

Pro Bono Awards Biographies

Children's Law Award

Zebulon Winstead

Alexandria

Zeb Winstead is the Managing Member of Crowell and Owens, LLC. He graduated from the University of Mississippi with a B.B.A. in banking and finance and managerial finance, and earned his law degree from Tulane University School of Law. Following graduation he moved to Alexandria working for Provosty, Sadler, DeLaunay, Fiorenza & Sobel, before joining Crowell and Owens, LLC. Winstead has previously been named a Pro Bono Publico Award Recipient and has been volunteering to represent children in CINC cases for a number of years. In addition to his service to children, he is the chair of the Bar Foundation's Central Partnership Panel, a member of the LSBA House of Delegates, a member of the LABA Client Assistance Committee and Governance Committee, a Hearing Committee member for the Louisiana Disciplinary Board, and is a past president of the Alexandria Bar Association. He is also an adjunct faculty member at Louisiana State University of Alexandria teaching business law.

Law Student Pro Bono Award

Lauren Bradberry

Louisiana State University Paul M. Hebert Law Center

Lauren Bradberry was born and raised in Gonzales. After earning a bachelor's degree in engineering from Virginia Tech, she returned to attend the LSU Paul M. Hebert Law Center. She received her J.D., with honors, in May 2016. Bradberry has taught in the Law Center's "Street Law" program, volunteered numerous hours at the Family Court Pro Se Helpdesk and has logged many hours as a Live Help Navigator (as well as many hours of community service work with the Baton Rouge Food Bank and the Bishop Ott Center, among others). As a second year law student, Bradberry founded what has now become an annual charity event at LSU, the "Relay for Life," which raises funds for cancer research. As Community Service Chair and ultimately as president of the Law Center's Public Interest Law Society, Bradberry has increased student awareness of and participation in public interest work. As president, she helped initiate several new programs, including the Law Center's "Public Interest Law Week" – a five-day event which brings together pro bono legal service providers, programs and informational presentations, all for the purpose in informing students about and giving them opportunities to pursue public interest careers. As an editor of the *Louisiana Law Review*, she worked with one other student to organize the Law Center's recent and successful Symposium on Sentencing Reform.

Rebecca Holmes

Loyola University School of Law

Rebecca Holmes is a May 2016 graduate from Loyola University of New Orleans College of Law. As a law student, Holmes was the president of the National Lawyers Guild, and promoted events highlighting social justice. In addition, she volunteered for the Volunteer Income Tax Association clinic, providing free tax filings for low-income earners. With the support of the Gillis Long Poverty Law Center, Holmes interned at Colorado Legal Services in Denver last summer. There, she assisted indigent clients in filing for bankruptcy, defending against collection and garnishment, and foreclosure prevention. In her last year of law school, she was accepted to the Community Justice section of Law Clinic. Holmes has been the lead attorney on multiple cases defending low-income clients in rental housing disputes and has served as co-counsel to clients who have faced housing discrimination. She will sit for the Louisiana Bar Exam in July 2016.

Britni Duplantis

Southern University Law Center

Britni Duplantis, a native of Lafayette, is a third year law student at Southern University Law Center. Upon entering law school, Duplantis quickly became active on campus in numerous organizations. She serves as a Student Ambassador through the Office of Recruitment and Admission and travels across the state to recruit prospective law students. She is also a founding Executive Member of the Pro Bono Project at Southern University Law Center. As a founding member, she created the operational handbook and developed the organization's database to adequately promote accountability within its structure. Aside from the operational aspects of the Pro Bono Project, she also maintains a monthly event calendar that is distributed to students. Duplantis is the Managing Partner of SULC's Juvenile Law Clinic. Upon graduation, she will sit for the Louisiana Bar Exam and plans to return to Lafayette.

Stacey Michel

Tulane University Law School

Stacey Michel is a May 2016 graduate of Tulane University Law School. She was recently named one of the 25 "Law Students of the Year" by *National Jurist Magazine* for her exceptional devotion to improving the New Orleans community through her pro bono legal work. Michel started volunteering at the Youth Study Center (YSC), Orleans Parish's juvenile detention facility, during her first year of law school. One example of her contributions is the creation of a self-assessment tool for the center. Combining aspirational national practice guidelines with mandatory state juvenile detention standards, Michel created a tool to improve living conditions for youths at the New Orleans facility. In addition, she has helped the YSC create policy to improve compliance with the Prison Rape Elimination Act. She has also assisted other nonprofits in the area including the Orleans Public Defenders and Court Watch NOLA. Michel is the Senior Articles Editor for Volume 25 of the *Tulane Journal of Law & Sexuality*, the secretary of the Tulane Chapter of the American Constitution Society, and a student attorney in the Tulane Criminal Litigation Clinic.

Friend of Pro Bono Award

Young Lawyers Section of the New Orleans Bar Association

New Orleans

The New Orleans Bar Association's Young Lawyers Section (YLS) is comprised of lawyers practicing less than five years, and is dedicated to serving the community and the profession. The YLS sponsors and hosts multiple fundraising events every year to benefit Southeast Louisiana Legal Services and the Pro Bono Project to aid in their mission of providing pro bono legal services to those in need in the New Orleans community. The YLS hosts annual charity golf tournaments, bowling tournaments, concerts, cook-offs, and socials to raise funds from members of the legal community for direct providers of pro bono legal aid. The Executive Council of the Young Lawyers Section consists of Chair Kelly Juneau Rookard, Chair-Elect Aaron Greenbaum, Vice-Chair Alex Glaser, Secretary Kelly Brilleaux, Treasurer Kimberly Silas, and Past Chair Ross Molina.

John DeRosier, District Attorney of Calcasieu Parish

Lake Charles

John DeRosier is currently serving his third term as the elected District Attorney of Calcasieu Parish. He is a decorated Vietnam Veteran who has spent years supporting veteran causes and other charitable activities. DeRosier recently founded a 501C(3) foundation to help the needy in Calcasieu Parish. On January 13, 2016, he led The Fresh Start Initiative, a collaborative project aiding job seekers in need of expungements. Through this unprecedented event, over 102 people appeared at the Lake Charles Civic Center and were helped by numerous local and state agencies in an expedited fashion and at a reduced cost. No other Louisiana district attorney has ever led such an endeavor to help people obtain expungements to further their employment efforts. This action is just one example of DeRosier's commitment to helping others in his community.

Emily Ziober

Baton Rouge

Emily Ziober is a solo attorney who served previously as Administrative General Counsel with the Louisiana First Circuit Court of Appeal and as Assistant Director of the Center of Civil Law Studies at the LSU Law Center. She received a B.A., *summa cum laude*, and a J.D. from LSU, where she was a member of the Louisiana Law Review. Ziober received the 2012 LSBA Pro Bono Publico and Century Awards. She was the Baton Rouge Bar Association's Pro Bono Chair during 2012-2015 and has written pro bono articles for LSBA and Baton Rouge Bar publications. She serves on the LSBA Access to Justice Committee and as a board member of the Louisiana Civil Justice Center. Ziober is the president-elect of the Women's Council of Greater Baton Rouge and is a board member of Catholic Charities.

Pro Bono Publico Award

Gold, Weems, Bruser, Sues & Rundell

Alexandria

Since 1950, Gold Weems has molded solutions for the people and businesses of Louisiana. The firm is committed to providing pro bono legal services to indigent individuals, legal advocacy organizations, and nonprofits. The firm has worked with numerous groups, including the Central Louisiana Pro Bono Project, Wills for Heroes, and Ninth Judicial District Court's help desk, to deliver pro bono legal services to the community. Gold Weems attorneys regularly volunteer to represent Louisiana's most vulnerable citizens in child abuse and neglect proceedings. The firm frequently supports charitable and civic organizations, including the Louisiana Bar Foundation and Central Louisiana Pro Bono Project. Gold Weems also handles important work for community agencies and nonprofit organizations.

Nadège Assalé

New Orleans

For many years, The Pro Bono Project has been the only source for indigent clients seeking to interdict relations who no longer have mental capacity to make decisions for themselves. These cases have always been difficult to prosecute due to the understandable reluctance of volunteers to deal with such sensitive and sad matters. Nadège Assalé, one of The Pro Bono Project's Distinguished Service volunteers for 2015, labored with a very difficult case for almost three years, during which time unique issues were raised such as venue, the right to refuse treatment, and service on institutionalized people. Co-counseling with her colleague Emile Dreuil, Nadège persevered and recently obtained a judgment of full interdiction that the family member can use to provide better care and financial security for their relative.

Dana Atchison

New Orleans

Dana Atchison is Assistant General Counsel for Entergy where she has worked since 1998. Her practice focuses on privacy, data security, commercial transactions, and intellectual property matters. Prior to joining Entergy, she worked as a foreign policy analyst for Czech President Václav Havel, and as a policy analyst for the New Zealand Ministry of Justice. She has a B.A. from Lake Forest College, a C.S.S. and an A.L.M from Harvard University, and a J.D. and Certificate in Arbitration from Tulane Law School, where she served as editor-in-chief of the *Tulane Journal of International and Comparative Law*. She also studied Eastern European law at Univerzity Karlovy School of Law in the Czech Republic. Atchison serves as an officer and board member for New Orleans Medical Mission Services. In addition to providing legal assistance with hundreds of medical forms each year, she has run an eye clinic with the

organization in Nicaragua since 2008. These clinics have seen over 12,000 patients, the most recent in March 2016 having seen over 1,600 patients.

Jeffrey Cole

Lake Charles

Jeffrey Cole is a Senior Partner at Plauche, Smith & Nieset, LLC, and has been with the firm since March of 1980. He received his undergraduate degree from LSU in 1976, and his J.D. from the LSU Law Center in 1979. As president of the Southwest Louisiana Bar Association, Cole accepted on behalf of the organization the 2006 Pro Bono Publico Award for outstanding pro bono services for the victims of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita awarded by the Southwest Louisiana Legal Services Society. Cole served on the first Board of Directors of the Southwest Louisiana Bar Foundation, and served as president of the organization in 2013. Presently, as a member of the Southwest Louisiana Bar Foundation, Cole volunteers as the children's attorney in CINC cases in Southwest Louisiana, under a sub-grant the Southwest Louisiana Bar Foundation receives from Acadiana Legal Services.

Lisa Cronin

Shreveport

Lisa Cronin, Special Counsel at Cook, Yancey, King and Galloway, practices in the areas of defense, commercial and other civil litigation. After graduating from LSU Law School in 1984, she served as a law clerk for Hon. Fred Blanche, Jr., at the Louisiana Supreme Court. For the last nine years, Cronin has been actively involved in Common Ground Community, Inc., a nonprofit organization working in the low-income Cedar Grove neighborhood of Shreveport. She has worn many hats over the years, but currently volunteers as its chief executive officer, handling Common Ground's administrative and legal affairs. She has built strong, trusting relationships with the community members. In recent years, the formal pro bono legal clinic Cronin ran has been replaced by more informal "Ask Lisa" sessions where community members seek her out knowing that she will always find a way to assist with their personal legal matters.

Jonah Freedman

New Orleans

Jonah Freedman is a solo practitioner whose areas of focus are estate planning and property law. He is also a Loyola University Incubator Program attorney with the Loyola College of Law. After obtaining a B.S. from LSU in economics, he entered the financial planning industry and has been a Certified Financial Planner™ since 2004. Upon earning his law degree from Loyola in 2014, he joined the Incubator Program, where he dedicated a minimum of 40 pro bono hours per week in 2015 to serving the legal needs of the community. He has worked very closely with the Pro Bono Project, especially in cases dealing with property and wills. For that service, the Pro Bono Project honored him with a Distinguished Service award, making him the newest member of the Louisiana Bar to ever receive such a distinction.

Meredith Grabill

New Orleans

After clerking for three federal judges and practicing for years in New York, Grabill moved back to New Orleans, bringing a pro bono spirit with her. Family law cases are always the top item on The Pro Bono Project's docket; in the last two years, Grabill has litigated over eight cases chiefly in the family law arena. She was the first volunteer of The Pro Bono Project to represent an orphaned child in an ex parte custody proceeding, and helped inform the court about the propriety of the process she employed. She has represented clients for interdiction, tutorship, and custody cases, as well as bankruptcy and commercial litigation cases. Grabill's prior career in juvenile justice and mental health services may explain the empathy and compassion she brings to her work.

Valerie Guidry

Lafayette

Valerie Guidry is an attorney with Ottinger Hebert, L.L.C. in Lafayette. Her practice areas include environmental and oil and gas litigation. Guidry is also an adjunct professor of law at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. She is a graduate of Louisiana State University and the LSU Paul M. Hebert Law Center. Guidry volunteers for the H.E.L.P. (Homeless Experience Legal Protection) program administered by the Lafayette Parish Bar Association which helps the homeless obtain certified copies of their birth certificates to prove their identities when applying for jobs and shelters. She received the "Top H.E.L.P. Award" in 2015. Guidry also volunteers for the Counsel on Call program which gives self-represented litigants an opportunity to discuss their legal matters with volunteer attorneys. She has been awarded the Lafayette Volunteer Lawyer Outstanding Attorney Award in 2014 and 2015 and the Louisiana State Bar Association Pro Bono Century Club Award in 2015. She is an active member of the American Inns of Court of Acadiana, serves on the Board of Trustees of the Children's Museum of Acadiana, and volunteers for the ULL Moot Court, St. Joseph's Diner, and other community groups.

Thomas "Trey" Hightower, III

Lafayette

Thomas "Trey" Hightower, III is an attorney with The Hightower Law Firm in Lafayette. He is a graduate of Louisiana State University with a B.A. in political science and LSU's Paul M. Hebert Law School. Following graduation, Hightower served as a law clerk for Hon. Richard T. Haik, Sr. Hightower then practiced medical malpractice defense with Judice & Adley, APLC before joining the Hightower Law Firm in 2013. Since then, he has enjoyed a general litigation practice. Hightower is the immediate past president of the Lafayette Young Lawyers Association, and is also involved in Lafayette Volunteer Lawyers, handling numerous pro bono cases. He also serves on the Boards of Directors of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Acadiana and the Greater Southwest Mardi Gras Association.

Jane Jackson*New Orleans*

In the fall of 2014, Jane Jackson accepted one of the most difficult cases The Pro Bono Project has had in quite some time—a complex foreclosure case that had looming deadlines to meet and a thick record to plow through. Jackson took the bull by the horns and presented a spirited defense for a client who had been lost in the complexity of the litigation. With support from her colleagues at Kelly Hart & Pitre, she continued with the case through much of 2015, and through diligent efforts was able to reach a negotiated settlement with the lender. Finding pro bono representation for fast-moving and complex litigation always presents a challenge. Jackson's decision to step up and confront all the problems of a complex case allowed her to fulfill unmet needs among the many unserved. Jackson shows the true spirit of pro bono.

Jonathan Jarrett*Lafayette*

Jonathan Jarrett is a family law practitioner, having founded his private practice, The Jarrett Firm, in 2014. He graduated from the University of Mississippi with a B.A. in Spanish and from the LSU Paul M. Hebert Law Center. Following his graduation, Jarrett served as an associate with the Juneau David Law Firm in Lafayette, where he practiced in the area of insurance and civil defense. Since founding The Jarrett Firm, he has focused in the areas of family law and criminal law. In 2013, Jarrett began volunteering with the Lafayette Volunteer Lawyers program, representing victims of domestic violence. In 2015, he was awarded the Lafayette Parish Bar Association's Top Protective Order Award and Outstanding Attorney Award. He serves on various committees with the Lafayette Young Lawyer's Association and Paula K. Woodruff Family Law Section. Jarrett also enjoys volunteering with youth organizations, including coaching a local high school's mock trial team. In the past, he has coached a youth soccer team.

Winfield Little, Jr.*Lake Charles*

Winfield Little, Jr. is a graduate of Louisiana Tech University, where he received a B.S. degree in physics. After serving in the USAF as a captain, he attended the LSU Paul Hebert Law Center where he graduated with a J.D. degree in 1974. Little has practiced in Lake Charles since being admitted to the practice of law in 1974. He has been admitted to practice in all Louisiana courts, the Western District of Louisiana, the Middle District of Louisiana, the Eastern District of Louisiana, the 5th Circuit and the US Tax Court. He has served as an Assistant Bar Examiner since 1980, in the LSBA House of Delegates for a number of terms representing the 14th Judicial District and is currently serving his second year of his second term on the LSBA Board of Governors, 4th District. In 2000 he served as president of the Southwest Louisiana Bar Association. He received his formal Alternative Dispute Resolution training at the renowned Straus Institute for Dispute Resolution, Pepperdine University, School of Law.

Thomas L. Lorenzi*Lake Charles*

Thomas Lorenzi, of Lorenzi & Barnatt, LLP, has practiced criminal defense since admission in 1975 after graduating from Duquesne University and the LSU Paul Hebert Law Center. He represents children in CINC cases through the Southwest Louisiana Bar Foundation. He was also a charter board member of the Juvenile Justice Project of Louisiana, representing juveniles in litigation to compel comprehensive reform of juvenile justice. Forty years have been dedicated to representing indigent individuals accused of crime, including capital cases, and seeking a constitutional public defender system in Louisiana. He is a Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers, a 2007 Louisiana Bar Foundation Distinguished Attorney, and a 2007 LSBA David A. Hamilton Lifetime Achievement Award recipient. Lorenzi is a former president of the Louisiana Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, through which he was awarded the 2003 Justice Albert Tate, Jr. Award and the 2000 Sam Dalton Capital Defense Advocacy Award. He currently serves on the Louisiana Public Defender Board.

Maria Losavio*Alexandria*

Maria Losavio is the sole proprietor of Losavio Law Office, LLC. Her primary practice is in the areas of personal injury and worker's compensation. She received her J.D. degree from the LSU Paul Hebert Law Center where she was on Law Review (1994-1996). Losavio is a volunteer attorney for children in state custody as a CINC Attorney, as well as a board member of the Central Louisiana Pro Bono Project and former board member of Rapides Children's Advocacy Center. Reflective of her desire to help others and children in particular, she does volunteer work not only during her professional time but she is also a foster parent. For numerous years, Losavio has presided over her children's schools parent club organizations where she has been the recipient of volunteer awards and partner-in-education awards.

Seth Mansfield*Lafayette*

Seth Mansfield of Lafayette is an associate attorney at Neuner Pate. He received a B.S. degree in criminal justice in 2006 from the University of Louisiana-Lafayette and a M.S. degree in criminal justice in 2009 from the University of Cincinnati. Prior to entering law school, Mansfield worked as a deputy in the Patrol Division of the Lafayette Parish Sheriff's Office. He received a J.D. and Graduate Diploma in Comparative Law in 2012 from the LSU Paul M. Hebert Law Center. He was admitted to practice in Louisiana in 2012. Mansfield is a member of the Lafayette Bar Association, the Louisiana Association of Defense Counsel, the John M. Duhe, Jr. Inns of Court, and Lafayette Volunteer Lawyers. As a member of Lafayette Volunteer Lawyers, he has handled multiple divorce and child custody cases, assisted in providing the homeless with legal assistance through the Homeless Experience Legal Protection Program, and advocated for victims of domestic violence through the Protective Order Panel. Mansfield received the LSBA Young Lawyers Division Pro Bono Award in 2014, the Lafayette Volunteer Lawyers Outstanding Attorney Award in 2013, 2014, and 2015, and the LSBA Pro Bono Century Award in 2013, 2014, and 2015.

Eric Miller*Baton Rouge*

Eric Miller represents management in the areas of labor and employment law with The Kullman Firm. His primary practice is in the area of labor and employment law, where he represents management in all phases of employee relations, including collective bargaining, union avoidance training, EEO enforcement and Wage & Hour audits, as well as defending claims arising under state employment laws. He is a regular speaker on labor and employment topics. His professional activities include the Labor and Employment Law Sections of the Louisiana, Texas, and Houston Bar Associations; the Baton Rouge Bar Association Pro Bono Committee, CLE Committee, Volunteer Panel and the Law Expo Committee; the Wex Malone Chapter of the American Inns of Court; the Federal Bar Association; and the Society for Human Resource Management. He is the past recipient of the BRBA David A. Hamilton Pro Bono Award (2009), the BRBA Pro Bono Publico Award (2007), and was named a CALSC Pro Bono Honoree (2008). Miller received his B.A. from Tulane University in 1987, his J.D. degree from Louisiana State University in 1990, and is licensed in the states of Texas and Louisiana.

Ross Roubion*Lafayette*

Ross Roubion received his B.A. in history from Louisiana State University where he was a four-year letterman on the men's track and field team. He earned his J.D. and graduate degree in comparative law in 2014 from the LSU Paul M. Hebert Law Center. While in law school, he served as the Senior Production Editor for the *LSU Journal of Energy Law and Resources*, and was the winner of the Best Oralist Award at the Tulane National Sports Law Invitational. Since 2014, Roubion has practiced in Lafayette with the Onebane Law Firm, where he represents oil and gas producers in regulatory and litigation matters. He has frequently represented abused and battered women in civil protective order hearings through the Lafayette Bar Association's pro bono initiative, Lafayette Volunteer Lawyers, and has represented other clients in family law and civil matters on a pro bono basis.

Dyan Schnaars*Lafayette*

Dyan Schnaars began her career as a paralegal in her hometown of Alexandria, La. After 13 years in the legal field, she decided to return to school as a mature student. Schnaars obtained her Bachelor's Degree from University of Louisiana at Lafayette and then earned her J.D. from Southern University Law Center. She joined the Galloway Jeffcott team in 2014 practicing exclusively in the area of family law. Schnaars is a family law attorney with compassion for families. She litigates divorce and child custody with conviction, advocating for legal and moral justice. She is a member of the Louisiana Bar Association and the Lafayette Parish Bar Association. In 2015, Schnaars received the Champions of Justice award from the Lafayette Bar Association for her pro-bono work in the community.

Paul Tellarico*Alexandria*

Paul Tellarico attended the LSU Paul M. Hebert Law Center. He was admitted to the bar in 1989 and practiced law with Neblett, Beard and Arsenault before he started his own firm to foster a closer relationship with his clients. He is admitted to practice in all of the state and federal courts in Louisiana as well as the Supreme Court of the United States. Tellarico is a volunteer representing children who have been removed from the family home under the CINC program. Additionally he works the Self-Help Desk at the Rapides Parish Courthouse and attends Alexandria's free legal clinics; helping clients prepare wills, advance directives and gives general civil legal advice. Tellarico received the Alexandria Pro Bono Project's MVP award last year for having the most pro bono hours in that year. He was a guest on the local morning show that showcases individuals who are doing an outstanding job in the community.

Rolando Urbina*Baton Rouge*

Rolando Urbina, a native of New Orleans, is the Member-Manager of the Law Offices of Rolando R. Urbina and Associates L.L.C., located in Baton Rouge. His areas of practice are personal injury, family law, criminal law and small business formation. Urbina received a Bachelor degree in history and law and humanities from Xavier University of Louisiana in 2005 and earned his J.D. from Southern University Law Center in 2011. He currently serves as the 18th President of the Louis A Martinet Legal Society Greater Baton Rouge Chapter. Urbina is an Assistant City Prosecutor for Baton Rouge in Division E of Baton Rouge City Court. He was an Assistant Public Defender in Section 5 of the 19th Judicial District Court; he also served as investigator for the Louisiana Commission on Human Rights, where he investigated a variety of discrimination cases from racial discrimination to sexual harassment. Urbina serves as a board member and as legal counsel for "The Way Church" and is a board member of Southeast Louisiana Legal Services and Baton Rouge Bridge Academy. He is also the Chairman of the Board for the Marshall-Brennan Project. He formerly served as youth pastor at Mt. Carmel Baptist Church and was an executive with the Boy Scouts of America.

Christian Weiler*New Orleans*

Christian Weiler is a tax attorney with the law firm of Weiler & Rees, LLC. He is a Board Certified Tax-Law Specialist as certified by the Louisiana Board of Legal Specialization and received his Masters of Law (in Taxation) from Southern Methodist University, Dedman School of Law. Weiler advises clients in all areas of tax law, including federal, state and local tax matters. He also advises clients on other aspects of tax planning and resolution; including formation and application for tax-exempt status, tax collection disputes and business and estate planning matters. For the last five years, Weiler has spent substantial hours volunteering his services and providing free legal aid as part of the Tax Clinic of Southeast Louisiana Legal Services. He also volunteers his time with The Children's Neuromuscular Foundation of Louisiana and Boys Hope Girls Hope of Greater New Orleans.

James Zito*Baton Rouge*

James “Jimmy” Zito, a graduate of the LSU Paul M. Hebert Law Center, is a sole practitioner who has practiced law in Baton Rouge for nearly 44 years. He served as Senior Assistant Parish Attorney handling litigation for the City of Baton Rouge for over 39 years. Zito has participated in the Pro Bono work of the Baton Rouge Bar Association for many years taking numerous cases each year. He has also been a regular volunteer at Thirst for Justice, a clinic started by Retired Judge Melvin Shortess that offers legal counsel to underserved members of the community. As owner of Drusilla Seafood Restaurant/Drusilla Place Catering in Baton Rouge, his company donates meals on a monthly basis to homeless individuals at various St. Vincent de Paul Shelters. His company also provides food each month to Joseph’s House, a shelter run by Catholic Charities that provides assistance to men recently released from prison. Zito is past president of the Catholic High School of Baton Rouge Alumni Board of Directors and founder of its yearly Taste Fair that feeds over 800 people for the school each year.

Gary Zwain*Metairie*

Gary Zwain, a valued volunteer with The Pro Bono Project for over 20 years, took on one of the most egregious cases The Project has had in a long time, a bureaucratic nightmare that begged for redress. While the case is still before the courts, The Project has strong hopes that Zwain will see the client’s vindication. Zwain has also responded to the plight of juvenile immigrants, and represented two children whose lives would have been in danger if forced to return to their home country. Deportation was avoided, and the children are on the way to receiving protection that will allow them to remain here with their family. Through another source, Zwain has also been working on a civil rights case for a formerly pro se client.

Career Public Interest Award**James Welch***New Orleans*

James Welch was born in Shreveport in 1951. He graduated from Texas A&M University in 1973, and went on to attend the Loyola University New Orleans College of Law. His lifelong dedication to assisting underserved communities developed early on. He was a student practitioner in the Loyola Law Clinic. After graduating, he was hired as a staff attorney at the Orleans Indigent Defender’s Office from 1983 to 1985. Since 1985, Welch has been a civil legal aid attorney in the New Orleans area; he has devoted his professional career to serving low-income individuals at Southeast Louisiana Legal Services (SLLS), formerly known as New Orleans Legal Assistance Corporation.

Over his long career, Welch has assisted 19,000 people; he has helped his clients obtain or preserve assets, income, or benefits valued at over \$15 million. He has handled cases in virtually every civil legal aid practice area, including family law, domestic violence, consumer,

successions, contractor fraud, landlord-tenant, and disaster law. Welch managed the Chalmette SLLS office for many years, serving St. Bernard and Plaquemines Parishes. In 2003, he began working in the Consumer Law Unit of the SLLS New Orleans office. After Hurricane Katrina, Welch was part of a small cadre of SLLS lawyers who set up a temporary Disaster Legal Services office in Shreveport in partnership with North Louisiana Legal Services. During that time, he assisted individuals displaced by the storm with disaster law issues. He returned to New Orleans to help clients with bankruptcy, foreclosure, and contractor fraud issues post-Katrina.

After three decades, Welch still has the “fire in the belly”. In 2012, he took on a new challenge as the legal arm of the Delgado Community College Single Stop USA project. His focus is on removing legal barriers to community college students’ ability to complete their education. The project has flourished under Welch’s leadership, winning the first ever LSBA Access to Justice Innovation in Civil Legal Service Delivery Award in 2015.

David A. Hamilton Lifetime Achievement Award

Glenn Marcel

Baton Rouge

Glenn Marcel earned his B.S. from Louisiana State University and his J.D. from the LSU Paul M. Hebert Law Center. He practiced corporate law with partner Wendell G. Lindsay for over 20 years. He was also general counsel to a large gaming company, and then general counsel for an extensive domestic and international retailer of specialty steel, pipes and valves. Marcel also served as an administrative law judge. He retired late last year after a career spanning 40 years. Marcel was a member of the LSBA Pro Bono Committee, the BRBA Pro Bono Committee, the BRBA Pro Bono Panel, and a frequent volunteer for the BRBA Ask-A-Lawyer and Thirst for Justice programs. He also volunteered for BRBA’s Wills for First Responders and as a judge for youth mock hearings and arguments. He was a frequent contributor to the BRBA’s *Around the Bar* magazine. His role models for volunteerism are his wife and the Hon. Judge Melvin Shortess (retired).