

# LOUISIANA STATE BAR ASSOCIATION ACCESS TO JUSTICE COMMITTEE MEETING

10:00 A.M. Friday, January 21, 2022

## *Attendees*

Hon. Lisa Woodruff-White (retired), ATJ Committee Co-Chair  
Tina Suggs, ATJ Committee Co-Chair, Frederick A. Miller & Assoc., LSBA Board of Governors  
Talya Bergeron, Directing Attorney, Southeast Louisiana Legal Services  
Amanda Brown, Executive Director, Lagniappe Law Lab  
Miriam Childs, Director, Law Library of Louisiana  
Ann Gregorie, Executive Director, Baton Rouge Bar Association  
Franchesca Hamilton-Acker, Managing Attorney, Acadiana Legal Service Corp.  
C.C. Kahr, Executive Director, Pro Bono Project New Orleans  
Virginia Listach, Director, Southern University Law Center Legal Clinic  
Luz Molina, Clinic Professor, Loyola College of Law  
Joe Oelkers III, Acadiana Legal Service Corporation  
Camille Patti, LIFT Graduate, Attorney at Law  
Elena Perez, Pro Bono Coordinator, Southeast Louisiana Legal Services  
Sara Pic, Head of Public Services, Law Library of Louisiana  
Sachida Raman, Deputy Director, Acadiana Legal Service Corp.  
Vanessa Spinazola, Executive Director, Justice and Accountability Center  
Lisa Stansky, Southeast Louisiana Legal Services  
Jane Thomas, Elder Law Task Force, Attorney at Law  
Laura Tuggle, Executive Director, Southeast Louisiana Legal Services  
Josef Ventulan, ABA-YLD District Representative, East Baton Rouge Parish Family Court  
Sharonda Williams, Director of Government Affairs, Loyola University

*Leadership Class – The LSBA Leadership Class program further develops young attorneys' leadership skills and provides them with opportunities for statewide networking.*

Stuart Breaux  
Andretta Breaux-Atkins  
Chaunda Brooks  
Elizabeth Hyman  
Taylor LeDuff  
Margaret Manning  
Briana Spivey  
Micah Williams

## *Staff*

Stephanie Beagh, ATJ Projects Counsel  
Mariarenee Contreras, ATJ Projects Counsel  
Amy Duncan, ATJ Projects and Training Counsel  
Jordan Maier, ATJ Department Coordinator  
Rachael Mills, ATJ Projects Counsel  
Monte Mollere, ATJ Director

## Minutes

- I. **Welcome and Introductions** – Judge Woodruff-White and Tina Suggs welcomed the group.
- II. **Consent Calendar** – The items on the consent calendar were approved unanimously.
- III. **Access to Justice Planning**

### Justice Index

**Overview of Results** – Monte presented background on the Justice Index and its results from 2020. The Index is a snapshot of the degree to which each US state has adopted best practices for ensuring access to justice for all people based on various relevant ATJ issues. States are given a score out of 100 for overall access as well in several categories, such as language access. The result detail significant progress in Louisiana in the past four years, with our national ranking among states increasing from 44<sup>th</sup> in 2016 to 27<sup>th</sup> in 2020.

**Disability Access Discussion** – Mariarenee Contreras reported on how the LSPD Committee is using the Justice Index results to guide their work this year. The committee developed two working groups, focused on training and education and website accessibility. The training and education workgroup is collaborating with the Louisiana Judicial College to develop judicial trainings, a bench card, and videos on disability rights issues. The website accessibility workgroup is working with district courts as they redesign their websites to ensure they are functionally accessible and include relevant information for people with disabilities.

**Discussion of opportunities for coordinated work** – Judge Woodruff White and Tina Suggs reported on their takeaways from the national conference of ATJ leaders. Several highlights included client-driven innovation (via including clients in committees and boards) and the cultivation of cultural humility and cross-cultural sensitivity.

**Strategic Plan – A Continuum of Legal Services** – Amy Duncan reminded attendees of the ATJ strategic plan and introduced the goal under discussion: to increase lawyer and litigant participation.

**Pro Bono Campaign** – C.C. Kahr introduced the campaign to encourage attorneys to give 20 hours in 2022, intended to boost the declining involvement of volunteers during the pandemic. The statewide, year-long campaign will engage attorneys, the judiciary, law students and others. Chief Justice Weimer has acknowledged support of the campaign and has agreed to reach out to judges and lawyers statewide to encourage pro bono. The Committee unanimously approved a motion to support the campaign.

**Limited Scope Representation** – Professor Virginia Listach gave an overview of the Modest Means Directory and the free online [Limited Scope Toolkit](#). Developed

by the Modest Means Committee, the toolkit includes resources and information for attorneys on how to provide a menu of a la carte, flat-fee legal services to clients who may not be able to afford the costs of traditional hourly representation. She noted the following benefits of limited scope representation:

1. Clients feel more comfortable knowing what the cost is up-front.
2. Clients may return for more services if they are happy with the first service.
3. Attorneys can expand their client base beyond just those who can pay for full service in order to bring in more revenue.
4. LSR eases the burden on the courts by improving the quality of materials submitted by SRLs.
5. Attorneys have the opportunity to assess their relationship with the client before committing to taking on a full case.

Camille Patti shared her experience providing limited scope representation through the LIFT incubator program. She reported that she had not encountered any pushback from courts, although opposing counsel might have been confused in a case where, for example, she represented a client in child support matters while SLLS represented them for the divorce.

Camille raised an issue regarding withdrawal of representation for which she sought feedback from the LSBA ethics counsel. Attorneys are required to submit a certification that the limited services have been completed and all orders have been submitted. This not only makes the LSR process more complicated, but additionally, Jefferson Parish charges a \$100 fee to file a motion to withdraw, which may be unaffordable for someone who needs low-cost representation in the first place.

#### **IV. Access to Justice Commission Committee Reports**

**SRL & Technology Committee** – Amanda Brown presented the committees’ work in creating and updating forms for their automated forms project. Pilot automations of 103 divorce without children and adult name change forms have been completed and approved by the Supreme Court. The committees have a workflow plan in place to complete the same process with the rest of the SRL forms. Additional support is needed to create the family law forms – members were asked to email [stephanie.beaugh@lsba.org](mailto:stephanie.beaugh@lsba.org) and [amanda@lagniappelawlab.org](mailto:amanda@lagniappelawlab.org) if interested in assisting.

#### **V. ATJ Committee Subcommittee and Initiatives Reports**

**Disaster Response Subcommittee** – Ann Gregorie shared that the disaster response subcommittee has been meeting every three weeks to address lingering needs post-Hurricane Ida. Rachael Mills is directing hotline callers to pro bono attorneys and the group is monitoring for issues with FEMA.

**Spring Justice Fridays** – Mariarenee Contreras reported that the *Justice Fridays* legal aid training series will return this spring. Members were invited to submit proposals for speakers and training topics by February 7, 2022.

**ATJ Grant Fund** – Monte Mollere announced that 2022 ATJ Grant Fund applications are due to the LBF by February 21. The grant awards up to \$50,000 each year to 501(c)3 organizations for the purposes of 1) the advancement and maintenance of statewide technology, 2) the coordination of statewide intake and referral, or 3) disaster or emergency response.

**Pro Bono Awards** – Jordan Maier announced that nominations for the LSBA Pro Bono Publico and Children’s Law Awards would be due by February 7 through the online portal.

## **VI. Justice Community Conversations**

**ATJ 2021 Top Ten List** – Monte suggested members check out the [ATJ Top Ten List](#) (page 14 of the January Bar Briefs), which shares the accomplishments of the ATJ community in the past year.

## **VII. Adjournment**