



## Louisiana Access to Justice Commission

10:00 a.m. on Friday, August 18, 2023

### MEETING MINUTES

#### Attendees:

- Hon. Laurie Brister, Judge 6<sup>th</sup> Judicial District, Lake Providence – LDJA Rural Judge Representative
- Larry Centola, Martzell, Bickford & Centola, New Orleans – LSBA Executive Committee Representative
- Hon. Cynthia Clay Guillory, Judge 14<sup>th</sup> Judicial District, Lake Charles - LBF Board Representative
- Stephen I. Dwyer, LSBA Immediate Past President, Metairie - Unrestricted Appointment
- CC Kahr, Executive Director, The Pro Bono Project, New Orleans - Pro Bono Organization Representative
- Christy Kane, Entergy Corporation, New Orleans, - Corporate Counsel Representative
- Hon. Patricia Koch, Judge 9<sup>th</sup> JDC, Alexandria, Louisiana District Judges Association Representative
- Prof. Virginia Listach, Southern University Law Center, Baton Rouge – Law School Representative
- Mike Mestayer, Private Practitioner, New Orleans, LBF Officer Representative
- Alainna Mire, LSBA Past President, Alexandria – Unrestricted Appointment, ATJ Commission Co-Chair
- Chris Ralston, Phelps Dunbar, LLP, New Orleans - Private Practitioner Representative
- Sachida Raman, Executive Director, Acadiana Legal Services Corporation, Lafayette - Louisiana Legal Services Representative
- Veronica Sizer, Executive Counsel, GOHSEP, Baton Rouge -Unrestricted Appointment
- Michael Street, Watson, McMillin & Harrison, LLP, Monroe - LSBA Board of Governors Representative
- Laura Tuggle, Executive Director, Louisiana Legal Services Corporation, New Orleans - Louisiana Legal Services Representative
- Sandra Vujnovich, Judicial Administrator, Supreme Court of Louisiana, New Orleans - Louisiana Supreme Court Judicial Administrative Office Representative
- John Weimer III, Chief Justice of the Louisiana Supreme Court, Thibodeaux - Justice of the Louisiana Supreme Court; ATJ Commission Co-Chair
- Hon. Lisa Woodruff-White, Retired Judge 19<sup>th</sup> JDC, Baton Rouge - Chair of the LSBA ATJ Committee

- Justin Woods, Clerk of Court, 4<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeal, New Orleans – Clerk of Court Representative

**Guests:**

- Thomas Tyler, ConnectLA Office of Broadband Development and Connectivity
- Adrienne Wheeler, Executive Director, Louisiana Appleseed
- Sarah Berthelot, Executive Director, Louisiana Association of United Ways
- Laura Sewell, Interim Executive Director, Louisiana Bar Foundation

**LSBA Staff:**

- Stephanie Beagh
- Bridget Berins
- Amy Duncan
- Rachael Mills
- Monte Mollere

**\* A G E N D A \***

**I. Welcome and Introductions**

Chief Justice John Weimer and Alainna Mire, Co-chairs welcomed attendees.

**II. Consent Calendar**

Adoption of the Consent Calendar was moved by Stephen Dwyer, seconded by Sandra Vujnovich, and adopted with no opposition.

**III. ConnectLA *Office of Broadband Development and Connectivity*–**

**Guest** Thomas Tyler introduced the work of ConnectLA on broadband expansion throughout the state and efforts to eliminate the digital divide in Louisiana. The goal of 100% coverage of all underserved locations of the state with affordable broadband is expected to be met within 4 – 5 years. Part of the funding of this program provides for education and training for jobs in the setup and maintenance of the infrastructure of broadband. He invited anyone with questions to contact him at [Thomas.Tyler@la.gov](mailto:Thomas.Tyler@la.gov) and to view their website at <https://connect.la.gov/>

**IV. Access to Justice Commission Issues and Initiatives**

- a. Justice For All Project Update** – Chief Justice Weimer and Alainna Mire reported on the LSBA receiving the ABA 2023 Harrison Tweed Award at the ABA annual conference in August. The award recognizes the extraordinary achievements of state and local bar associations that develop or significantly expand projects or programs to increase access to civil legal services for persons living in poverty. They expressed their gratitude for all of the work done by Commission members and staff on the Legal Help Access Point project recognized by this award. Additionally, Rachael Mills updated the group on the related efforts of Law Talks, and Lawyers in Libraries.
- b. Accessibility Committee - Monte Mollere** reported that a planning committee consisting of Prof. Luz Molina, Accessibility Committee Chair; Debra Weinberg LSBA Disability Committee co-chair; Brian Wiggins, Supreme Court Chief Deputy Judicial Administrator, Monte Mollere and Amy Duncan, ATJ Staff, met to discuss

the work of the Accessibility Committee. A mission statement was developed and the focus of the committee was set.

- c. **Community Education and Outreach Committee** –C.C. Kahr reminded Commission members of the formation of the Community Education and Outreach Committee which was suggested during the ATJ Conclave. This committee will move forward by collecting and evaluating the available legal needs data from Lagniappe Law Lab, Court SRL resources, and 211 to define what the needs are in the community. This data will help prioritize an area of legal need with which to start communications with the public and community providers- particularly social workers and faith-based organizations. Sarah Berthelot from the Louisiana Association of United Ways discussed the 211-referral system.

- V. **Louisiana Bar Foundation Report** Michael Mestayer highlighted that the LBF will distribute 12.6 million dollars in grants this year. He shared that their impact multiplier is \$17.99 for each grant dollar given. Judge Guillory reminded the commission of the LBF Pop-Up Tour beginning in November and the Annual Fellows Gala on April 19, 2024.

#### VI. **Access to Justice Committee Issues and Initiatives**

- a. **Disaster Response Subcommittee.** Based on the success of the first “Disaster Law Collaboration Summit, the ATJ Disaster Response Subcommittee has agreed to coordinate a second Disaster Summit for the Louisiana Legal Services Programs. The summit will be held in June 2024 in the Acadiana Legal Service Corp service area in an effort to engage stakeholders from Southwest Louisiana. Details will follow.
- b. **LIFT Legal Incubator Project.** LIFT efforts to ensure private attorney support of specific legal needs identified by legal aid providers will continue beyond their initially expected periods. Amber Mason and Paul Brazil will continue to assist SLLS through the Disaster Title Clearing project and will participate in legal clinics around the state with Appleseed. The Rural Justice project with ALSC has also been renewed for a second year. Amy Duncan is looking for 5 attorneys to participate. Please let her know if you know any interested attorneys.

#### VII. **ATJ Commission Meetings, Times, and Locations were announced:**

- a. Friday, October 27, 2023, 10:00 AM Louisiana Supreme Court
- b. Friday, February 23, 2024, 10:00 AM Louisiana State Bar Association
- c. Friday, May 10, 2024, 10:00 AM Louisiana State Bar Association

- VIII. **Adjournment** – Allaina Mire’s call to adjourn was put into motion by Chief Justice Weimer, seconded by Mike Mestayer, and adopted.