

2015 Legal Service Excellence in Advocacy Award



Sachida Raman is a graduate of Tulane Law School and began his legal services career in 1993 with Southeast Louisiana Legal Services (SLLS) in Hammond where he handled a varied caseload and practiced in both Federal and Bankruptcy courts. He joined Acadiana Legal Services Corporation (ALSC) in Lafayette in 2000 as the Managing Attorney for the Family Law Unit. He has trained and mentored countless attorneys through his lectures and assisted thousands of individuals with their legal needs through his practice.

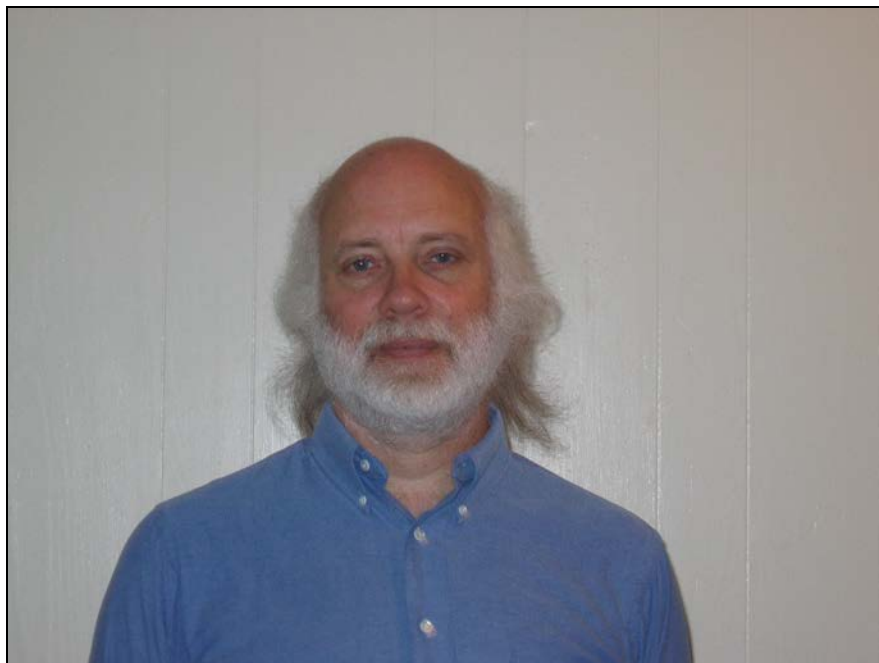
Sachida truly aims to improve the actual process of justice to change the lives of those less fortunate. He believes in our system of justice and strives for systemic change to provide greater access to our court system. His devotion to greater access is seen in Sachida's work as a member and chair of the Access to Justice Self-Represented Litigation Subcommittee. Sachida's work with that committee and the Lafayette Volunteer Lawyers includes development and review of form pleadings that self-represented individuals throughout the state have access to daily through most of the 6 live self help desks and 11 individual court websites. The landscape for self-represented litigants in Louisiana is much improved because Sachida's work.

2015 Legal Service Innovation Award



Southeast Louisiana Legal Services' "Single Stop" service center at Delgado Community College provides onsite holistic legal services, financial planning and tax preparation services to at risk community college students thereby removing barriers to completion of education and improved employment options. Expungement of minor infractions and arrest records have been shown to drastically improve an individual's employment opportunities as well as the chance to be gainfully employed. After being featured on the National Public Radio Community Impact segment, national interest in replication of this project was spurred and SLLS was asked to showcase the project in a Clearinghouse Review article educating other public interest organizations on the possibility of replication. To date, Single Stop has helped almost 1,000 students stay on track by addressing a legal crisis. The project's success led to an expansion in Dec. 2014 to Baton Rouge Community College

2016 Legal Service Excellence in Advocacy Award



David H. Williams has been Litigation Director for Southeast Louisiana Legal Services for 10 years; was in full time private practice litigating primarily for Medicaid applicants and recipients for 10 years; and before that practiced for over ten years with New Orleans Legal Assistance Corporation, doing litigation and other advocacy concerning Medicaid, welfare, food stamps, child care assistance, unemployment compensation, and Social Security problems. He also counsels on Medicaid litigation, primarily class actions, with the Advocacy Center. In 1994, he received the Louisiana State Bar Association's first Career Public Interest Award and the National Legal Aid and Defender Association's Reginald Heber Smith Award for his Medicaid and other public benefits advocacy. In 2014, the New Orleans Bar Association's Mark Moreau award. He has a B.A. in Public Policy Studies and Economics from Duke University, and a J.D. from Harvard Law School.

2016 Legal Service Innovation Award



“2016 CIVIL JUSTICE TOUR”

The Louisiana Civil Justice Center (LCJC) is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization. Its mission is to provide critical legal assistance for low-income, disaster-affected and other vulnerable residents across Louisiana. Founded in 2005 in the wake of Hurricane Katrina to provide disaster legal assistance to residents statewide through a toll-free legal assistance hotline, LCJC’s role in the justice community has evolved over the years to help meet the growing legal needs of Louisiana’s poverty population. LCJC focuses on developing innovative programs that can most efficiently and cost-effectively assist those in need. Through its statewide hotline, court-based help desks, medical-legal partnership, community clinics and other services, LCJC assists nearly 15,000 vulnerable individuals a year—resolving legal problems that are fundamental to their basic quality of life, such as, maintenance of housing and income, stability of a family, and the health and well-being of their children.

This year LCJC launched an ambitious project titled, “The 2016 Civil Justice Tour”. The tour, led by Program Director Amelia Hoppe, set out across the state to provide legal clinics and free legal assistance to low-income Louisiana residents. With the help of volunteer attorneys, in-person legal clinics were provided in 15 cities, in some of Louisiana’s most impoverished areas. Through the tour, LCJC was able to provide hundreds with brief legal information, advice, and resources.

Legal Service Excellence in Advocacy Award



Hannah Adams is a Staff Attorney in the housing unit at Southeast Louisiana Legal Services' New Orleans office. From 2015-2017 Hannah served as an Equal Justice Works fellow, representing low income tenants living in substandard and health-threatening housing conditions in evictions, subsidy terminations, repair disputes, and affirmative lawsuits. Starting in fall 2017 Hannah began a Borchard Foundation on Law and Aging fellowship assisting seniors with rental housing-related legal issues. Hannah is a 2015 graduate from Northeastern University School of Law with a concentration in Poverty Law and Economic Justice. Prior to law school Hannah coordinated education and outreach programs at the Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center for five years. She is a member of the Housing Committee and Louisiana chapter of the National Lawyers Guild, and a board member at Jane Place Neighborhood Sustainability Initiative, a community land trust that advocates for tenant rights and develops permanently affordable rental housing in New Orleans.

Legal Service Innovation Award



STAR® launched its legal services program in 2015 after being awarded the Legal Assistance for Victims (LAV) Grant from the Office on Violence Against Women. This funding allowed STAR to develop its specialized legal services geared towards serving non-intimate partner sexual assault survivors, as well as partner with the LSU Law Center to develop a clinical education course for law students to provide legal representation to sexual assault survivors.

STAR attorneys provide consultation and legal representation to survivors in the areas of education, employment, family/juvenile law matters, housing, privacy, public benefits, victim rights, and safety issues. Through its first two years of existence, STAR's legal team has assisted over 230 survivors in over 400 legal matters.

The legal services program is spearheaded by its visionary Legal Director, Morgan Lamandre, Esq., and includes two staff attorneys, Cherita McNeal, Esq. and Brittany Tassin, Esq., all graduates of Southern University Law Center.