline and develop metrics in order to gauge not only the success of our grantees, but the effectiveness and impact of the Reset itself. This resulted in the development of 11 key metrics which are discussed in more detail and can be found at <https://bit.ly/2TK50KF>.

In the interim, the Foundation embarked on new and innovative approaches such as facilitating a partnership between Florida Rural Legal Services and Toyota to increase productivity through process improvement; creating Florida Pro Bono Matters, the first online program of its kind in the U.S. to connect lawyers to pro

bono cases statewide; transitioning to competitive grant-making which emphasizes collaboration and teamwork amongst grantees; and investing in and promoting technology and innovation projects designed to increase access to justice. The Foundation is also constantly exploring other funding sources and possible partners, given the inevitable changes experienced and expected in virtually all sectors of our society, including the courts and the banking industry in particular.

Because of limited resources and a changing dynamic, we must continue to think outside of the box for innovative solutions. We send our grantees to trainings and conferences to learn from other states and programs. We crowdsource better policies and procedures to share with our grantees. Now, we maximize our impact by supporting community lawyering, education and outreach, policy advocacy, and replicable and scalable projects.

The stark reality is that current resources are limited and the need, along with Florida's population, continues to grow in explosive fashion. But, Florida, and the Foundation in particular, is blessed with tremendous talent, commitment and dedicated leadership. Together, I am confident we can confront our reality, effectively increase access to justice and make a better place for us all. In the words of Mother Teresa, "Yesterday is gone. Tomorrow has not yet come. We have only today. Let us begin."

Hala A. Sandridge, President

## New members join Foundation Board of Directors

The Foundation's six designated directors serve in their appointed positions for one year. At-large directors serve a maximum of two three-year terms, with one-third selected by the Florida Supreme Court, one-third by The Florida Bar Board of Governors and one-third by the Foundation board.



Hon. Hugh Carithers, Director, 2019-22  
Carithers recently retired after serving as a judge on the 4th Circuit Court since 1993. In 2016, he received the Jacksonville Bar Association's Liberty Bell Award.



Min Cho, Director, 2019-22  
Cho is general counsel of uBreakiFix in Orlando. He was previously a partner with Holland and Knight. In 2013, he was named one of the Orlando Business Journal's 40 Under 40.



Steve Dupré, Designated Director, 2019-20  
Dupré is the president of Florida Legal Services and a shareholder with Carlton Fields in Tampa. He also serves on the board of directors of the Baryshnikov Arts Center.



Dori Foster-Morales, Designated Director, 2019-20  
Foster-Morales is the president-elect of The Florida Bar. She has served on the Board of Governors since 2008, and practices marital and family law in Miami.



Kevin McCoy, Director, 2019-20  
McCoy is a shareholder with Carlton Fields in Tampa. He is a former board chair of Bay Area Legal Services and is a recipient of their Outstanding Pro Bono Service by a Young Lawyer award.



Hon. Peggy A. Quince, Director, 2019-22  
Quince was appointed to the Florida Supreme Court in 1998, its first African-American woman. She served as Chief Justice from 2008-10. She retired in January.



Lara J. Tibbals, Director, 2019-22  
Tibbals is an attorney of counsel with Hill Ward Henderson's litigation group in Tampa. In 2006, she received the Hillsborough County Bar Association's Outstanding Young Lawyer Award.

## June 2019 Board of Directors meeting recap

**T**he Foundation's Board of Directors met on June 27 in Boca Raton during The Florida Bar Annual Convention.

The meeting preceded the Foundation's Annual Dinner and Medal of Honor awards ceremony. As such, the agenda for the meeting was shorter than usual. The major actions of the board and reports received included:

- Budget and Finance Committee

- ▶ The Foundation's FY 2019-20 Operating Budget was presented and approved by the Board. FY 2018-19 expenses were \$703,180 below budget and the FY 2019-20 Operating Budget is \$3,215,845, which represents a 9.7% reduction from the Foundation's FY 2018-19 budget.

- Grants Committee

- ▶ 2019-20 Law School Civil Legal Clinic Grant Program Awards were approved. Florida

State University and the University of Florida were awarded funding for a joint program that addresses immigration issues in North Florida and provides law students significant opportunities for involvement in the provision of civil legal assistance in impoverished local communities, focusing on marginalized groups.

- ▶ Florida Innovation Grants (FIG). A potential new grant that would provide funding for technology and innovation was discussed in concept. If developed, it would replicate Legal Services Corporation's (LSC) existing technology and innovation grants (TIG) on a statewide basis and be primarily directed to non-LSC grantees. Staff was directed to continue developing the concept and report back.

- Investment Committee

- ▶ The Investment Committee

recommended and the Board approved reinvestment of \$1.85M of excess Bank of America funds to mature in June 2020.

- Governance

- ▶ The President's gavel was handed over by President Juliette Lippman to President-elect Hala Sandridge who announced committee appointments and meeting times and locations for upcoming board meetings. The Board will meet at various locations throughout the state to reach out to local communities and grantees.

The Board's next meeting will be on September 13 in Tampa. President Sandridge's firm, Buchanan, Ingersoll & Rooney, will host the meeting. This will allow the Foundation to save meeting and accommodation expenses. The Staff and Board are extremely grateful for this generous and kind gesture by President Sandridge and her firm.



# Michael A. Bedke receives Medal of Honor Award

**M**ichael A. Bedke, a real estate partner in the DLA Piper Tampa office, received the 2019 Medal of Honor for a Lawyer for his exceptional dedication to providing pro bono service, his remarkable advocacy for AIDS patients and domestic violence survivors both locally and internationally, his invaluable support developing the No Place Like Home program and his commitment to improving the lives of veterans, disaster survivors and law students.

"Mike is one of those extremely rare individuals who has noteworthy qualifications in all three areas for which one may be nominated," wrote Richard Woltmann, CEO/president of Bay Area Legal Services, in his nomination of Bedke. "Mike has spent his entire legal career serving the public, working to improve access to justice and advancing the science of jurisprudence."

As a young lawyer, Bedke accepted pro bono cases representing persons with AIDS in the 1980s, a time when the general public was both fearful and uneducated about the disease. He encouraged colleagues to take similar cases and served on the board of the Tampa AIDS Network.

After Hurricane Andrew, Bedke worked to pass Good Samaritan legislation that removed an impediment to lawyers providing pro bono help to disaster survivors. He also led legal relief efforts in response to Hurricane Iniki in Hawaii, the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, and September 11. He founded the Greater Access and Assistance Project while chair of the ABA's YLD, modeling it after the Courthouse Assistance Project he created as a member of Bay Area Legal Services' board of directors.



The 2019 Medal of Honor Award for a Lawyer was presented to Michael A. Bedke from Florida Lawyers Mutual Insurance Company board member Juliet Roulhac (center) and former Florida Bar President Gwynne A. Young.

"Throughout his life, Mike has recognized his duty to serve the public in a wide variety of ways," wrote Gwynne A. Young, past president of The Florida Bar, in a letter of recommendation for Bedke. "He is constantly thinking of ways to meet the unmet legal needs in our community. He has a unique ability to identify groups in need of legal services and develop effective plans for meeting those needs."

Bedke has worked on behalf of domestic violence survivors for more than 25 years. He was appointed to the National Advisory Committee on Violence Against Women in 2002 and has served on numerous boards working to improve access to legal help for survivors. He worked with the Women's Caucus of the Peruvian Parliament to draft model domestic

violence legislation.

At his alma mater, the University of Florida, he developed a program to recruit and retain minority law students. He has also served as an adjunct professor at Stetson College of Law.

As president of the board of Bay Area Legal Services in 2015, Bedke spearheaded a fundraising effort that created a \$400,000 endowment for a veterans program. He also led the development and implementation of Bay Area's No Place Like Home Project through his work with the Real Property, Probate and Trust Law Section (RPPTL). The project engages RPPTL members to provide pro bono help to low-income homeowners experiencing title issues.

*"The contributions of Michael A. Bedke to the delivery of legal services is unmatched. Having had the opportunity to work side by side with Mike, I cannot think of anyone more deserving of this award."*

– Gwynne A. Young, past president of The Florida Bar and Carlton Fields shareholder

## Richard C. Milstein receives Medal of Honor Award

Richard C. Milstein received the 2019 Medal of Honor for a lawyer at the Foundation's Annual Reception and Dinner for his exemplary and unending capacity for pro bono work as a volunteer guardian ad litem for more than 35 years, his leadership and advocacy for marriage equality and civil rights, and his efforts to enact legislation to protect minors in the dependency system.

Milstein, a partner in the Miami office of Akerman, was appointed to his first pro bono case by a U.S. District Court judge just months after being admitted to the Bar in 1974. This led to more cases, and before the concept of ad litem had even been formulated, Richard was volunteering his time protecting children during divorces.

In 1986, Milstein was appointed to oversee a case involving the misappropriation of a minor's funds in guardianship. After recovering a considerable sum for the child, he worked to draft and enact legislation to protect the interests of children in the same situation.

"Richard's pro bono work knows no bounds, as evidenced by the realm of his pro bono legal services to indigent clients, civil organizations, voluntary bar associations and to all who have nowhere else to turn to for assistance," said Karen J. Ladis, executive director of Dade Legal Aid, in a letter of recommendation for Milstein. "He has gone above and beyond for decades to champion causes for the defenseless and disenfranchised, donating his time generously, helping to make legal services accessible to those in greatest need."

Milstein was the pro bono guardian ad litem in a highly-publicized case in 2000 in which a three-year-old had been beaten into a coma, and he was charged with advising the court on whether the child should be removed from life support. He has represented children during contentious custody battles and helped children achieve permanent reunification after being placed in foster care.

Milstein's involvement in civil rights extended to his personal life when, in 2014,



Florida Lawyers Mutual Insurance Company board member Juliet Roulhac presents the 2019 Medal of Honor Award for a Lawyer to Richard C. Milstein of Akerman LLP.

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he and his husband, who had married in Iowa in 2010, challenged Florida's ban on same-sex marriage. The lawsuit ultimately resulted in marriage equality statewide a year later.

"Florida and its residents will have more and improved access to justice because of Richard's work," said Judge Vance E. Salter in his letter of recommendation for Milstein. "Countless individuals and nonprofit groups have received donations of legal advice, and those persons and entities view our profession positively as a result. His essential virtues of humanity, tolerance and charity have always set him apart."

In 2016, in another high profile case, Milstein served as a guardian ad litem for a transgender teen who wanted to change the name and gender marker on his birth certificate. The decision set a precedent for transgender teens in Florida, who can now amend their birth certificate's gender markers.

Milstein has served as president of the Dade County Bar and received the Florida Supreme Court's Tobias Simon Pro Bono Service Award in 1996.

*"Richard has contributed so much and will continue to be a contributor, but his legacy will be so much more than preserving civil rights, his prolific pro bono work, and being the consummate litigator. He gives you his full attention when you are in his presence."*

– Juliet Roulhac, Regional Manager of External Affairs for Florida Power & Light Company and Florida Lawyers Mutual Insurance Company director



## Paul C. Doyle Children's Advocacy Award winners recognized

The Paul C. Doyle Children's Advocacy Award was presented during the Foundation's 43rd Annual Reception and Dinner June 27 in Boca Raton.

The award, which is given biannually, recognizes high-quality legal representation and systemic legal advocacy for Florida's low-income children by Children's Legal Services grantees. Doyle was the founding director of the Foundation's legal assistance for the poor and law student assistance grant programs.

The 2019 winner, Americans for Immigrant Justice (AIJ), worked to reunite children in immigration detention centers with their families. In early 2018, the Department of Homeland Security began to refer immigrants who crossed the border without permission to the Department of Justice to face prosecution under a new zero-tolerance policy. As a result, thousands of children were separated from their parents upon apprehension by Customs and Border Protection.

For more than 20 years, AIJ has been the only agency providing legal services to children detained in Office of Refugee Resettlement shelters in South Florida. These shelters are normally populated with unaccompanied minors, but there was suddenly a dramatic shift — the majority of the children were now separated minors, many under the age of eight.

Many of the children were suffering from severe trauma, and few spoke English. Some of the children were so young they did not know their parent's full name or their own age.

AIJ responded rapidly, shifting resources. They produced a coloring book that allowed staff attorneys and shelter advocates to successfully communicate with vulnerable children and worked around the clock for eight weeks to reunify children with their families.

AIJ successfully reunited 100 of 120 children with their families. Although the policy officially ended in 2018, AIJ continues to work on reunification and immigration court cases.

The Florida State University College of Law Public Interest Law Center Children's Advocacy Clinic was the first runner-up. The clinic's Human Trafficking and Exploitation Law Project



Former Foundation president Kathy McLeroy of Carlton Fields presents the Paul C. Doyle Children's Advocacy Award to Americans for Immigrant Justice. Left to right: Kathy McLeroy, Jennifer Anzardo Valdes, Angeliki Bouliakis Andronis, Janette Vargas, Alexandra Manrique and Rosario Paz.

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Kathy McLeroy of Carlton Fields presents the first runner-up Doyle Award to Florida State University College of Law. Left to right: Kathy McLeroy, Paolo Annino, Caitlyn Kio, Laura Dadowski, and Daniela Donoso.



The University of Miami School of Law accepts the second runner-up Doyle Award. Left to right: Bernie Perlmutter, Kele Stewart, Romy Lerner and Melissa Swain.

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uses direct representation and community outreach to combat the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

Children who are trafficked but not already involved in the dependency system are unable to access the same services as foster children. With the clinic's help, children can receive treatment in a safe harbor program without first being in foster care. The clinic has also collaborated with a local teen drop-in center to provide workshops for homeless youth at risk of trafficking. The clinic trains lawyers to advocate

for trafficking survivors as well.

The second runner-up was the University of Miami School of Law Children and Youth Clinic, which collaborated with the school's health rights and immigration clinics to end the categorical, summary dismissals of private dependency petitions based on an immigrant child's intent to seek special immigrant juvenile status (SIJS). Their efforts resulted in a Florida Supreme Court decision that unanimously held that the intent of the child to seek SIJS is not a basis to deny the petition.

## Attorney Jackie Dowd receives Curran Distinguished Service Award

Jackie Dowd, managing attorney of nonprofit poverty and social justice firm Legal Advocacy at Work and legal counsel for Orlando-based IDignity, was awarded The Florida Bar Foundation's Jane Elizabeth Curran Distinguished Service Award June 27 at the Foundation's Annual Reception and Dinner.

The award is named for the Foundation's first executive director. It recognizes individuals who, over their careers, have achieved meaningful, effective and lasting increases in access to civil justice for the poor in Florida.

"Jackie has changed the lives of thousands of homeless and low-income individuals by providing legal advocacy that would otherwise be unavailable," wrote Frederick J. Lauten, recently retired chief judge of Florida's 9th Judicial Circuit, in a letter supporting Dowd's nomination. "Ms. Dowd has been a stalwart advocate for those who are chronically underrepresented in our justice system. You will find few others who have dedicated more of their time, energy and passion to the representation of the poor and homeless in Central Florida."

After working as a journalist, Dowd enrolled in law school at the University of Florida in her 30s. She began her legal career representing General Motors before moving to the Florida Attorney General's office where she eventually became the supervisor of the Orlando Economic

Crimes Unit. In 2004, she served as managing attorney of Community Legal Services of Mid-Florida.

The next year, as acting director of clinical programs at Florida A&M University College of Law, Dowd established the school's Homelessness and Legal Advocacy Clinic. Shortly after, she represented the group Food Not Bombs as an ACLU cooperating attorney, arguing for the right to feed the poor and homeless in an Orlando city park.

In 2006, Jackie founded her nonprofit firm to handle cases relating to collections, evictions, family law, public benefits and employment law for poor and homeless individuals and families.

A year later, she played an instrumental part in the founding of IDignity, which helps homeless and low-income individuals obtain identification.

As IDignity's legal counsel, Dowd helps clients who are having difficulty getting birth certificates, marriage records, social security records, immigration records and other documents needed to obtain a Florida ID. IDignity has served more than 19,000 people,

many of whom Jackie has met in the woods and in shelters to provide services.

Dowd was also instrumental in starting Orlando's annual homeless memorial service, which brings together city leaders and the community to honor homeless people who passed away that year. The event has not had to honor any Jane or John Does in recent years, mainly due to her IDignity work.

The 2019 Jane Elizabeth Curran Distinguished Service Award was sponsored by Jacksonville law firm Pajcic & Pajcic, and was presented at The Boca Raton Resort and Club during The Florida Bar Annual Convention.



Jackie Dowd, right, accepts the Jane Elizabeth Curran Distinguished Service Award from Foundation board member Raymond P. Reid Jr.

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## Goldstein Award renamed

The Foundation's Steven M. Goldstein Award for Excellence has been renamed the Goldstein - Van Nortwick Award for Excellence. The award recognizes a project of significant impact work undertaken by a Foundation grantee and is awarded once every two years.

The Foundation created the award in honor of Goldstein, who passed away in 1994. Goldstein and William A. Van Nortwick, a former Foundation president, knew each other for years, meeting first as Foundation board members in 1990. They became fast friends and even running and fishing buddies. At board meetings, they often took opposite sides on important legal aid issues, yet had the utmost respect for each other. Van Nortwick passed away in January.

The newly-named award honors the life, legacy and friendship of these two champions whose commitment to those less fortunate while remaining true to the highest principles of the judicial system helped create the touchstone by which the Foundation measures excellence.



Juliette Lippman, right, presents the first honorary Goldstein - Van Nortwick Award to Van Nortwick's wife and former Foundation president Maria Henderson.

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## Disaster Recovery Legal Corp Fellows support hurricane survivors

The Foundation began funding three Equal Justice Works Fellows serving in the Disaster Recovery Legal Corps in 2018. The fellowships were created to support Florida residents impacted by Hurricanes Irma and Maria.

In the first 11 months of their work, the fellows have provided legal assistance to 72 individuals and legal information to 2,203 individuals. The majority of cases opened have been related to housing, consumer finance and family matters. Fellows work within their communities to also address disaster preparedness, ownership and title clearance,

foreclosure and immigration.

"We are tremendously proud of these Disaster Recovery Legal Corps Fellows and their legal advocacy to help individuals and families whose lives have been completely upended by Hurricanes Irma and Maria," said David Stern, executive director of Equal Justice Works. "The Florida Bar Foundation's support enabled these passionate Fellows to devote their talents to help communities recover and rebuild."

At Community Justice Project in Miami, fellow Jean-Luc Adrien works with community members to address unsafe housing conditions, displacement, increasing rents and food

insecurity.

Fellow Delmarie Alicea attended a disaster resource community fair in Panama City to assist Hurricane Michael survivors, and was one of the few Spanish-speaking providers there. In Orlando, she has built relationships with local government officials and used social media to inform the community about a housing assistance deadline.

Also in Orlando, fellow Latasha Cooper participates in local long-term recovery group meetings with the American Red Cross and in monthly county emergency operation center meetings.



Jean-Luc Adrien, a graduate of New York University School of Law, works with Community Justice Project.



Delmarie Alicea, who works with Florida Legal Services, graduated from Barry University School of Law.



Latasha Cooper, a graduate of FAMU College of Law, works with Community Legal Services of Mid-Florida.

## Law School Civil Legal Clinic grants awarded

In June, the Foundation's board approved two Law School Civil Legal Clinic grants, totaling \$199,999. Law school clinics funded by these grants provide an in-depth educational experience in representing the poor and in working with individual clients and client groups in civil matters. The clinics also encourage law students to pursue public interest careers representing the poor and promote a commitment to pro bono representation of the poor.

### **Florida State University College of Law, Public Interest Law Center: \$100,000**

#### *Eliminating Economic Barriers Immigrant and Farmworkers Clinic*

This clinic promotes economic development by eliminating barriers to employment, such as undocumented status, lack of housing, and lack of healthcare for immigrants and farmworkers. It will also educate law students on public interest advocacy.

### **University of Florida Levin College of Law: \$99,999**

#### *Immigration Clinic*

This clinic provides indigent immigrants with legal representation, mental health counseling and victim advocacy, using a national model that advances trauma responsive practices. Last year, the clinic focused primarily on services to immigrants who are survivors of domestic, dating, sexual, and stalking violence, but it will expand services to a broader range of immigrants in the coming year.



# Federal court entrusts Foundation with \$3.6M to increase representation

This spring, the Foundation received \$3.6 million from a four-judge panel of the United States District Court for the Middle District of Florida, the result of a case in which sanctions against two law firms were levied. The Foundation will disburse the money to qualified legal aid organizations in the Middle District of Florida to assist litigants in obtaining representation in court.

"Sometimes lemons can be turned into lemonade," United States District Judge Roy B. Dalton Jr. said. "The U.S. District Court recently had the unpleasant task of imposing sanctions on lawyers in connection with the massive volume of tobacco litigation. It is true that out of challenge springs opportunity."

Dalton, along with United States District Judges Timothy J. Corrigan, Marcia Morales Howard and William G. Young, presided over the case which stemmed from the Engle

tobacco litigation. The Court found that certain lawyers had engaged in unethical and unprofessional conduct, resulting in a sizeable sanctions award.

In October 2018, following the termination of litigation, the Court decided that the bulk of the sanctions funds would be disbursed by the Foundation to qualified legal aid organizations to increase access to the courts for those who do not otherwise have it.

The Foundation will use the money to promote robust, professional, ethical and competent representation of low-income Floridians through grants made to civil legal aid organizations.

According to the Court's order, the Foundation will allocate the funds "in rough proportion to the number of Engle cases that emanated from the respective divisions of the Middle District." Accordingly, 60% of the funds

will be disbursed to legal aid organizations in Jacksonville Division counties; 22% to organizations in Orlando and Ocala Division counties; 15% in Tampa; and 3% in Ft. Myers.

"This order represents a monumental act which promotes the very principles of our democracy and the aspirations of our justice system," Florida Bar Foundation Executive Director Donny MacKenzie said. "The Court is setting an admirable example of how fiscal sanctions can be used in unique situations such as this to promote professionalism, ethical representation, and increase access to justice. The Foundation sincerely appreciates the Court selecting and tasking us with the honor of responsibly disbursing these monies in so worthy a cause."

Grants will be awarded in mid-September.

## Foundation funds 10 Summer Fellows across Florida



Arcelia Rodriguez  
• University of Miami School of Law  
• Family unit project and community economic development initiative at **Catholic Legal Services**



Asma Patel  
• Florida International University College of Law  
• Guardian ad litem program at **Legal Aid Society of the Orange County Bar Association**



Monique Puentes  
• University of Florida Levin College of Law  
• Litigation designed to create systemic reform at **Southern Legal Counsel**



James Coner  
• University of Florida Levin College of Law  
• The Miami Inclusion Alliance (domestic violence, sexual assault and disability) at **Disability Independence Group**



Jhon Guerrero Solis  
• University of Florida Levin College of Law  
• Legal advocacy to improve the financial stability of vulnerable people at **Jacksonville Area Legal Aid**



Jesus Hernandez  
• University of Miami School of Law  
• Guardianship and family law at **Dade Legal Aid**



Emily Lane  
• Stetson University School of Law  
• Family law, housing, immigration and more at **Legal Aid of Manasota**



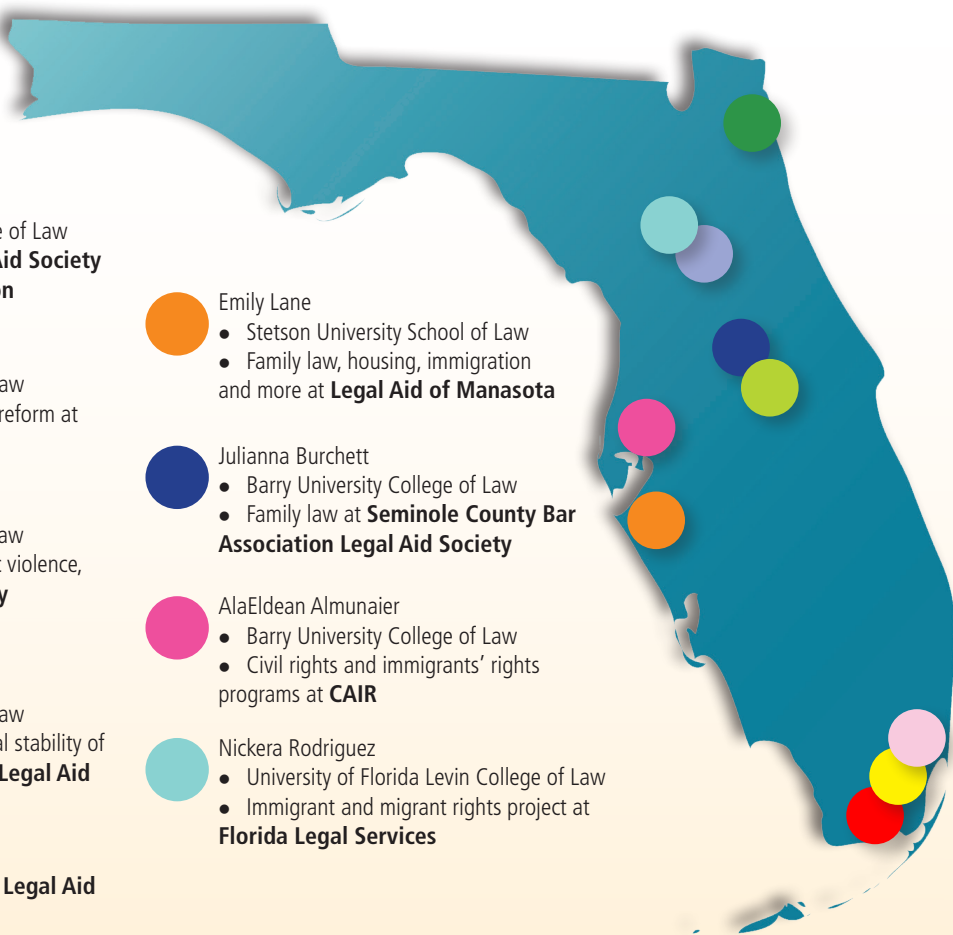
Julianna Burchett  
• Barry University College of Law  
• Family law at **Seminole County Bar Association Legal Aid Society**



AlaEldean Almunaier  
• Barry University College of Law  
• Civil rights and immigrants' rights programs at **CAIR**



Nickera Rodriguez  
• University of Florida Levin College of Law  
• Immigrant and migrant rights project at **Florida Legal Services**



pleasure of meeting with clients," Levy said. "I thought I'd just get some legal research to do."

Instead, Levy, a rising 3L at the Dwayne O. Andreas School of Law at Barry University, spent several weeks working on the case with the clients and shadowing Panton, a Barry Law alumna.

Panton encouraged him to ask their clients questions, let him fill out their bankruptcy worksheet and asked him to obtain the required financial documents to start the bankruptcy petition.

"We had a situation where we needed some pay stubs, so it was my responsibility to reach out to the employer and get them so we could move along. Little tasks like that come together and form the case," Levy said. "That was cool because these are things you don't think of because you're not really exposed to the practical side in law school."

One of the ways the Foundation accomplishes its mission to increase access to justice is by promoting public service among lawyers by making it an integral component of the law school experience. The Florida Pro Bono Law School Challenge facilitated both representation of low-income persons and promotion of public service.

According to the ABA Center for Pro Bono, more than 58% of lawyers who provided pro bono legal services as law students said doing so made them "more" or "far more" likely to provide pro bono services after graduating.

Levy, whose father is a bankruptcy attorney in Fort Myers, understood the basics of a Chapter 7 bankruptcy, but felt he learned much more by having a hands-on experience.

"Mentoring provides an opportunity to help law school students to do better by making them experience real practice," Panton, a solo practitioner in Leesburg, said. "I truly enjoyed the opportunity to mentor a future attorney."

Having found mentoring to be a rewarding experience before, Panton jumped at the chance to help her alma mater, mentor again, and take a pro bono case at the same time.

Working alongside Panton, Levy was also

exposed to challenges and learned how to overcome them.

"[Our clients] were Spanish-speaking. We had to use a translator provided by CLSMF, so one of the things I learned is what you do when you're faced with a language barrier," Levy said.

Levy also learned how Panton is able to incorporate pro bono into her law career.

"I think pro bono is a really important part of what being a member of any bar stands for," Levy said. "I think that the partnership Jesusa has with legal aid, taking pro bono cases as she's able, that seems like a really good way to integrate it into a private practice."

Panton has also volunteered as a guardian ad litem.

"Pro bono means giving back to the community," said Panton. "As a lawyer, I have chosen to be a public servant. It is a privilege to be of service to those who need it."

Panton and Levy finished their pro bono case with a hearing as Levy was taking his final exams. Sixty days later, the clients received a discharge order, which was a positive outcome for them.

Panton and Levy's partnership earned their school, Barry Law, points for student and alumni engagement during the challenge.

The Foundation announced the winners of the challenge at The Florida Bar Annual Convention in June.

Florida Coastal School of Law won the top honor, the MVP Pro Bono Champion Award, for matching the most students with its own alumni.

Florida A&M University College of Law won for the most alumni engagement; Barry University School of Law won for most student engagement.

"The number of cases taken exceeded our expectations," Juliette E. Lippman, immediate past president of the Foundation, said. "We are so impressed with the interest and commitment of the students, and the dedication of the lawyers who took these cases."



Florida Coastal School of Law Dean Scott DeVito accepts the MVP Pro Bono Champion Award from Foundation President Juliette E. Lippman.



FAMU College of Law Interim Dean Nicky Boothe Perry (left) accepts the alumni engagement award from Foundation President Juliette E. Lippman.



Barry University School of Law Dean Leticia M. Diaz (left) accepts the student engagement award from Foundation President Juliette E. Lippman.



# Foundation raises \$63,665 for Loan Repayment Assistance Program at dinner

by Carley Conrod

**A**t the 43rd Annual Dinner and Reception on June 27, more than \$63,000 was raised in support of the Foundation's Loan Repayment Assistance Program (LRAP). Through LRAP, the Foundation helps legal aid organizations recruit and retain high-quality lawyers. It does this by funding a \$5,000 annual paydown of individual student

loans if a lawyer continues to work for a legal aid organization for a year and uses the loan proceeds to pay down student loan debt.

The goal of LRAP is to incentivize a career as a civil legal aid lawyer so more poor and at-risk Floridians can receive the help they need with legal issues. Since its inception in 1992, LRAP has granted more than \$9 million in loan

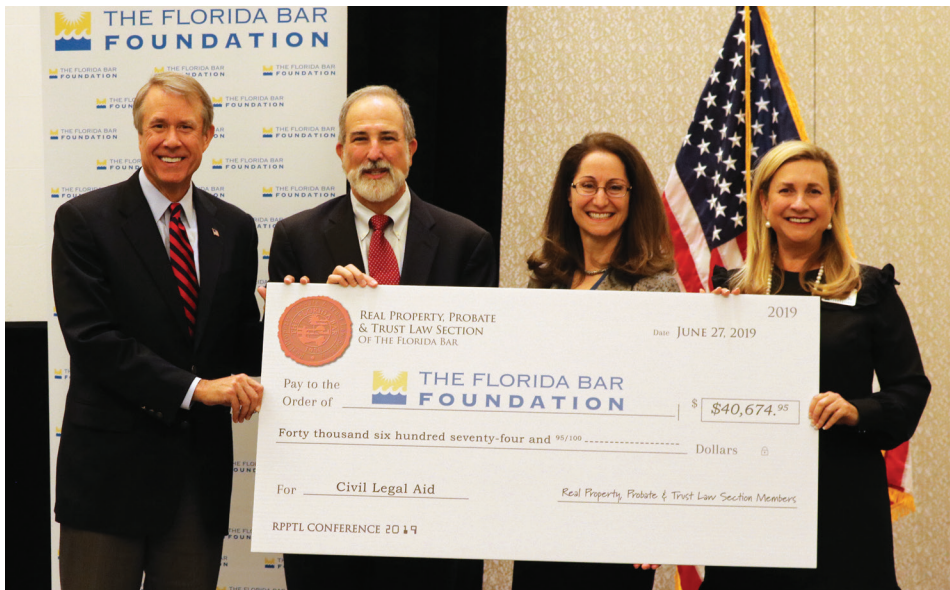
repayment assistance to eligible legal aid lawyers.

Dinner attendees made donations through Give By Cell, an interactive fundraising tool in which pledges are made via text and the total amount of money raised can be seen in real time. Many donations were made in honor of Judge William A. Van Nortwick, a former Foundation president and 2015 Medal of Honor winner who passed away in January. Van Nortwick was also the subject of the renaming of the Steven M. Goldstein Award for Excellence, which will henceforth be named the Goldstein – Van Nortwick Award for Excellence.

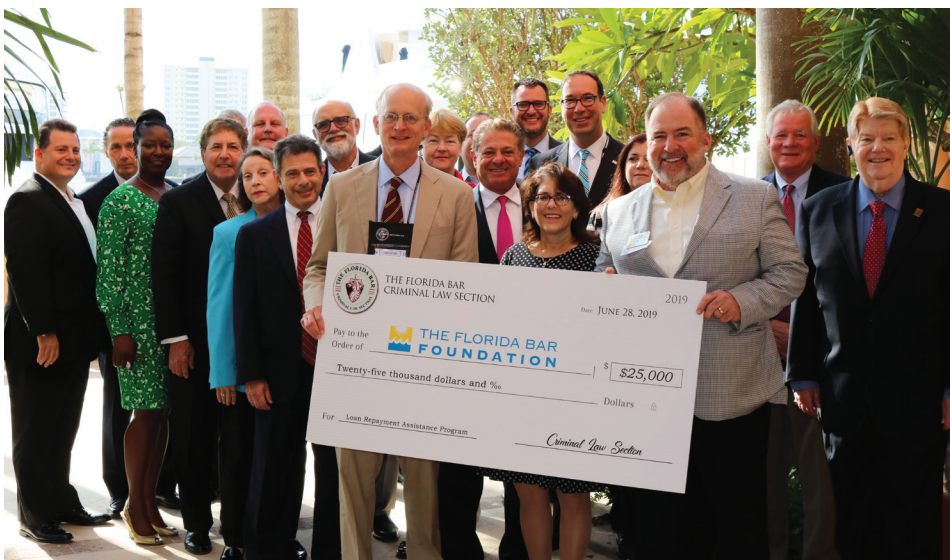
Speaking of the Foundation in 2015, Van Nortwick cited its uniqueness as a pillar of its effectiveness, saying, "They don't just say, 'Let's give grants to these grantees and continue to serve the same population over and over and over,' knowing that they can only serve 20% of the need. They say, 'What is the problem, and can we solve that problem in some other way?' They say, 'I'll treat the back-end problem because it's there and I've got to deal with that, but let me find what the systemic issue is so that I can come back and attack it that way and maybe eliminate the back end.' And that's not necessarily universally true with many organizations."

Maria Henderson, a former Foundation president and Van Nortwick's wife, made a generous matching pledge of \$25,000 in support of LRAP and in honor of her husband. Other notable pledges made in Van Nortwick's honor include former Florida Supreme Court Justice Barbara Pariente's gift of \$5,000 and \$10,000 from Van Nortwick's siblings and their children.

In total, nearly \$45,000 was raised in honor of Van Nortwick. Combined with the night's other donations, enough money was raised to help 12 civil legal aid lawyers pay down their loans for one year.



Michael A. Bedke and Michael Gelfand of The Florida Bar Real Property, Probate and Trust Law Section presented a donation of more than \$40,000 to Foundation President Hala A. Sandridge (third from left) and Immediate Past President Juliette E. Lippman at the Foundation's June board meeting. The RPPTL section raised funds during a "Jail 'n Bail" event in which members were "jailed" until friends and colleagues bailed them out.



Members of The Florida Bar Criminal Law Section, including the section's Immediate Past Chair David Barksdale (holding check on left), presented a donation of \$25,000 to Foundation Executive Director Donny MacKenzie (holding check on right) at The Florida Bar's Annual Convention in June. The donation will be used for LRAP.

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