



# Louisiana Access to Justice Commission

10:00 a.m. on Friday, February 23, 2024

## MEETING MINUTES

### Attendees:

- Hon. John Weimer III, Chief Justice of the Louisiana Supreme Court, Thibodeaux - ATJ Commission Co-Chair
- Alaina Mire, LSBA Past President, Alexandria – Unrestricted Appointment, ATJ Commission Co-Chair
- 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
- C.C. Kahr, Executive Director, The Pro Bono Project, New Orleans - Pro Bono Organization 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
- 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
- Hon. Lisa Woodruff-White, Judge 19<sup>th</sup> JDC (retired), Baton Rouge - Chair of the LSBA ATJ Committee

### Guests:

- Hon. Patricia Oppenheim, Judge 22<sup>nd</sup> Judicial District, Covington
- Amanda Brown, Executive Director, Lagniappe Law Lab, New Orleans

## **LSBA Staff:**

- Stephanie Beaugh
- 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 Chief Justice Weimer, and adopted with no opposition.

### **III. Access to Justice Commission Issues and Initiatives**

- a. Accessibility Committee** - Prof. Luz Molina reported that the committee set 3 goals including: 1) development of committee membership, 2) creation of a common language through clear definitions, and finally 3) development of training for judges and lawyers to normalize meaningful accessibility. The next meeting is scheduled for March 19th.
- b. Self-Represented Litigation Committee** – Judge Patricia Oppenheim reported that registration is open for the SRL Service Provider Summit for April 19th at Louisiana National Guard Training Center Pineville in Pineville, LA. The focus is on rural access needs. She also reported that the committee is still working on updating and creating new forms. They are exploring the topic of SRL Safe Harbor Provisions.
- c. Technology Committee** - Upon request of the Technology Committee Chair Amanda Brown, the Commission endorsed the name change form and 102 divorce forms (with and without children) pending verification that the inclusion of the petitioner’s full social security number was required. Chief Justice Weimer and other members voiced concern over the security issues arising and suggested research to confirm. Once verified, the forms will be made to conform to the law and considered endorsed. Judge Woodruff-White suggested a statement be added to the 102 divorce forms cautioning that “victims of domestic violence may lose some rights by using these forms”.
- d. Community Education and Outreach Committee** – Amy Duncan reported that the committee collected and evaluated the available legal needs data from Lagniappe Law Lab, Court SRL resources, LSC, SLLS, and 211. Based on the evaluation of the data, the committee formed an education working group to develop training for public and community providers- particularly social workers and faith-based organizations. The first training session will be held for 211 contact specialists at ViaLink. The working group is scheduled to meet March 1<sup>st</sup> to develop the training.
- e. 2<sup>nd</sup> Access to Justice Conclave** - Monte Mollere shared that the 2nd ATJ Conclave is scheduled for April 12th at Jones Walker in New Orleans. Tara Veazey will be returning to help with the conclave. There will be a discussion on community navigators, community partnerships, and the opportunity to communicate with one another. Monte reiterated the invitation that everyone received via email.

**IV. Louisiana Bar Foundation Report** - Michael Mestayer highlighted that the LBF was not only able to meet the \$12.6 million dollars in grants this year, but able to add a onetime bonus to civil legal aid attorneys. He shared that the LBF has a new website: <https://raisingthebar.org> and invited everyone to visit it. Judge Guillory reminded the commission of the LBF Annual Fellows Gala on April 19, 2024.

**V. Access to Justice Committee Issues and Initiatives**

- a. Disaster Response Subcommittee** - Louisiana Disaster Law Collaboration Summit is scheduled for Thursday and Friday, June 20th - 21st, 2024. Hosted by the Louisiana State Bar Association's Access to Justice Program (LSBA), Acadiana Legal Service Corporation (ALSC), and Southeast Louisiana Legal Services (SLLS) at the Doubletree Hotel in Lafayette, the summit will bring together disaster responders from across the state and bridge the gap between legal aid and community response agencies. Questions can be directed to LSBA Projects Counsel Rachael Mills at [rachael.mills@lsba.org](mailto:rachael.mills@lsba.org).
- b. Pro Bono Awards** – Bridget Berins invited the commission members to attend the 2024 Pro Bono Publico and Children's Law Awards Ceremony being held Tuesday, May 21, 2024 at the Louisiana Supreme Court, beginning at 5:00 pm with a reception following.

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

- a.** Friday, April 12, 2024, ATJ Conclave, 9:30 AM Jones Walker
- b.** Friday, May 10, 2024, 10:00 AM Louisiana State Bar Association

**VII. Adjournment** – Alainna Mire's call to adjourn was put into motion by Prof. Luz Molina, seconded by Mike Mestayer, and adopted.